

**THE PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLES OF THE ACADEMIC
STAFFS OF ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS (EHEIS) AND THE IMPACTS OF
DEMOGRAPHICS ON LEADERSHIP STYLE PERCEPTION**

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Abstract

This research focuses on perception of academic staffs' on leadership styles of university administration. A sample of four hundred twenty three academic staffs from three universities is taken using proportionate stratified random sampling technique with colleges serving as a basis of stratification. Perceived leadership is measured by the response of academic staffs to twenty four items measuring four constructs of leadership style: directive leadership, coaching leadership, facilitating leadership and delegating leadership.

It was found that the leaders of EHEIs are perceived as adopting all the dimensions of leadership style studied: directive, coaching, facilitating and delegating leadership style. Moreover, there is no difference in the way male and female academic staffs, single and married academic staffs, academic staff with administrative position and those without administrative position, academic staffs of different academic ranks, academic staff with different academic qualification, academic staff of different religion, and place of birth (origin) perceived leadership style of their supervisors. There is, however, statistically significant difference in the way academic staffs from different colleges and departments perceived their supervisor.

Key words: Perceived leadership style, directive leadership, coaching leadership, facilitating leadership, delegating leadership

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Introduction

Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of organizational goals. Fiedler and chemers (1967) defined leadership as directing and coordinating group activities. Northouse (2004) stated that leadership is influencing others to achieve a common goal. Day (2001) defined leadership as building network relationships to enhance cooperation.

Different theories are developed to explain leadership. Trait theory, behavioral theory (Ohio State & Michigan University findings), contingency theory (Fiedler's Theory, Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Theory, Path Goal Theory) are some of the leadership theories identified.

Lewin et al. (1939) identified autocratic, participative, and Laissez Faire leadership style. Laissez faire leadership Style is largely a freewheeling view that tends to minimize the amount of direction and face time required. It works well if there are highly trained and highly motivated employees. The autocratic style has its advocates, but it is falling out of favour in many countries. It is hard to order and demand someone to be creative, perform as a team, solve complex problems, improve quality, and provide outstanding customer service. The participative style presents a happy medium between over controlling (micromanaging) and not being engaged and tends to be seen in organizations that must innovate to prosper.

Leaders adopting directing leadership style tell their followers what objective they want them to accomplish, how and where it will be accomplished, and when it must be accomplished by setting clear objectives and rules and by ensuring that their expectations are clearly defined and understood (House 1996). Then, they supervise their team closely to ensure members follow their directions precisely. There is positive relationship between directive leadership style was and organizational commitment.

Coaching leadership style is a situation where the leader provides equal amounts of direction and support or facilitation. Here the leader will provide lots of direction, but will ask the follower for ideas and suggestions. A two way communication style exists. However, the leader is still in control of the decisions.

Victor Vroom and Arthur Jago (Vroom and Jago 1988) defined facilitating leadership style as case where leader presents the problem to the team in a meeting, acts as a facilitator, defines the problem to be solved, and sets the boundaries within which the decision must be made. The goal is to get agreement on a decision. Above all, the leader takes care to ensure that her or his ideas are not given any greater weight than those of others simply because of her position. The leader's role is much like that of chairperson, coordinating the discussion, keeping it focused on the problem, and being sure that the essential issues are discussed. The leader doesn't try to influence the team to adopt her or his solution. The leader is willing to accept and implement any solution that has the support of the entire team

Participative leadership style is defined as joint decision making or shared influence in decision making by supervisor and his or her followers. It is found to improve the quality of decision making (Scully, Kirkpatrick et al. 1995), improve quality of employee work life (Somech 2002), increase employees motivation (Locke and Latham 1990), increase employees' commitment (Yammarino and Naughton 1992; Armenakis, Harris et al. 1993) and increase employees' job satisfaction (Smylie, Lazarus et al. 1996).

In delegating style, the leader permits the followers to make the decision within prescribed limits. The team undertakes the identification and diagnosis of the problem, developing alternative procedures for solving it and deciding on one or more alternative solutions. The leader doesn't enter into the team's deliberations unless explicitly asked, but plays an important role by providing needed resources and encouragement. This style represents the highest level of subordinate empowerment (Vroom and Jago 1988).

The Ethiopian government has expanded the higher education system in number and intake capacity at breakneck speed and there is increase in the enrolment rate. Moreover, there are numerous reforms being implemented. Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia are undergoing several changes and restructuring to make them more responsive to the need of the society. Management by objective, result oriented management, Business process reengineering, and performance management are some of the reforms introduced in last 2 decades. The universities are also continuously engaged in recruitment, selection, training and development of academic staff to meet the increasing demand for the academic staff.

Ameijde, Nelson et al. (2009) stated that higher education institutions are facing continuous pressure for change. This demanding fact is becoming global. Higher education institutions are needed to do more with less resource and are facing new realities.

Objective of the study

The general objective of this study is to assess the perceived leadership style of EHEIs. The specific objectives of this study are:

- To assess perceived leadership styles of EHEIs
- To see if there is any relationship between demographic variables of the faculty and their perception of leadership styles

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses are formulated:

Ho1: Supervisors of EHEIs are not perceived as adopting directive leadership style

Ho2: Supervisors of EHEIs are not perceived as adopting coaching leadership style

Ho3: Supervisors of EHEIs are not perceived as adopting facilitating leadership style

Ho4: Supervisors of EHEIs are not perceived as adopting delegating leadership style

Ho5: Perception of the leadership styles of academic staff is independent of demographic variables.

Methodology

There were thirty-one public universities in Ethiopia, ten of which are only one year old. Hence, the researcher selected three of the 21 public universities that are believed to be old enough to

provide the necessary information for the research. There were 2128 full time instructors in the selected universities in year 2011/12. The sample size is then determined using the sample size determination formula with finite population correction factor:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot N \cdot pq}{(N - 1)e^2 + Z^2pq}$$

Where, $e=0.05$, $p=q=0.5$ and $Z=1.96$

This gives a required sample size of 421 respondents. However, hundred percent response rate cannot be achieved. Hence, sample size is adjusted for 75 % response rate and a sample of 527 is taken using a proportionate stratified sampling technique using the colleges as a basis of stratification.

Measurement

Leadership variable is conceptualized by four constructs: directive leadership style, coaching leadership style, facilitating leadership and delegating leadership style. Each of the constructs is measured by 6 items Likert scale questions ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and the average of the six items is taken as a measure of the perceived leadership style.

Finding and discussion

Leadership styles

The indexed measure of directive leadership has a mean of 3.31 and standard deviation of 0.89 respectively; Symmetrical ($S=-0.208$; $S.E=0.119$); and platykurtic ($K=-0.608$; $S.E=0.237$).

Coaching leadership style, measured by indexing six items, is found to have a mean and standard deviation of 3.25 and 0.93 respectively; symmetrical ($S=-0.150$; $S.E=0.119$); and platykurtic ($K=-0.568$; $S.E=0.237$).

The indexed measure of facilitating leadership has a mean and standard deviation of 3.25 and 0.88 respectively; symmetrical ($S=-0.059$; $S.E=0.119$); and platykurtic ($K=-0.653$; $S.E=0.237$).

The indexed measure of delegating leadership style has a mean and standard deviation of 3.3 and 0.90 respectively; symmetrical ($S=-0.212$; $S.E = 0.119$); and platykurtic ($K=-0.476$; $S.E=0.237$).

T-test is conducted to test if the supervisors of Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions are perceived as adopting directive, coaching, facilitating and delegating leadership style. The test indicated that the supervisors adopted directive leadership ($t=7.03$, $P = 0.000$), coaching leadership style ($t=5.54$, $p=0.000$), facilitating leadership style ($t=5.73$, $p=0.000$) and delegating leadership style ($t=6.71$, $p= 0.000$).

Table: t-test for the perceived leadership styles

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Directive leadership	7.032	422	.000	.30599	.2205	.3915
Coaching leadership	5.539	422	.000	.24968	.1611	.3383
Facilitating Leadership	5.729	422	.000	.24547	.1612	.3297
Delegating Leadership	6.708	422	.000	.29496	.2085	.3814

Demographic profile and perceived leadership styles

An attempt is made to see if the perceived leadership style is independent off the demographic profiles of the respondents.

Directive leadership style

There was no statistically significant difference in perceived leadership style of male and female academic staff ($t=0.897$, $P=0.370$), married and unmarried academic staffs ($t= -0.453$, $P=0.651$),

and academic staff with administrative position and those without administrative position ($t=1.00$, $P=0.316$).

Analysis of variance indicate that there was no significant difference in perceived directive leadership style of the different academic ranks ($F=0.58$, $p=0.745$), academic qualifications ($F=1.58$, $p=0.194$), religions ($F=0.77$, $p=0.592$), and places of birth ($F=0.85$, $p=0.586$); but significant difference was found in perceived directive leadership styles of colleges ($F=4.67$, $p=0.000$) and universities ($F=4.16$, $p=0.016$).

Turkey post-hoc test indicated that the perception of the academic staff of Natural Science college towards their supervisors as adopting a directive leadership style is higher than that of Business and Economics (3.08 ± 1.05 , $p=0.036$), Medicine and Health science (3.09 ± 0.85 , $p=0.021$) and Law and Governance (2.95 ± 0.77 , $p=0.001$) as compared to that of natural science college (3.53 ± 0.81).

Turkey post-hoc test indicated that the perception of the academic staff of Wolaita Sodo University towards their supervisors as adopting a directive leadership style is higher than that of Hawassa University (3.19 ± 0.94 , $p=0.014$) as compared to that of Wolaita Sodo University (3.5 ± 0.88).

Coaching leadership style

There was no statistically significant difference in perceived coaching leadership style of male and female academic staffs ($t=0.56$, $P=0.573$), married and unmarried academic staffs ($t= -0.14$, $P=0.892$), and academic staff with administrative position and those without administrative position ($t=-0.06$, $P=0.955$).

There was no significant difference among the different academic ranks ($F=0.31$, $p=0.930$), academic qualifications ($F=0.89$, $p=0.444$), religions ($F=0.53$, $p=0.786$), and places of birth ($F=0.88$, $p=0.565$) in their perception of their supervisors' coaching leadership style; but significant difference was found among universities ($F=4.30$, $P=0.014$) and colleges ($F=4.67$, $p=0.000$) in their perception of their supervisors' coaching leadership style.

Turkey post-hoc test indicated that the perception of the academic staff of Wolaita Sodo University towards their supervisors as adopting coaching leadership style is higher than that of

Hawassa University (3.17 ± 0.94 , $p=0.028$) and Arbaminch university (3.16 ± 0.87 , $P=0.024$) as compared to that of Wolaita Sodo University (3.46 ± 0.95).

Turkey post-hoc test indicated that the perception of the academic staff of Natural Science college towards their supervisors as adopting coaching leadership style is higher than that of Business and Economics (3.02 ± 1.08 , $p=0.026$), Medicine and Health science (2.91 ± 0.95 , $p=0.001$) and Law and Governance (2.89 ± 0.72 , $p=0.001$) as compared to that of natural science college (3.50 ± 0.85) and the perception of the academic staff of medicine and health sciences towards their supervisors as adopting coaching leadership style is lower than that of technology college (3.50 ± 0.88 , $p=0.024$) as compared to that of medicine and health sciences (2.91 ± 0.95).

Facilitating leadership style

There was no statistically significant difference in perceived leadership style of male and female academic staffs ($t=1.01$, $P=0.315$), married and unmarried academic staffs ($t= -1.05$, $P=0.294$), and academic staff with administrative position and those without administrative position ($t=0.92$, $P=0.358$).

There was no significant difference among the different universities ($F=2.19$, $P=0.113$), academic ranks ($F=0.59$, $p=0.738$), academic qualifications ($F=1.45$, $p=0.228$), religions ($F=0.50$, $p=0.812$), and places of birth ($F=0.74$, $p=0.699$) in their perception of their supervisors' facilitating leadership style; but significant difference was found among colleges ($F=3.77$, $p=0.001$) in their perception of their supervisors' facilitating leadership style.

Turkey post-hoc test indicated that the perception of the academic staff of Natural Science college towards their supervisors as adopting facilitating leadership style is higher than that Medicine and Health science (3.01 ± 0.84 , $p=0.012$) and Law and Governance (2.92 ± 0.70 , $p=0.003$) as compared to that of natural science college (3.46 ± 0.86).

Delegating leadership style

There was no statistically significant difference in perceived leadership style of male and female academic staff ($t=0.42$, $P=0.675$), married and unmarried academic staffs ($t= -1.09$, $P=0.276$), and academic staff with administrative position and those who have no administrative position ($t=0.66$, $P=0.539$).

There was no significant difference among the different academic ranks ($F=0.42$, $p=0.866$), academic qualifications ($F=1.39$, $p=0.246$), religions ($F=0.360$, $p=0.904$), and places of birth ($F=0.70$, $p=0.735$) in their perception of their supervisors' delegating leadership style; but significant difference was found among universities ($F= 4.60$, $P= 0.011$) and colleges ($F=5.92$, $p=0.000$) in their perception of their supervisors' facilitating leadership style.

Turkey post-hoc test indicated that the perception of the academic staff of Wolaita Sodo University towards their supervisors as adopting coaching leadership style is higher than that of Hawassa University (3.22 ± 0.90 , $p=0.025$) and Arbaminch university (3.20 ± 0.87 , $P=0.017$) as compared to that of Wolaita Sodo University (3.51 ± 0.93).

Turkey post-hoc test indicated that the perception of the academic staff of Natural Science college towards their supervisors as adopting delegating leadership style is higher than that of Business and Economics (3.09 ± 1.04 , $p=0.027$), Medicine and Health science (2.99 ± 0.88 , $p=0.001$) and Law and Governance (2.91 ± 0.74 , $p=0.000$) as compared to that of natural science college (3.55 ± 0.84).

Findings

The faculty of Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions perceived their supervisors as adopting all the leadership styles studied: directive, coaching, facilitating and delegating. There is no predominantly perceived leadership style. Hence, Hypotheses Ho1, Ho2, Ho3 and Ho4 are rejected.

It was also found that there was no statistically significant difference in perceived directive leadership styles between the groups of gender, marital status, administrative position, academic ranks, academic qualification, religion, place of birth or origin; there was, however, a significant difference among universities and colleges.

When it comes to perceived coaching leadership style, there was no statistically significant difference for gender, marital status, administrative position, academic ranks, academic qualification, religion, place of birth or origin; there was, however, a significant difference among universities and colleges.

With regard to perceived facilitating leadership style, there was no statistically significant difference for gender, marital status, administrative position, academic ranks, academic qualification, religion, place of birth or origin and universities; there was, however, a significant difference among colleges.

Finally, when it comes to perceived delegating leadership style, there was no statistically significant difference for gender, marital status, administrative position, academic ranks, academic qualification, religion, and place of birth or origin; there was, however, a significant difference among universities and colleges.

The Hypothesis that there is no difference among the different demographic variables in their perception of leadership styles is rejected for the following:

- Directive leadership style & colleges; and directive leadership style & universities
- Coaching leadership style and colleges; and coaching leadership style & departments
- Facilitating leadership styles and colleges
- Delegating leadership style & colleges and delegating leadership style & universities

The trend in Ethiopian Higher Education institutions is that the staff will be brought to administrative position without having any formal or informal training in leadership and management in most of the departments, sections, and colleges or even at university level at times. This is clearly shown by the variation of perception of leadership styles across colleges and universities. It implies that there is no corporate leadership style taught, adopted and enforced at university level. Supervisors lead the way they think is appropriate to them. There is no coherence, consistency and similarity among colleges and departments in the way people think they are being led; which results in confusion.

Conclusion and recommendations

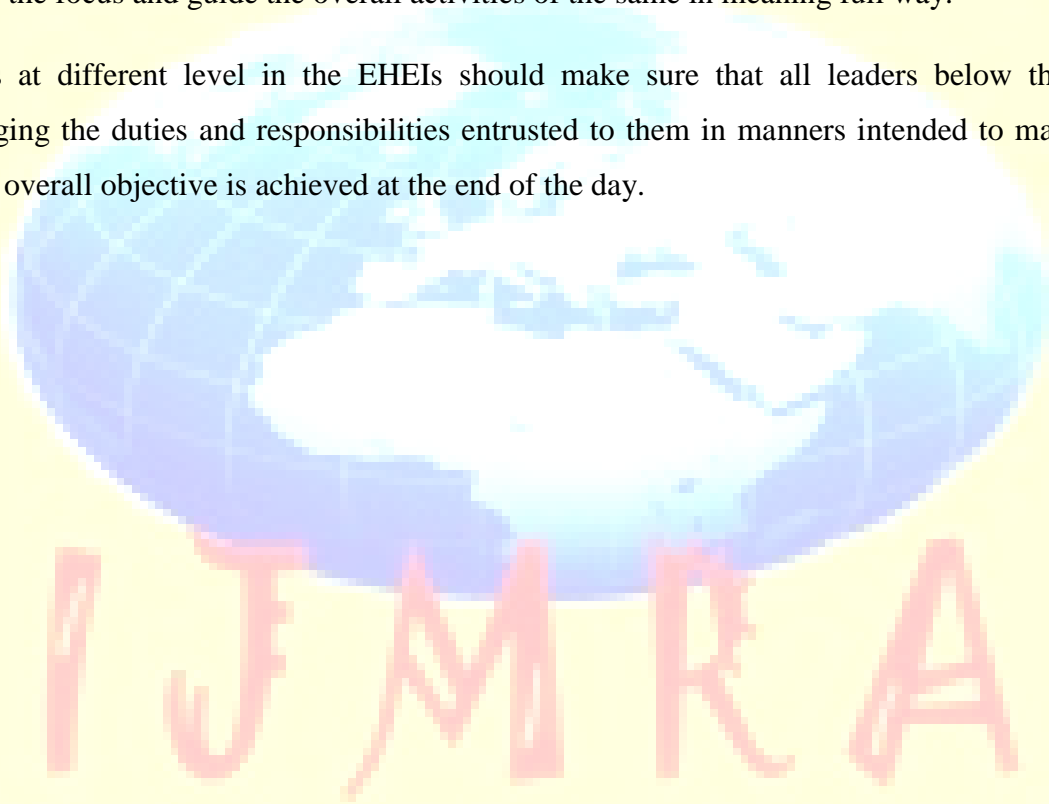
The study clearly indicated that leadership styles adopted by EHEIs are rather leader dependent. There is no similarity among universities, colleges and departments in their styles of leading. There is a lack of institutionalized leadership style; and choice of leadership style seems to be arbitrary. There is no logical and strong reason for variation of leadership styles among

universities, colleges and departments since they are inherently the same: same vision and mission, same policy, having equally qualified staff, and operating in the same environment.

The academic staffs are put on administrative positions with assumption that they already know how to lead the respective units they are assigned to resulting in arbitrary choice of leadership styles. There is a need for the supervisors to undergo formal leadership training and development programs.

The Management EHEIs should strategize leadership of the Higher Education Institutions to sharpen the focus and guide the overall activities of the same in meaning full way.

Leaders at different level in the EHEIs should make sure that all leaders below them are discharging the duties and responsibilities entrusted to them in manners intended to make sure that the overall objective is achieved at the end of the day.



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