



A study on leadership preferences among post graduate students of Kashmir University

Irshad Ahmad Najar, Wahid Ahmad Dar

Research Scholars, Kashmir University, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Abstract

A descriptive study was conducted among post graduate students of Kashmir University using Leadership preference scale (L.I. Bhushan, 1995). This scale has been developed in 1995. This scale was administered to a sample of 250 post graduate students, randomly drawn from Kashmir University. The study aimed at understanding gender differences in leadership style preferences; the influence of residential background on leadership style preference and the differences in leadership style preference among students from joint and nuclear families. It was seen that more preference is for authoritarian leadership. Females were found more authoritative than males. Students from nuclear families were found more authoritative than students belonging to joint families. The students from rural and urban areas don't show any differences in their leadership preferences.

Keywords: post graduate students, leadership

Introduction

In modern days the importance of leaders in enhancing the performance and reputation of an organization is widely acknowledged (Barchiesi *et al.*). The concept of leaders and followers has for centuries been a central tenet of human society. Numerous definitions of leadership have been proposed, but most conclude that leadership is a process, entails influence, occurs within a group setting and involves shared goals or visions (Northouse, 2017) [5]. The concept of leadership "style" emerged through classical studies conducted by (Lewin *et al.* 1939) [7]. They identified authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire styles of leadership, and demonstrated that leadership style had a profound effect on group productivity and interactions with other group members and the leader. Some scholars argue that democratic leadership is, on balance, less productive but more satisfying than autocratic leadership (Bass, 1990) [1].

Empirical research on the problem of gender and leadership styles yields a pattern of findings that is more complex than that generally acknowledged by social scientists or writers of popular books on management (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001) [6]. Deji and Makinde (2006) [12] after analysis of various demographic variables like age, education levels, and gender, found that women leaders had a higher level of external orientation and leadership skill than men. Women tended to adopt a more democratic or participative style and a less autocratic or directive style than did men (Eagly & Johannesen 2001; Eagly, *et al.* 1992) [6, 11]. Gibson (1995) found that males emphasize the goal setting dimension, while females emphasize the interaction facilitation dimension in their leadership behaviors. Gender contrast effect may exist in that, autocratic female managers were perceived to be higher performers than autocratic male managers (Luther, 1996). Women managers possessing certain distinct feminine talents and characteristics may be better prepared to cope with the challenges of the future than many traditional males

(Sharma, 1990) [15]. Culture also has influence on leadership styles (Jogulu, 2010) [4]

There has been a lot of research supporting the view that genes have more influence on leadership role occupancy than environment (Avolio and Gibbons 1988) [1]. While others claim that environment can also have a moderating role to play in shaping the leadership behavior of an individual (Zhang, & Arvey, 2009) [17]. Yet the accumulated research clearly suggests that genetics accounts for only some 30% of the variance in leadership ratings and leadership role occupancy. Another 10–15% of the variance appears to be attributable to work and broader life events, whereas the remaining 50% is as yet undiscovered (Arvey, *et al.* 2007) [2]. family background can have significant influence on future leadership development as noted by Standford-Blair & Dickmann (2005) [16] that individuals identified their parents and other family members as being very influential for their ascendance into leadership roles and their values and styles of leadership. It was also found that leaders evaluated as more transformational by their followers independently described their parents as being very challenging and supportive, in a balanced way (Avolio & Gibbons 1988) [1]. We will here study the leadership styles preferences among university students in relation to their Gender, family type and residential background.

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To study the leadership preferences of post-graduate students of Kashmir valley
2. To compare the leadership preference of male and female students
3. To compare the leadership preference of rural and urban students
4. To compare the leadership preference of students from nuclear and joint families

Hypothesis

- H₀₁** : There is no significant difference between leadership preference of male and female students
- H₀₂** : There is no significant difference between leadership preferences of rural and urban students
- H₀₃** : There is no significant difference between leadership of students from nuclear and joint families

Methods

A descriptive and cross-sectional method was used for the present study. The sample for the present study was drawn randomly from university of Kashmir. The population for the present study are the post graduate students of Kashmir University, Kashmir. Leadership preference scale (L.I. Bhushan, 1995). This scale has been developed in 1995. It aims at measuring ones degree of preference for authoritarian or democratic style. It consists of 30 items which are to be answered in terms of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The scoring is very simple, with positive items being scored as 54321 for strongly agree, and agree and so on. For negative items the scoring is reversed. Higher score indicates preference for democratic leadership. Various statistical techniques were used for the present study like mean, SD, T test using IBM SPSS software package.

Interpretation and Analysis

Table 1: shows frequency distribution and percentage of leadership preferences among university students

Leadership Dimension	Number	Percentage
Authoritarian	237	94.8
Democratic	13	5.2

The above table indicates that 94.8% (237/250) of sample group preferred authoritarian leadership and only 5.2 % (13 out of 250) preferred democratic leadership.

Table 2: showing comparison of mean scores of leadership preferences of sample with respect to gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Male	89	72.71	12.69	2.74**
Female	161	68.70	10.09	

** = significant at 0.01 level, * =significant at 0.05 level, NS = Not significant

Table 2 shows the difference between the mean scores of leadership preferences of university students with respect to their gender. As is evident from the table, the calculated value (t=2.74) is highly significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) which states that “male and female university students don’t differ significantly in leadership preferences” stands rejected.

Table 3: showing comparison of mean scores of sample with leadership preferences with respect to family status:

Family status	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Nuclear	193	69.27	11.30	2.23*
Joint	57	73.01	10.57	

** = significant at 0.01 level, * =significant at 0.05 level, NS = Not significant

Table 3 shows the difference between the mean scores of leadership preferences of university students with respect to their family status. As is evident from the table, the calculated value t=2.23 is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, our null hypothesis (H₀₃) which states there is no difference in leadership preferences of university students with respect to family status stands rejected.

Table 4: showing comparison of mean scores of leadership preferences of sample group with respect to residential background:

Residence	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Rural	124	70.66	10.91	.75 ^{NS}
Urban	126	69.60	11.55	

** = significant at 0.01 level, * =significant at 0.05 level, NS = Not significant

Table 4 shows the difference between the mean scores of leadership preferences of university students with respect to their residence. As is evident from the table, the calculated value is insignificant both at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) which states “there is no significant difference in leadership preferences of university students with respect to residence” stands accepted.

Conclusion

1. 94.8% of student prefers authoritarian leadership style and mere 5.2% prefer democratic leadership style. Thus more preference is for authoritarian leadership
2. The male and female university show significant differences in their leadership preference level. Females were found more authoritative than males.
3. The university students from nuclear families differ significantly in their leadership preference. Students from nuclear families were found more authoritative than students belonging to joint families.
4. The students from rural and urban areas don’t show any differences in their leadership preferences.

References

1. Avolio BJ, Gibbons TC. Developing transformational leaders: A life span approach. In J. A. Conger & R. N. Kanungo (Eds.), Charismatic leadership: The elusive factor in organizational effectiveness. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988, 276-309.
2. Arvey RD, Zhang Z, Avolio BJ, Krueger RF. Developmental and genetic determinants of leadership role occupancy among women. Journal of Applied Psychology. 2007; 92(3):693.
3. Barchiesi MA, La Bella A. Leadership Styles of World's most Admired Companies A Holistic Approach to Measuring Leadership Effectiveness, International Conference on Management Science & Engineering, 2007.
4. Jogulu UD. Culturally-linked leadership styles. Leadership & Organization Development Journal. 2010; 31(8):705-719.
5. Northouse PG. Introduction to leadership: Concepts and practice. Sage Publications, 2017.
6. Eagly AH, Johannesen-Schmidt MC. The leadership styles of women and men. Journal of social. 2001;

57(4):781-797.

7. Lewin K. Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates, *Journal of Social Psychology*
8. Loden M. *Feminine leadership, or, how to succeed in business without being one of the boys*. Crown Pub, 1985.
9. Luthar HK. Gender differences in evaluation of performance and leadership ability: Autocratic vs. democratic managers. *Sex Roles*. 1996; 35(5):337-361.
10. Eagly AH, Johnson BT. Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological bulletin*. 1990; 108(2):233.
11. Eagly AH, Karau SJ, Johnson BT. Gender and leadership style among school principals: A meta-analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*. 1992; 28(1):76-102.
12. Deji OF, Makinde OT. Comparative study of the influence of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of men and women leaders on their leadership styles and patterns in the rural areas of Nigeria. *Journal of Comparative Social Welfare*. 2006; 22(1):49-62.
13. Prasitthipab S. *Family Communication Patterns: Can They Impact Leadership Styles?*. *Masters Theses*, 2008, 16.
14. Plomin R, *et al*. *Behavioral genetics in the postgenomic era*, American Psychological Association, Washington, 2003, 3-15
15. Sharma S. *Psychology of Women in Management: A Distinct Feminine Leadership*. *Equal Opportunities International*. 1990; 9(2):13-18,
16. Standford-Blair N, Dickmann MH. *Leading coherently: Reflection from leaders around the world*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005.
17. Zhang Z, Ilies R, Arvey RD. Beyond genetic explanations for leadership: The moderating role of the social environment. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. 2009; 110(2):118-128.