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PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the Leadership Behaviour of the College principals in Kanyakumari District as well as to examine if a statistically significant relationship existed between the Leadership Behaviour and their Administrative experience. This study employed a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire included two parts, Demographic Questions and Leadership Behaviour Questions. 130 sets of questionnaires were sent to all 130 College principals in Kanyakumari District using Drop-off and Mail-survey method. Analysed data using SPSS and Applied Pearson Correlation, Chi-Square to test hypothesis. The findings of the study reveal that there is significance relationship between the leadership style of College Principal and their Administrative experience. Principals with more administrative experience are more likely to be Democratic than the Principals with the less administrative experience.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the mirror of the society, showing its strength and weakness, hopes, biases and key values of its culture. Modern education aims at imparting

knowledge, skills & attitude required by the youngsters to become functional in their respective societies. Colleges are therefore indented to serve as agents for developing individual citizens within a country. In essence, colleges are institutions where students are groomed to appreciate what the society in which they live stands for and are equipped in order for them to contribute to the advancement of their society.

Research on managers (formal leaders) in different settings suggests that Leadership style, Decision-making style, and Motivation are the three important factors for managerial effectiveness (Bass, 1990). The manager, a decision maker and the motivator in the field of higher educational institution is “The principal”, who is the chief of the institution. This article investigates the three important dimensions of principals’ behavior: viz., Leadership style, Decision making style and Motivation Profile. Leadership style describes the behavior of the leader by Autocratic Leadership, Democratic Leadership and Laissez-Faire Leadership; Managerial decision-making style describes the typical way in which the principal solve problems and make decisions. Four functions are used to describe Decision making behavior: Directive, Analytical, Conceptual and Behavioral; and Motivation profile describes the need for the Motivation: Achievement Motivation, Affiliation Motivation, and Power Motivation.

ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

The principal is the key person in the academic hierarchy of the college. According to University Grant Commission, the principal is responsible for ensuring quality of education, administering college admission, scheduling classes, determining the work load of teachers, faculty development, evaluation of campus programmes, students discipline, allocating finance within the limits set by the governing body, maintaining relations with the university, government, alumni, other support agencies and general public and overall coordination and management.

The principal is the major component of college management. The tone and efficiency of the college largely depend on his ability and skill, personality and professional competence. The principal is the keystone in the arch of college administration. He is the hub of the educational effort. In the college management, the principal occupies a unique position. He is in the strategic centre of a well instructional relationship – teacher pupil, teacher –parent and teacher –teacher. It is he who arranges their co-ordinate efforts. In spite of the similarities in the organizational and administrative structures of colleges, they are different, one from the other in the way they function as well as the effects they function as well as the effects they have on the lives of students. Colleges which perform above average with regard to students’ behavior have the tendency to perform above average in academic achievement. In other words, it appears that there is a correlation between students conduct and their academic attainment. The differences in students’ behavior and academic outcomes are influenced inter alia by the principal.

The climate and effectiveness of a college change drastically owing to a change of leadership is another important problem analyzed by the researcher.

The college climate in various ways mirrors the principal's personality and he/she can promote or destroy a college through the climate he/she creates. The researcher in some situations, have witnessed a change in the climate of a particular college shortly after a new principal's assumption of duty. In some cases, students begin to show better attitude towards college and college work; the teacher are more hardworking, striving to meet the new principal's expectations and standard. The impact of the new principal is felt to the extent that by the end of the academic achievement. The teachers are not only mere active, but they also put in their best for the accomplishment of the college goals. In some other situations, the opposite is the case so much that the students and other stakeholders grossly dissatisfied with the performance of the principal and the college initiates the transfer of the principal. These instances prove that the type of leadership prevailing in the college is vital to the organizational climate and the principals are the key figures who can so change the work climate that all the teachers are motivated to work hard with the result that the goals of the colleges preserved.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives of the present study:

- To analyse the Demographic profile of the College principals in Kanyakumari District.
- To study the relationship between the Leadership Behaviour of College principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative Experience.
- To provide suggestions based on the findings of the study.

HYPOTHESIS

H1. There is no relationship between the Leadership styles of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative experience.

H2. There is a relationship between the Decision making styles of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative experience.

H3. There is no relationship between the Motivation Profile of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative experience.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is conducted in Kanyakumari District, which is a tiny district in Tamil Nadu. The population for the purpose of the study is the College Principals in Kanyakumari District. The researcher has taken five types of Colleges in Kanyakumari district viz., Arts & Sciences (n=24), Engineering Colleges (n=31), Polytechnic Colleges (n=21), Nursing College (n=20) and Education Colleges (n=34) as the target group for the purpose of this study. As

the researcher had taken whole population of the target group as a population for the purpose of this study, it is a census survey. This study employed a survey questionnaire.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table.1. Demographic profile of the College principal (Frequency and percentage)

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	51	39.2
	Female	79	60.8
Age Group	Below 40	10	7.7
	41-45	17	13.1
	46-50	32	24.6
	51-55	47	36.2
	56 & Above	24	18.5
	Type of College	Arts & Science	24
	Engineering	31	23.8
	Polytechnic	21	16.2
	Nursing	20	15.4
	Education	34	26.2
Teaching Experience Group	Less than 10	5	3.8
	Between 10-15	8	6.2
	Between 16-20	19	14.6
	Between 21-25	32	24.6
	Between 26-30	44	33.8
	Above 30	22	16.9
Administrative Experience Group	Less than 2	13	10.0
	Between 2-3	17	13.1
	Between 4-5	34	26.2
	Between 6-7	27	20.8
	Above 8	39	30.0

Source: Primary data

The frequency and percentage analysis of the college principals demographic profile viz., Age, Teaching experience, Administrative experience Type of College and Gender reveals that most respondents were in the age range of 51-55, followed by the age range of 46-50, 33.8% of the respondents were having teaching experience between 26-30 years followed by 24.6 % of respondent who has teaching experience between 21-25 years, 30.0% of the respondents have above 8 years of administrative experience followed by 26.2 % of the respondent who have administrative experience between 4-5 years, most respondents were from education n=34 (26.2%) followed by engineering colleges n= 31(23.8%) and the data showed that out of 130 valid responses, 51 Principals were male and 79 Principals were female.

H1. There is no relationship between the Leadership styles of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative experience.

In order to test this hypothesis a Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) between the respondents' Administrative experience and the Leadership styles was applied.

Table. 2

Correlation of Leadership style of College Principal and their Administrative experience

		Administrative experience
Autocratic	Pearson Correlation	.258**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	130
Democratic	Pearson Correlation	.194*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.027
	N	130
Laissez-Faire	Pearson Correlation	.304**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	130

The result shows statistically significance relationship between the Leadership styles of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative experience in all the three styles at 0.01 and 0.05 significance level. Autocratic leadership shows ($r=.258$, $p=.003$), Democratic leadership shows ($r=.194$, $p=.027$) and Laizzes-faire Leadership shows ($r=.304$, $p=.000$) with positive correlation with statistically significant relationship. Thus **the hypothesis is not accepted.**

Figure.1

Cluster Bar chart for Democratic leadership style and Administrative experience of the respondent

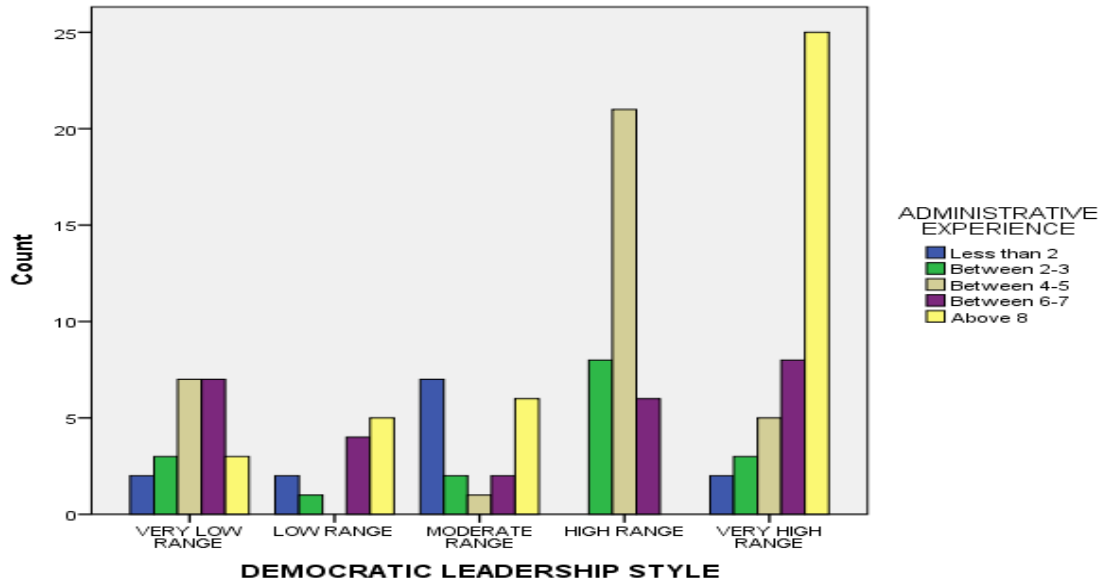


Chart shows that increase in Administrative experience of the principal ranges high and very high level of intensity for Democratic Leadership and vice versa.

H2. There is a relationship between the Decision making styles of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative experience.

In order to test this hypothesis a Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) was applied.

Table 3 .Correlation of Decision Style of College Principal and their Administrative experience

	Administrative experience
Directive	
Pearson Correlation	.052
Sig. (2-tailed)	.558
N	130
Analytical	
Pearson Correlation	.030
Sig. (2-tailed)	.738
N	130
Conceptual	
Pearson Correlation	-.131
Sig. (2-tailed)	.137
N	130
Behavioral	
Pearson Correlation	.047
Sig. (2-tailed)	.598

The result shows statistically no significance relationship between the Decision Making styles of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative experience in all the four styles at 0.05 significance level. The correlation is positive for all the other Decision style except Conceptual Decision style, where the Conceptual Decision style has a negative correlation ($r = -.131$). 'p' value of all the four style is greater than .05, for Directive Decision style ($p = .558$), for Analytical Decision style ($p = .738$), for Conceptual Decision style ($p = .137$) and for Behavioural Decision style ($p = .598$). Thus **the hypothesis is accepted.**

Table 4. Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.181	12	.771
Likelihood Ratio	8.286	12	.762
Linear-by-Linear Association	.280	1	.597
N of Valid Cases	130		

H3. There is no relationship between the Motivation Profile of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Administrative experience.

In order to test this hypothesis a Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) between the respondents' Administrative experience and the Motivation Profile was applied.

As per the analysis, Motivation profile of the college principals shows statistically insignificant relationship with their Administrative experience at 5% significance level, the 'p' value in all the three Motivations are greater than 0.05. 'p' value of Power Motivation is .629, $r = -0.043$, it means statistically no significance with negative Correlation, 'p' value of Affiliation Motivation is .874, $r = -0.014$, it means statistically no significance with negative Correlation and 'p' value of Achievement Motivation is .551, $r = .053$, it means statistically no significance with positive Correlation. Since all the Motivation profile with the teaching experience does not shows a statistically significant relationship, **the hypothesis is accepted.**

Table 5 Correlation of Motivation profile of College Principal and their Administrative experience

		Administrative experience
Power		
Pearson Correlation		-.043
Sig. (2-tailed)		.629
N		130
Affiliation		
Pearson Correlation		-.014
Sig. (2-tailed)		.874
N		130
Achievement		
Pearson Correlation		.053
Sig. (2-tailed)		.551
N		130

The cross tabulation between Administrative experience of the college principal and predominant Motivation profile is conducted using Chi-Square test in SPSS. The cross tabulation and chi-square value revealed the insignificant relationship between the two variables.

Table 6

Achievement Motivation * Administrative Experience Crosstabulation						
	ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE					Total
	Less than 2	Between 2-3	Between 4-5	Between 6-7	Above 8	
Least Preferred	5	6	20	7	9	47
Back up	0	1	5	5	9	20
Dominant	2	4	2	7	8	23
Very Dominant	6	6	7	8	13	40
Total	13	17	34	27	39	130

The probability of the chi-square test statistic (chi-square=18.772) was $p=0.095$, greater than the alpha level of significance of 0.05. Thus no significance difference. $X^2(12, N = 130) = 18.772, p = .094$.

Table 7

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.772	12	.094
Likelihood Ratio	21.240	12	.047
Linear-by-Linear Association	.359	1	.549
N of Valid Cases	130		

MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings of the study reveal the following:

- The majority of College Principals in Kanyakumari District were female. This result may give us an indication that females tend to work in Colleges more than males.
- Most of the Principals in the Colleges were above 50 years of Age.
- The majority of the College Principals in Kanyakumari District had a high range of years of administrative experience.
- Most of the College Principals in Kanyakumari District had more than 25 years of Teaching Experience.
- There is significance relationship between the leadership style of College Principal and their Administrative experience. Principals with more administrative experience are more likely to be Democratic than the Principals with the less administrative experience.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FINDINGS

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study the following implications were pointed out and provided suggestions accordingly, which are as follows:

- The researcher suggests that college principals must be aware of different leadership behavior, so that they switch in to the particular style in order to overcome the situation. Mech (1993) stated that when the managers are aware of their decision styles and orientation, they are more able to balance between the strength and weaknesses of their own and others' decision modes. While there are preferred styles and a predominant orientation among Principals, some may not be the most effective in all situations or environments; therefore it is

suggested that Principals to find ways to take advantage of the benefits provided by the other styles.

- As exist in the higher education, the newly appointed Principal should be given compulsory orientation programme that enable them to face the new challenges in the field of education effectively. This will also ultimately generate in them ideal Leadership qualities.
- Teaching Experience and Administrative experience of the College Principal had a statistically significant relationship with their leadership style. Higher the teaching and Administrative experience, more likely to be Democratic in Leadership. Lower the experience more Autocratic to be. Whereas, finding reveals Decision Making style and Motivation profile of the College Principal has no significant relationship with their Teaching and Administrative experience. Thus from the finding of the past and present study the researcher suggest that, teachers with minimum teaching experience may be given an opportunity to lead an educational institution in taking good decision and Motivate the students for academic achievement which creates a good and favorable climate. Leadership behaviors of the college principal in not depend upon his/her teaching or administrative experience.

CONCLUSION

From the study it is clear that the College Principals in Kanyakumari District are not alike in the adoption of their Leadership behavior. Each Principal has his or her own style. Some of them have more than one dominant style; some have more than one back-up style, while others use some of the styles rarely. Sternberg (2001), states that according to Webster's Dictionary (1967), "A style is a distinctive or characteristic manner, or method of acting or performing." It means that the Principals use different methods for leading, Motivating and make decisions. In addition each style has its strength and weaknesses, so knowing more about each leadership style, Decision making style and Motivation profile, will lead the College Principal to be more able to use the strengths of other modes and to balance against the weaknesses of their own approaches and therefore enhance their ultimate effectiveness.

All the results of this study will be useful to the researchers for comparing the variables in leadership studies. The abstract of this study will be a legend to the related literature of leadership studies.

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