

# **A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON LEADERSHIP STYLES USED BY DEPARTMENT HEADS IN UNIVERSITIES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This article presents a study conducted to investigate the effect of demographic variables on leadership styles of Department heads from HEC recognized Public and Private Universities at Lahore. In any organization, Leadership is an essential component for their success or failure. Leadership position which interacts with faculty, students and employees within any university or college is referred as department head or chair. In today's competitive environment educational leaders are facing challenges. This study was designed to explore the effect of demographic variables on leadership styles of departmental heads (Deans, Principals, Directors, and Chairpersons). For this purpose, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was administered to a sample of 650 participants (490 male and 160 female) of ages between 31-70 years. Statistical analyses revealed no significant differences regarding gender and age in using transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant leadership style by university heads. Results revealed significant differences with regard to university type and designation in using Transactional leadership style.*

**Keywords:** *Leadership style, Transformational leadership style, Transactional leadership style, Passive-Avoidant Style, Department heads.*

## **1) INTRODUCTION**

Effective leadership is significant in higher education institutions for creating friendly and useful teaching environment for their faculty and students by facilitating them with quality education which is needed. Success of any educational institution depends on its departmental leadership that can be given names as Dean, Principal, Director or Head of Department. Bowman in 2002 stated from his study that, " leaders are

expected to serve in roles as diverse as resource manager, instant problem solver, spokesperson, deep listener, motivator, enabler, meaning maker, systems designer, and cultural rainmaker” (p. 158). He also noted that, “Faculty members recognized more than fifty discrete roles and but leadership demands central place to department’s daily operations” (p. 158). So it can be said that department head plays a critical and significant leadership role within his/her institution. From past several decades, management and leadership experts have undergone a revolt in how they define leadership and what should be their attitudes toward it. They have gone from a very classical autocratic approach to a very creative, participative approach. However, it was observed that not everything old is bad and not everything new is good. Wolinski (2010) defined *leadership as a relationship that involves mobilizing, influencing, and guiding of others toward desired goals*. Leadership is defined as ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals. Sometimes leadership is formal and structured, such as a manager who yields authority over subordinates in an organization (Robbins & Judge 2009; Robbins & Sanghi, 2005).

Ample literature on leadership is present in business management, in business studies on managerial sample but little research has been done on leadership in academic departments and in educational settings. Department chairs have the authority to make most of the departmental decisions but rarely have any formal training or instruction for this position. They really lack in knowing how to manage people or how to accomplish group goals (Whitsitt, 2007). That’s why researcher took these leadership styles with a sample of educational administrators.

## **2) Leadership Styles**

Leadership style is a way and approach through which a leader provides direction, implements plans, and motivates people to attain certain goals and objectives. Leadership style is a leader’s behavior which is resulted by his/her philosophy, personality and experience. There is as many leadership styles as there are leaders. Kurt Lewin and colleagues did leadership decision experiments in 1939 and identified three different styles of leadership, in particular around decision-making.

- Autocratic
- Democratic

- Laissez-Faire (Lewin, 2010)

This study revolves around three types of leadership styles---mainly the transformational and transactional and passive-avoidant. The differences between transactional and transformational leadership styles were first given by Weber in 1947 who suggested that transactional leadership is based on control on the basis of knowledge and hierarchical power and transactional leaders aim to negotiate and bargain to achieve higher efficiency.

Both transactional and transformational leadership styles have great impact on the dynamics of organizational agility and subsequent competitive advantage. But when we talk about motivating the faculty performance, both transactional and transformational leadership styles are important. From a transactional perspective, faculty appreciates administrators who clearly communicate both university and departmental goals. For true motivation, administrators must seek to affect faculty on an intrinsic level where personal efficacy is raised through the successful accomplishment of objectives. (Woods, 2007)

### ***2.1) Transactional Leadership Style***

Transactional leaders guide and motivate their followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying role and task requirements (Robbins & Sanghi, 2005). By using this style a leader helps his/her followers to identify what must be done to accomplish the desired results. The transactional approach uses the path-goal concepts as its framework. It is not often found in organizational setting (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly, & Konopaske, 2006).

### ***2.2) Transformational Leadership Style***

Transformational leader inspires followers to transcend their own self-interests and who are capable of having a profound and extraordinary effect on followers. Transformational leadership is more than charisma (Robbins & Sanghi, 2005). Transformational leader persuades followers to work hard to achieve the goals envisioned. The leader's vision provides the follower with motivation for hard work that is self-rewarding (internal) (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopaske, 2006)

### **3) EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES IN USING DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES**

Gender has been given importance in many research studies from last past decades. Researchers have different views about what type of differences exist and to what extent they exist between male and female managers concerning leadership styles. After early 1990's, there is a growing body of research emerged regarding gender differences in leadership styles with several well-known management researchers, including Powell (1990, 1993) and Bass (1981) supporting this belief.

Fein, Tziner, and Vasiliu, (2010) conducted a study on Age cohort effects, gender, and Romanian leadership preferences. They found results having significant differences with regard to gender and age in using different leadership styles. They reported significant differences in using Transformational leadership style regarding gender and no significant differences with regard to gender on transactional leadership style were found. It was also found that females score on transformational leadership style was higher than males. With regard to age they reported the same results. A significant difference was found on transformational style regarding age while no difference was found for transactional style regarding age.

Campbell (2010) conducted a comparative study on Educational Leadership Behavior by gender and race. Results of the study indicated significant differences with regard to age. It was concluded that African-American and female principals preferred Transformational style than their Caucasian and male counterparts. It was also concluded that African-Americans avoid Transactional and Laissez-Faire leadership styles, while women more likely used consistently one particular Transactional style - Contingent-Reward - and to avoid using both the Active and Passive Management-by-Exception styles altogether. This study also examined years of experience as a mediating variable, and results indicated that relationship between leadership styles and years of experience is less clear, though there was a moderate increase in the use of Transformational leadership approaches with greater experience.

Singh, Nadim and Ezzedein (2012) reported in their study that some scholars believe that males and females are same in their leadership and

management styles. Eagly and Johnson (1990) came with similar conclusion in a meta-analysis of leadership styles of males and females.

They also found that women preferred democratic or participative leadership style, while men showed preference for autocratic or directive styles. In a recent meta-analysis of 45 studies small but statistically significant differences between the styles of men and women leaders were reported (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

Jones and Rudd (2008) conducted a study on Transformational, Transactional, or Laissez- faire Leadership: An Assessment of College of Agriculture Academic Program Leaders' (Deans) Leadership Styles. They reported results from their study that academic leaders in colleges of agriculture used more transformational than transactional leadership style. Findings also revealed that males scoring were slightly higher than females in all leadership scale scores. They also reported that gender and ethnicity did not significantly influence the use of leadership style of the academic program leaders, and concluded that gender and ethnicity did not contribute to the leadership style of the academic leaders in this study.

## **4) METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

### **4.1) Method**

This section of article gives details regarding the sample, instrument and data analysis of the study.

### **4.2) Sample**

Total 650 department heads (Deans, Principals, Directors and Chairpersons) from 27 HEC recognized public and private universities at Lahore were consisted the population of this study. Census was taken from the whole population. Out of 650 respondents 467 responded to the questionnaire. Final response rate of the sample was 71.85%.

### **4.3) Instruments**

Two questionnaires were used in this study for data collection. First one was about some demographic variables including (age, gender,

qualification, rank and designation). Second questionnaire was for investigating the most prevalent leadership style of the department heads. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is based on the Full Range Leadership Model developed by Bass and Avolio. It is a short but comprehensive questionnaire of 45 items that measures a full range of leadership behaviors. The MLQ has been repeatedly validated by leadership experts. MLQ is strongly predictive of leader performance (Bass, 1990). It measures leadership styles and designates behaviors ranging from transactional to transformational leadership and also to laissez-faire leadership. The reliability of the MLQ, as reported by Bass and Avolio for each leadership factor, ranges from 0.74 to 0.91.

#### **4.4) Procedure**

The data were collected through personal visits to the participants to distribute and collect the questionnaires and secondly questionnaires were sent through mail. Respondents were required to report their opinions against each statement of the scale. Then, their responses were added to find a total score for each scale. Research was descriptive in nature. The data set was analyzed through SPSS 16.0 version.

### **5) ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

Mean score, t test and ANOVA were applied for data analysis.

#### **5.1) Results**

*Table 1: Distribution of Sample on the basis of Categorical Variables*

<b>Background Variables/Characteristics</b>	<b>n = 467</b>
University Type	
Public	302 (64.7%)
Private	165 (35.3%)
Gender	
Male	341 (73%)
Female	126 (27%)
Age	
31-40 years	121 (25.9%)
41-50 years	146 (31.3%)
51-60 years	159 (34%)
61-70 years	36 (7.7%)
>70	5 (1.1%)

<b>Background Variables/Characteristics</b>	<b>n = 467</b>
Designation	
Chairman	284 (60.8%)
Director	95 (20.3%)
Dean	88 (18.8%)

In this table Demographic information about the participants of the study has been presented. This demographic information was related to University type, Gender, Age, and Designation. Total sample was consisted of 467 heads from both Public and Private Universities. In which 302 (64.70%) heads were from Public and 165 (35.3%) were from Private Universities. The sample was consisted of 341 (73 %) males and 126 (27 %) females. It also shows that Heads were divided into five categories with regard to Age. 159 (34.0%) heads were between the age group of 51-60. 146 (31.3%) heads were between 41-50 age group. And 121 (25.9%) heads were included in 31-40 age groups. This table further shows the distribution of heads designation wise. It consisted of 284 (60.8%) chairmen, 95 (20.3%) directors, and 88 (18.8%) deans.

*Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Leadership Styles*

<b>Styles</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Transformational	222	47.5
Transactional	105	22.5
Passive avoidant	55	11.8
Transformational and Transactional	49	10.5
No style	36	7.7
Total	467	100.0

Above table is presenting that among 467 respondents 222 have Transformational leadership style, 105 have Transactional leadership style, and 55 have Passive avoidant leadership style while 49 respondents have both transformational and transactional styles. The table also reveals that 36 respondents reported themselves as having no clearly identifiable style. It is clear from the table that transformational style is most frequently used by the respondents. As 36 respondents had showed no clearly identifiable style, so we will not consider them in further analysis.

**Table 3: Cross Tabulation of Leadership Styles regarding Gender**

University Type			Styles				Total
			Transformational	Transactional	Passive avoidant	Transformational and Transactional	
Public	Gender	Male	103	43	26	14	186
		Female	46	20	10	13	89
	Total		149	63	36	27	275
Private	Gender	Male	59	33	12	20	124
		Female	14	9	7	2	32
	Total		73	42	1	22	156

The distribution of respondents according to their leadership styles regarding gender and university type differences has been provided in the above table. It indicates total number of respondents in public universities were 275; while in private universities 156. Out of 275 respondents from public universities 186 were males and 89 were females. While from private universities (156) respondents 124 were males and 32 were females. It shows that greater number of male and female respondents from public and private universities was using transformational leadership style, while passive avoidant was least widely used by male and female respondents of both sector universities.

**Table 4: Cross Tabulation of Leadership Styles regarding Age Differences**

		Styles				Total
		Transformational	Transactional	Passive-avoidant	Transformational and transactional	
Age code	31-40	40	22	14	11	87
	41-50	76	38	20	19	151
	51-60	86	28	18	12	144
	61-70	19	14	2	7	42
	>70	3	3	1	0	7
Total		222	105	55	49	431



Above table reports the distribution of respondents according to their leadership styles regarding their age differences. It is illustrated that respondents were divided into 5 groups. Total number of respondents was 431 out of which maximum respondents (151) were present in 41-50 years age group, while minimum (7) was present in the above 70 age group. It presents that transformational leadership style was used by greater number of respondents (222) while passive-avoidant was least widely used style by respondents of public and private universities.

**Table 5: Independent Sample t-test by Gender regarding Leadership Styles**

MLQ-Scales	Gender	N	M	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Transformational	Male	310	66.99	6.46	429	-.71	.47
	Female	121	67.48	6.58			
Transactional	Male	310	23.45	3.12	429	-.41	.67
	Female	121	23.59	3.34			
Passive avoidant	Male	310	4.51	3.89	429	-1.05	.29
	Female	121	4.96	4.32			

This table is presenting the difference in using leadership styles regarding gender. It also presents that mean score of transformational leadership style is highest among all other styles for both male 66.99 and female 67.58 respondents while the mean score of passive avoidant style is lowest for both male 4.51 and female 4.96 respondents. By applying t test on mean scores of male and female respondents with regard to their leadership styles, t value (-2.21) was not significant at all for any leadership style. It can be concluded that female students (M=67.48, SD=6.58) have higher score on transformational leadership style than male respondents (M=66.99, SD=6.46).

**Table 6: t-test on Leadership Styles by University Type**

	University Type	N	M	SD	df	T-Value	P-Value
Transformational	Public	302	66.87	6.15	465	.01	0.21
	Private	165	66.08	7.28			
Transactional	Public	302	23.03	3.05	465	.58	0.02
	Private	165	23.75	3.32			
Passive avoidant	Public	302	4.01	3.92	465	.71	0.00
	Private	165	5.09	3.98			

\*\*p < 0.01      \*p < 0.05

In the above table difference in using leadership styles regarding university type has presented. It shows that mean score of transformational leadership style is highest among all other styles for both public M=66.87 and private M=66.08 sectors respondents while the mean score of passive avoidant style is lowest for both public M=4.01 and private M=5.09 universities respondents. This table reflects that there is significant difference among male and female respondents in using transactional and passive-avoidant leadership styles. Mean score for both transactional and passive-avoidant styles shows that respondents from private universities use these styles more as compare to the respondents from public sector universities. No difference was found regarding transformational leadership style, which shows that respondents from both public and private universities used transformational leadership style in similar way

*Table 7: Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Styles with regard to Age*

<b>Leadership styles</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Transformational</b>	31-40	87	66.59	6.70
	41-50	151	66.99	6.96
	51-60	144	67.71	5.55
	61-70	42	67.21	7.00
	>70	7	64.28	8.65
<b>Transactional</b>	31-40	87	23.06	3.43
	41-50	151	23.89	3.04
	51-60	144	23.14	3.11
	61-70	42	24.04	3.34
	>70	7	24.00	1.91
<b>Passive-avoidant</b>	31-40	87	4.63	3.93
	41-50	151	4.75	4.02
	51-60	144	4.52	4.24
	61-70	42	4.78	3.59
	>70	7	3.71	3.30

This table shows the 5 categories of respondents with regard to age. It also reflects that greater number of respondents fall among the age group of 41-50 i.e. 151 persons and the lowest number of respondents fall in the age group of 70 years i.e. 7 respondents. Table also shows that mean score of transformational leadership style is highest among all the age groups of

respondents while the mean score of passive avoidant style is lowest among all age groups. Mean score (M=67.71, SD=5.55) of respondents in the age group of 51-60 is comparatively higher among all age groups.

**Table 8: ANOVA**

Source Variable	df	SS	Mean square	F-value	P-value
<b>Transformational</b>					
Between Groups	4	132.56	33.14	.784	.536
Within Groups	426	18014.16	42.28		
<b>Transactional</b>					
Between Groups	4	72.35	18.08	1.79	.129
Within Groups	426	4297.13	10.08		
<b>Passive avoidant</b>					
Between Groups	4	10.71	2.67	.164	.956
Within Groups	426	6934.55	16.27		

In this table the age wise comparison of university heads in using different leadership styles has been given. F- Value for all styles is not significant. It is concluded from the table that there is no significant difference among the respondents of different age groups in using various leadership styles.

**Table 9: Descriptive Analysis of Leadership Styles with regard to Designation**

Leadership styles	Designation	N	M	SD
<b>Transformational</b>	Chairman	263	67.23	6.84
	Director	89	66.59	6.22
	Dean	79	67.39	5.51
<b>Transactional</b>	Chairman	263	23.23	3.29
	Director	89	24.19	2.89
	Dean	79	23.67	3.06
<b>Passive avoidant</b>	Chairman	263	4.72	4.13
	Director	89	4.44	3.33
	Dean	79	4.60	4.38

In this table distribution of respondents with regard to their designation has been illustrated. Respondents were divided into 3 groups. Table reflects that greater number of respondents is present in chairman group i.e. 263 persons and the lowest number of respondents were in Dean Group i.e. 79 respondents. Table also shows that mean score of Transformational leadership style is highest among all groups of respondents while the mean score of Passive avoidant style is lowest. Mean score (M=67.39.82, SD=5.51) of respondents of the dean group is comparatively higher among all groups.

*Table 10: ANOVA*

Source variable	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Transformational</b>					
Between Groups	2	33.60	16.80	.397	.673
Within Groups	428	18113.13	42.32		
<b>Transactional</b>					
Between Groups	2	67.92	33.96	3.379	.035*
Within Groups	428	4301.56	10.05		
<b>Passive avoidant</b>					
Between Groups	2	5.33	2.67	.164	.848
Within Groups	428	6939.92	16.22		

A comparison of university heads regarding their designation in using different leadership styles has presented in this table. The F value for transactional leadership style (3.379) was significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Table also indicates that F value for transformational and passive avoidant leadership style was not significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

*Table 11: Post hoc*

**Transactional**

Designation	Designation	Mean difference	P- value
Director	Chairperson	.99(*)	.011

The mean difference (.99) of respondents for dominating strategy between Director and Chairperson was significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

## **6) INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

This study aimed to identify Leadership styles used by the departmental heads of universities of Pakistan and to investigate the differences in using the LS with regard to some demographic variables (gender, university type, age, qualification, and designation. Results of this study did not show any significant differences among heads in using LS regarding gender, age and qualification. But for university type and designation significant differences were found in using different LS. Findings also revealed that Transformational leadership style was most widely used by majority of the university heads. Results also showed that females scored slightly high on mean score of transformational style than males. There is not much difference among male and female respondents in using transformational, transactional and passive-avoidant styles of leadership. Results of this study coincide with the results of many other studies which claimed that transformational leadership style is best in use and females use it slightly more than males. These include a study by Jones & Rudd (2008), who claimed that academic leaders use transformational leadership more often than transactional or laissez-faire. Other studies include Eagly, Johannesen- Schmidt, & Van Engen (2003) who also reported that effective successful leaders use transformational leadership style more often than transactional or laissez-faire leadership. Bass (1990) also gave same results that transformational leaders are more effective and successful.

Fein, Tziner, and Vasiliu, (2010) and Campbell, (2010) also came with the same results from their studies on leaders behavior, that female leaders use transformational leadership style more than their male counterparts.

As this study reports no significant differences in using different leadership styles regarding gender and age, but still these results coincide to some extent with the findings of a study conducted by Barbuto Jr, Fritz, Matkin & Marx (2007) on Effect of gender, age and education on leader's leadership behavior. They reported the results that show gender produced a small direct effect on leadership behaviors while the interaction of gender and education produced consistent differences in leadership behaviors. Jones and Rudd (2008) in their study also came with similar results that gender and ethnicity did not significantly influence the use of leadership style of the academic program leaders.

Powell and Graves (2003) suggested that the “sex of the individuals who hold leader roles should be of little concern. What should matter is how individuals, male and female, respond to the demands of the particular leader role that they occupy.” (p. 151).

The advocates of differences in leadership styles between females and males include several writers of business books who drew conclusions from their personal experience in organizations as well as informal surveys and interviews of managers (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). These writers claimed that the leadership styles of female and male are different, as female leaders are less hierarchical, more cooperative and collaborative. They also are more oriented to enhancing others’ self-worth (Book, 2000; Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1995). While in its comparison, social scientists claimed that female and male organizational leaders do not differ or minimized the importance of those differences that have been observed (Powell, 1990).

This study gave important result about difference in leadership styles regarding university type and designation. Results of the present study reported significant difference in using transactional and passive avoidant leadership styles regarding university type. Results also revealed that heads of private universities use transactional and passive avoidant leadership styles more as compare to the heads from public universities. In the context of Pakistani universities there are many differences regarding the working environment and culture prevailing in public and private universities. There can be many reasons for these results, one of which can be the difference in the hierarchy and infrastructure of public and private universities. Another reason is the working environments of private universities are better as compare to public sector universities. Private universities provide utmost facilities to their faculty, while in public universities faculty is not provided with such facilities. Future researchers should explore this variable in further research.

As, in Pakistan no such professional training given to the departmental heads for their leadership position at any educational institution, so the academic leaders are not aware of the importance of their use of leadership style and their effects at department level. Academic heads usually do not have any administrative and management expertise prior

to their jobs. If any, it is expected just due to their experiences during the job. This leads directly to the lack of most recently emerging academic heads should be prepared with leadership styles. Some training programs to train upcoming department heads about the proper use of leadership styles and should be arranged. This study will help to establish standards for personnel recruitment and improvement at leadership positions in universities. This will help them to find out the characteristics consider in order to select, train, and improve them. Institutions for training prospective and in service teachers, upcoming department heads may also need to reform their curriculum of educational administration and leadership and organizational behavior.

One weakness of this study lies in the fact that data were collected using self-report questionnaires, which could be influenced by personal biasness and social desirability. One area where improvement is needed is the role of culture which it plays on leadership styles. As gender is strongly affected by cultural background, more research is also needed on gender differences that reflect development with different cultures. For future research it is advised to use both qualitative and quantitative method. To assess leadership styles, behavioral measures, observational data and other-report methodologies should use. Replication of this research on a sample with same demographic characteristics but from all over the Pakistani universities might be another possibility for future research.

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