

Role of Qualification and Experience of the College Principals and Directors in the Choice of Leadership Style - A Study on the Colleges of Punjab

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Abstract

Every principal or Director of the college has distinct style of leadership. In present study transformational style of leadership was found to be most common style of leadership among the college Principals and Directors closely followed by transactional style. Laissez Faire was not a favourable style among college Principals and Directors as evidenced from the study. Leadership style was not found to be related to Qualification and Experience of the college principals.

Keywords: Leadership, Qualification, Experience, Transactional Style, Laissez Faire, Transformational Style, Principals, Directors

Overview

A college principal is expected to be a role model. He has to deal with the colleagues who are either equally or in some cases more experienced and educated. He has to deal with the very demanding, volatile and fragile youth (teachers & students) and at the same time he must act as a torch bearer for the institute. Role of the leader in the education sector has become more challenging nowadays. According to Lee Mitgang (2012) no educational institute can progress without the effective leadership of the institute. He cited Linda D. Hammond where she mentioned teaching quality is dependent upon the direction of the leadership. A good educational leader brings in good teachers and organisation performance is dependent upon it. O.P.

Akinnubi et. al. (2012) maintained, gender, experience and qualification of the principal affect the functioning of the organisation. It is very important to identify the successful educational administrators of today with most prevalent leadership style and its relationship with the other operating variables.

Definition of Leadership, Experience

Briane Lee (1997) stated after a review of modern definitions of leadership as an intensely human enterprise which does not fit neatly into definitions and boxes. Leaders have all the spontaneity, unpredictability, frailty, vulnerability and potential possible in the human race. According to Newstrom and Davis (2005) Leadership is the catalyst transforming potential into reality. Quinn (2004) stated leadership is a temporary condition. When certain skills and competencies are exhibited one can be said to be showing leadership and when not demonstrated leadership is absent. Robbins and Sanghi (2005) mentioned in Ohio state studies, Fiedler's model, path goal theory, and leader participation models, all have concerned transactional leaders. Transformational leaders have profound and extraordinary effect on their followers and they inspire their followers to transcend their self interests for the good of the organisation. Experience is the knowledge or mastery of an event or subject gained through involvement in or exposure to it. Experience is the knowledge or skill acquired over a period of practical experience of something, especially gained in a particular profession. Qualification is an ability, characteristic,

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or experience making you suitable for a particular job or activity. Qualification denotes fitness for a purpose through fulfilment of necessary conditions such as attainment of certain age, taking of an oath, completion of required schooling or training, or acquisition of a degree or diploma.

Review of Literature

Hunt (1996) in his study on health care sector found the style of leadership affects the job turnover, satisfaction, performance and service quality in an organisation. Bass (1985) argued transformational and transactional leadership styles were single continuum rather than mutually independent continua. Hessebein and Cohen (1998) stated leaders always challenge the status quo and have the ability to see things differently. They push themselves and others out of their comfort zone and are always ready for learning fresh ideas. Goleman (2002) identified six different types of leadership styles namely, Visionary leader, Coaching leader, Affiliative leader, Democratic leader, pace setting leader, Commanding leader. All these types of leadership style are contingent to the situation. Politis John (2001) claimed behavioural and interpersonal skills as most often cited essentials for successful knowledge management (acquisition). But unfortunately, little was known about the roles played by leadership in the process of knowledge acquisition. Results of his findings indicated leadership styles involving human interaction and encourage in participative decision-making processes were positively related to the skills and traits essential for knowledge management. Huberts, *et. al* (2007) found role modelling, strictness, and openness of leaders influence the behaviour of police officers, but the impact of the variables on the different types of integrity violations varies. Employees appeared to copy leader's integrity standards in their daily interaction with one another. Vroom and Arthur (1998) found managers must adapt their leadership styles to fit the demands of the situations they face. One of the necessary manifestations of this view was the need to adapt the form and degree of participation in decision making by subordinates, to the personalities of the subordinates, the decisions to be made and the general organisational circumstances. James Castiglione (2006) in his study on Librarians found that they were experimenting with organizational learning and new management styles in an attempt to cope with rapid change. Transformational management styles could be learned and applied by library

administrators. Gabrielsson *et. al* (2009) maintained two interactive dimensions at the heart of a leader's behaviour – assertiveness and responsiveness – are foundations of person's leadership style. Yoram Neumann and Edith F. Neumann (1999) examined university presidents' strategic style and related it to the college bottom line. The conclusion of the study is clear: presidents' strategic leadership style is associated with the college bottom line. The pattern is very distinct: Maintainers are directly associated with declining institutions while integrators and net casters are associated with successful Institutions. Hasan & Grace (2006) found Transactional leadership style was found to be the most frequently used leadership style; transformational leadership was exhibited less frequently; and laissez-faire was noted as the least commonly occurring leadership style but more frequent among the leaders with low educational background, low previous managerial experience, and employee leaders. Transformational leadership was found to induce the greatest satisfaction, willingness to exert extra effort, and effectiveness among employees. Hala Sabri (2007) in his results revealed IATA managers preferred transformational rather than transactional leadership style, in Jordan, there was no clear preference for transactional or transformational style as both were being used. Tichy and Cohen (1998) in their literature had identified nine functional and eleven accompanying attributes of servant leadership. They are *Functional attributes*: 1. Vision 2. Honesty 3. Trust 4. Integrity 5. Service 6. Modelling 7. Pioneering 8. Appreciation of others 9. Empowerment. Servant Leadership is a concept that can potentially change organisations and societies as it stimulates both personal and organizational metamorphoses. Heller *et. al.* (1993) revealed in their study leadership style of the principal was not very important but the behaviour of the principal with his teachers was more important. If the principal was having warm friendly supporting and good understanding with the teachers, then they felt more comfortable. This finding was in congruence with the findings of Hersey and Blanchard (1988) where they found theory of leadership should draw inferences from the characteristics of the followers and the situations rather than the overall leadership style of the leader. Garcia, M., Duncan, P., Carmody, M. and REE, M.J. (2014) in their research on elementary school teachers found leadership style and personality of principal creates an impact on the follower. Neuroticism (emotional stability) was the major predictor of the leadership style. There was relationship of emotional stability of leader with the transformational and

transactional leaderships. More emotionally stable leaders were perceived, more they were rated to be transactional and transformational leaders. Bass (1999) have mentioned women tend to be more of transformational type of leaders than the men. Togneri and Anderson (2003) maintained effective use of data by the principal can help them to find gaps in the performance, setting goals and improvement in the system. Transactional leadership style is the most advocated leadership style. Instructional leadership style no doubt is the best suited style for the educational leaders as it keeps them abreast of the latest developments, so they may not lose the focus of teaching and learning.

Research Methodology

Population for the study was all the colleges of the state of Punjab, affiliated to the state, central and private universities. At the time of research there were eight government universities, five private universities in Punjab and one thousand and forty one colleges in Punjab at the time of research.

Table 1

Name of University	Government Colleges	Government Aided colleges	Self Financed /Pvt. Colleges	Total No. Of Colleges
Punjabi University, Patiala.	23	17	152	192
Punjab University, Chandigarh.	15	59	114	188
Punjab Technical University, Kapurthala.	2	0	369	371
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.	10	39	105	154
Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot	7	0	129	136

Sample for the study and Statistical Tool. Table 1 shows the distribution of colleges in the state of Punjab. State of Punjab can be divided into three regions and i.e.

Majha, Malwa and Doaba. The major districts of Punjab are Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala, Bathinda, and Sangrur. Districts like Amritsar, Ferozepur, and Gurdaspur belong to majha region. Districts Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala and Ropar fall in doaba region. Bathinda, Faridkot, Sangrur, Mohali, Barnala, Chandigarh and Patiala are the major cities of Malwa region. A random sample of two hundred and forty three college Principals and Directors was taken.

Correspondence Analysis was the statistical tool applied for the analysis of the data.

Hypothesis

H0.1: Leadership style and qualification of the college principal is related.

H1: Leadership style and qualification of the college principal is not related.

H0.2: Leadership style and experience of the college principal is related.

H 2: Leadership style and experience of the college principal is not related.

Leadership Styles being followed by the College Principals and Directors and it's comparison with the educational background.

Table 2

Qualification	Leadership Style			Total
	Transactional	Transformational	Laissez Faire	
PhD	67 (71%)	90 (63%)	6 (100%)	163
PG	27 (29%)	53 (37%)	0	80
Total	94	143	6	243

According to the table 2 Transformational style of leadership (59%) was the most common style of the leadership being practiced by the college principals and directors as reported by the respondents in the survey. Second common style of leadership was transactional leadership style (39%). Laissez faire style of leadership was followed by only two and half percent of the respondents. Out of those principals and directors who were practicing transformational style of leadership sixty three percent were doctorate or above. Thirty seven percent remaining were post graduates.

Transactional style practicing principals and directors of the institutes were having seventy one percent of the respondents doctorate or above while twenty nine percent of them were postgraduates. All the principals were Ph.D. who reported to be practicing laissez faire style of leadership. Majority of the principals with doctorate level educational background were following transformational style of leadership followed by transactional style of leadership. Similar was the trend among the postgraduate principals with majority reported to be preferring transformational leadership style over transactional leadership. Surprisingly none of the postgraduate principals was reported to be practicing laissez faire style of leadership.

Correspondence Analysis

Test of independence between the rows and the columns:

Table 3

Chi-square (Observed value)	4.806
Chi-square (Critical value)	5.991
DF	2
p-value	0.09
Alpha	0.05

Test interpretation:

H0: Qualification and the Leadership style are independent.

Ha: There is a link between Qualification and the Leadership style.

Table 3 reveals computed value is more than significant value so null hypothesis is accepted. Hence qualification of the college principal is independent of the leadership style.

Table 4

Leadership Style	Weight (relative)	Distance	Sq-Distance	Inertia	Relative inertia
Transactional	0.387	0.089	0.008	0.003	0.156
Transformational	0.588	0.088	0.008	0.005	0.231
Laissez Faire	0.025	0.701	0.491	0.012	0.613

Total inertia = 0.02

In table 4 Leadership styles are displayed and their relative distances are shown. It is obvious from the table that Transformational and Transactional style of leadership are very close to each other.

Eigen values and percentages of inertia:

Table 5

	F1
Eigen value	0.02
Inertia (%)	100
Cumulative %	100

Eigen values correspond to the variance extracted by each factor.

Results for the Qualification

Weights, distances and squared distances to the origin, inertias and relative inertias (rows):

Table 6

Qualification	Weight (relative)	Distance	Sq-Distance	Inertia	Relative inertia
PhD	0.671	0.099	0.01	0.00651	0.329
PG	0.329	0.201	0.04	0.01327	0.671

Table 6 indicates that Qualification factor is widely dispersed and it is far from similarity.

Chi-square distances for qualification:

Table 7

Qualification of Principals	PhD	PG
PhD	0	0.299
PG	0.299	0

Results for the Leadership Style

Weights, distances and squared distances to the origin, inertias and relative inertias (columns):

Table 8

Leadership Style	Transactional	Transformational	Laissez Faire
Transactional	0	0.177	0.611
Transformational	0.177	0	0.789
Laissez Faire	0.611	0.789	0

Symmetric Plot

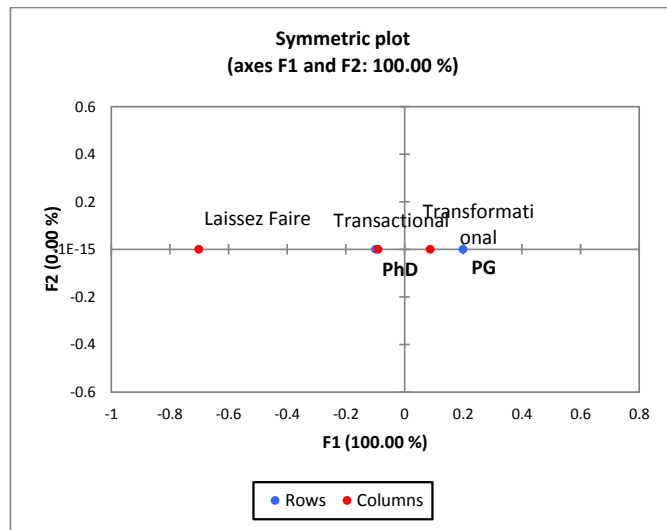


Fig. 1

In the Fig. 1 (symmetric plot) it is very much clear that college principals and directors with doctoral degree have transactional leadership style which is almost superimposed. Post graduate principals were found nearest to transformational leadership on the graph. Laissez faire leadership style was far away from doctoral degree holders as well as from the post graduate principals of the colleges. The education and leadership styles were not related to each other.

Comparison of the Leadership Styles of the College Principals and Directors with the Experience (number of years) on the current position.

Table 9

Leadership Style	Experience on the current Position			
	1-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-15 yrs	more than 15 yrs
Transactional	27 (52%)	40 (36%)	18 (36%)	9 (29%)
Transformational	25 (48%)	69 (62%)	30 (60%)	19 (61%)
Laissez Faire	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	3 (10%)

Principals and the directors of the institutes who have got experience ranging from one to five years transactional leadership style (52%) of leadership was preferred over transformational style (48%). Laissez Faire style was not reported in this category. In the category of the

principals having experience ranging between five to ten years transformational leadership style (62%) was dominant over transactional style (36%) of leadership. But in this category two percent of the respondents were reported to be following laissez faire style of leadership. Principals having experience ranging between ten to fifteen years again transformational leadership style (60%) was more in practice than the transactional style (36%). Four percent of this category reported for the laissez faire style of leadership. Principals with more than fifteen years of experience were again comfortable with the transformational leadership style (61%) than the transactional leadership style (29%). Surprisingly in this category laissez faire style of leadership surpassed all other categories with ten percent count.

Test of independence between the style of leadership and the experience:

Table 10

	4.437
Chi-square (Critical value)	12.592
DF	6
p-value	0.618
Alpha	0.05

Test interpretation:

H0: The Leadership styles and experience of the college principals are independent.

Ha: There is a link between Leadership styles and experience of the college principals.

Table 10 reveals that the computed p-value is greater than the significance level alpha=0.05, one cannot reject the null hypothesis H0.

Hence the leadership style and experience are independent of each other.

Total inertia = 0.018

Eigen values and percentages of inertia:

Table 11

	F1	F2
Eigen value	0.017	0.001
Inertia (%)	95.699	4.301
Cumulative %	95.699	100.000

The Eigen values correspond to the variance extracted by each factor.

Table 12

Leadership Style of Principals	Weight (relative)	Sq-Distance	Sq-Distance	Inertia	Relative inertia
Transactional	0.387	0.162	0.026	0.01017	0.557
Transformational	0.58	0.111	0.012	0.00721	0.395
Laissez Faire	0.033	0.163	0.027	0.00088	0.048

Table 12 establishes the Transformational Leadership style and Transactional style were closer to each other.

Table 13

	Transactional	Transformational	Laissez Faire
Transactional	0	0.273	0.189
Transformational	0.273	0	0.231
Laissez Faire	0.189	0.231	0

Table 13 exhibits tables of the principal coordinates and standard coordinates of the columns respectively. The standard coordinates are principal coordinates divided by the square root of the corresponding factor eigen value. The weighted sum-of-squares of the standard coordinates equals 1 for each factor.

Results for the Experience

Weights, distances and squared distances to the origin, inertias and relative inertias (experience):

Table 14

Experience of College Principals	Weight (relative)	Sq-Distance	Sq-Distance	Inertia	Relative inertia
1-5 yrs	0.222	0.239	0.057	0.013	0.698
5-10 yrs	0.453	0.062	0.004	0.002	0.094
10-15 yrs	0.206	0.064	0.004	0.001	0.046
more than 15 yrs	0.119	0.158	0.025	0.003	0.163

Table 14 shows the similarity between the various categories of the experience of the college principals. Categories of 5-10 yrs and 10-15 yrs are very much similar compared to other Categories.

Table 15

Experience	1-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-15 yrs	More than 15 yrs
1-5 yrs	0	0.296	0.289	0.396
5-10 yrs	0.296	0	0.071	0.112
10-15 yrs	0.289	0.071	0	0.112
More than 15 yrs	0.396	0.112	0.112	0

Table 15 exhibits tables of the principal coordinates and standard coordinates of the columns respectively. The standard coordinates are principal coordinates divided by the square root of the corresponding factor Eigen value. The weighted sum-of-squares of the standard coordinates equals 1 for each factor.

Symmetric Plot

In Fig. 2, Transactional leadership appeared to be closer to the principals having experience of 1-5 years in the position. Principals with more than fifteen years of experience appear closer to transformational leadership style on the graph. Further transformational leadership is almost equidistant for principals and directors having 5-10 years and 10-15 years of experience. Laissez faire is far away from all the experience categories.

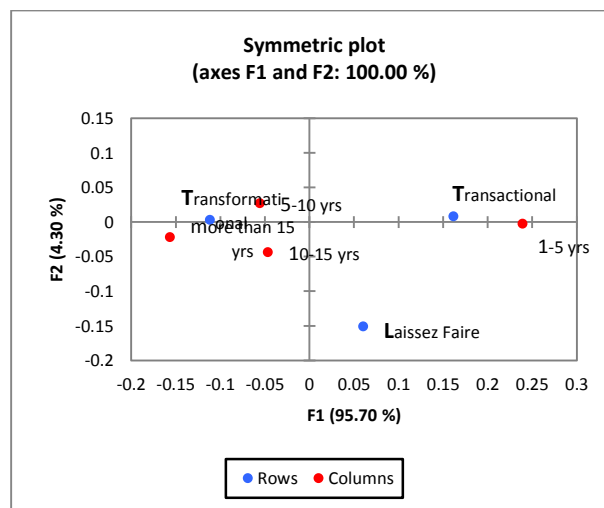


Fig. 2

Findings

An interesting comparison was made by comparing education of the college principals and its effect on their leadership style. It was found among the principals with doctoral degree, they did not differentiate between

transformational leadership and transactional style of leadership. Surprisingly the Laissez Faire type of leadership style was exhibited only by the doctoral respondents. Postgraduate principals made transformational leadership style as their first choice as compared to transactional leadership. Kustin Adam, *et. al* (2009) showed a transformational style of leadership was positively associated with interaction and network marketing. Passive/avoidant leadership had no effect on any of the marketing practices. High percentage of transformational leadership style among doctorate Principals may be attributed to the educational background and experience. It is well supported by Richard & Jones Robert (1995) who in their survey of CEOs of US and Japanese subsidiaries located in North America established the perceived link between leadership style and cultural upbringing and education, with higher education and experience one becomes more aware about his colleagues so he tends to believe in the abilities and sincerity. This fact was supported by Titus Oshagbemi (2004) who maintained age affects the style of leadership among the managers. He said with advancement of age older managers tend to be more of participative kind of managers than the younger. On the contrary both the older as well as younger managers tend to be similar on the directive and delegative leadership styles. Transformational Leadership is normally shown by the persons who are well enlightened and educated, by those who repose faith in their colleagues and subordinates. In case of college principals this is obvious. This is supported by the work of Juan Carlos Pastor & Margarita Mayo (2008) and it was revealed that ratings of transformational leadership are associated with theory Y philosophy of management and a learning goal orientation; whereas ratings of transactional leadership were found to be associated with performance goal orientation. In addition, executives with higher levels of education reported greater behavioural integrity, greater alignment between their managerial beliefs and their corresponding self-ratings of leadership behaviours. Many of the colleges started their operations only in the past few years so it was not surprising that transactional leadership style emerged as the second most preferred style. College principals with less than five years of experience preferred transactional leadership style over transformational style. Principals with experience of more than five years and up to ten years preferred transformational leadership style than transactional. This trend was similar to principals having more than ten

years of experience. Principals having more than fifteen years of experience were surprisingly having Laissez Faire style of leadership, but their number was very less. When experience increases then one tends to be more into the mode of transformation than into instructions. Principals exhibiting Laissez Faire style of leadership may be those persons who either retired from their first job or had taken up the second job at the fag end of their carrier. In government colleges the criteria for promotion is not merit but seniority. So some of the Principals in the government colleges may prefer Laissez faire style as their accountability is minimum and people are generally about to retire at this stage and they don't like to exercise any of their powers. Post graduate principals totally abstained from Laissez faire style of leadership. Transactional style of leadership was equally important in the current study. Majority of the colleges in the random sample were private colleges. These colleges are relatively new and were facing tough competition, may be transactional style of leadership was more obvious in those cases.

Conclusion

Transformational and Transactional style of leadership emerged as the most common leadership styles among the college Principals and Directors. Laissez faire was the least common style of leadership. Style of leadership didn't seem to have any relationship with the experience and educational background.

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