

<https://doi.org/10.33472/AFJBS.6.6.2024.2222-2229>



African Journal of Biological Sciences

Journal homepage: <http://www.afjbs.com>



Research Paper

Open Access

Examining Leadership Styles and Demographic Profiles of School Principals in Kanyakumari District: A Comprehensive Analysis

C. Aiswarya¹, Dr. C. Subathra²

¹Reg.no.19113151012023, Research scholar, S.T.Hindu College, Nagercoil, Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishegapatti, Tirunelveli-627012, Tamilnadu, India.

²Assistant Professor of Commerce & Research Supervisor, Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil, Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishegapatti, Tirunelveli-627012, Tamilnadu, India.

Article Info

Volume 6, Issue 6, June 2024

Received: 5 April 2024

Accepted: 10 May 2024

Published: 06 June 2024

doi: 10.33472/AFJBS.6.6.2024.2222-2229s

ABSTRACT:

Education mirrors society, showcasing its strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, biases, and core cultural values. It plays a pivotal role in advancing individuals and nations. At the top of the academic hierarchy within an institution is the principal, who carries various responsibilities as outlined by the University Grant Commission. These include ensuring educational quality, managing admissions, scheduling classes, assessing faculty workload, promoting faculty development, evaluating campus programs, maintaining student discipline, managing finances within governing body limits, fostering relations with government bodies, alumni, support agencies, and the general public, as well as overseeing overall coordination and management. To investigate the leadership styles employed by school principals in the Kanyakumari district, a researcher conducted a study with a sample of 240 principals from schools across the district. The study aimed to detail the demographic profiles of these principals and analyze the leadership styles they utilize. Data collection methods included drop-off surveys and mail surveys. The analysis used simple percentage analysis, descriptive statistics (including mean and standard deviation), and one-way ANOVA to interpret the various leadership styles.

Keywords: Demographics, Leadership Styles, Relationships, School Principals.

© 2024 J. C. Aiswarya, This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made

1. Introduction

Leadership is a critical element in educational administration and management. The roots of administration and management trace back to ancient times, such as 1300 B.C., when the Egyptians expanded their culture globally with a sophisticated system of large-scale administration. The Greeks introduced democracy, emphasizing fundamental principles like equality before the law, citizen involvement in public affairs, shared decision-making responsibility, and the importance of open discourse in governance. The Romans demonstrated adeptness in large-scale management by establishing a paid civil service system under Augustus around 25 B.C., overseeing both their affairs and those of their subjects.

Educational administration involves coordinating the activities of various groups, constituting the dynamic aspect of education. While educational philosophy defines objectives and educational psychology elucidates teaching principles, educational administration executes the practices. It encompasses planning, directing, controlling, executing, and evaluating the educative process. Contemporary research underscores the vital role of leadership, asserting that effective schools require leaders who align with the community.

Leadership Styles

Leadership style encompasses three main types: Autocratic Leadership, Democratic Leadership, and Laissez-faire Leadership. Lewin, Lippit, and White identified these styles in their 1939 experiments. These early studies were influential, establishing three major leadership styles:

Autocratic Leadership

In autocratic leadership, the leader exercises strict control and relies on the carrot-and-stick approach to motivate subordinates. This style emphasizes top-down communication, where decisions are dictated without seeking input from group members. While it can expedite decision-making, it may breed resentment and dampen morale. Autocratic leaders possess a clear vision of what needs to be done, maintaining a distinct boundary between themselves and followers. They make decisions independently, often without consulting the group, which can stifle creativity.

Democratic Leadership

Lewin's research identifies democratic leadership as the most effective style. In this approach, leaders actively support group members and participate alongside them. Encouraging participatory management, democratic leaders welcome input from group members, fostering cooperative decision-making and a sense of ownership among participants.

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Under laissez-faire leadership, the leader maintains minimal contact with the group, fostering a climate of freedom and non-interference. While this grants members autonomy, the lack of guidance and control can lead to individuals prioritizing personal objectives over group goals, ultimately eroding group cohesion. Lewin noted that delegative leaders offer little to no guidance, leaving decision-making solely to group members. Although this style may be effective with highly qualified individuals, it often results in ambiguous roles and diminished motivation.

Objectives

1. To analyze the demographic profile of school principals in the Kanniyakumari district, focusing on age, gender, and type of school.

2. To examine the relationship between the type of school and the leadership style of school principals in the Kanniyakumari district.

2. Review of Literature

Pascale Hajal-Chibani (2016) conducted a study on the leadership styles of school principals, aiming to examine their effectiveness in the Lebanese context. The study adapted Bolman and Deal's (1991) framework and compared leadership styles among Lebanese school principals. The findings revealed differences in leadership styles as perceived by the principals themselves, indicating their self-perception as effective leaders.

C. Subathra (2014) explored the leadership styles, decision-making styles, and motivation profiles of college principals in Kanyakumari district. The study aimed to analyze the relationships between these factors and demographic profiles. Results indicated no significant relationship between leadership styles and age among college principals in Kanyakumari district. Additionally, the majority of principals were female, with democratic leadership being the predominant style. Most principals had extensive teaching experience, and achievement motivation profile was dominant. However, there was no significant relationship between principals' age and leadership behavior, decision-making style, or motivation profile. Heba Alfahad, Dr. Salem Alhajri, and Dr. Abdulmuhsen Alqahtani (2013) investigated the relationship between school principals' leadership styles (transformational or transactional) and teachers' achievement motivation. The study involved 320 heads of instructional departments from randomly selected schools, revealing a prevalence of transformational leadership among principals and a positive correlation with teachers' achievement motivation. Sushil Kumar Dubey (2012) conducted a study to assess the leadership of secondary school principals in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat. The study compared leadership across various demographic variables such as gender, educational qualification, social category, type of school management, working experience, and residing area. Results suggested a need for improvement in principal leadership, with ownership moderating the differences in leadership styles.

Ninama K.C. (2011) investigated the leadership style of primary school principals in Bhiloda Taluka of Sabarkantha District. The study sampled 30 principals from 30 schools, finding that while most principals were cooperative with teachers, their work habits were less effective. Decision-making ability was noted as strong, but principals felt constrained by higher authorities.

3. Research Methodology

- This research aims to study the problem "Leadership Style and the Profile of School Principals in Kanyakumari District."
- The researcher employed a survey method, with 50% conducted through Drop-off Surveys and 50% through Mail Surveys. This method is considered appropriate for obtaining specific data about the research situation. Survey research is a credible technique in the social sciences, management, and commerce, demonstrated by its widespread acceptance and use in academic institutions. It involves soliciting self-reported verbal information from people, with the ultimate goal of generalizing about a large population by studying only a small portion of it. The surveys enabled the researcher to obtain data about the leadership styles of school principals in the Kanyakumari district.
- Simple Percentage Analysis was used to analyze the demographic profile of the school principals in the Kanyakumari district.

- Descriptive Analysis and One-Way ANOVA were applied to describe the various leadership styles of the school principals and to examine the relationship between leadership styles and the type of school.

4. Results and Interpretation

Demographic Profile of School Principals

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the School Principals

Age of the Principals		
AGE GROUP	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
BELOW 40	18	7.53
41-45	30	12.5
46-50	58	24.2
51-55	62	25.8
56 & ABOVE	72	30
TOTAL	240	100.0
Gender of the Principals		
GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
MALE	94	39.2
FEMALE	146	60.8
TOTAL	240	100.0
Type of School of the Principal		
TYPE OF SCHOOL	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
NURSERY & PRIMARY	44	18.3
PRIMARY ONLY	57	23.8
HIGHER SECONDARY	39	16.3
HIGH SCHOOL	37	15.4
MIDDLE SCHOOL	63	26.2
TOTAL	240	100.0

Source: Primary data

It was found that the minimum age of the respondents was 38, the maximum age was 60, and the mean was Table 1 shows age group wise frequency and percentage of the respondent, in that most respondents were in the age range of 51-55, followed by the age range of 46-50. The majority 60.8% of the principals were female, compared with 39.2% male Principals. Most respondents were from middle school n=63 (26.2%) followed by primary schools only n= 57 (23.8%).

Table 2. Leadership Style of the Respondent (Frequency and Percentage)

LEADERSHIP STYLE	VERY LOW RANGE	LOW RANGE	MODERATE RANGE	HIGH RANGE	VERY HIGH RANGE	TOTAL
AUTOCRATIC	n 35 (14.6%)	n 35 (14.6%)	n 42 (17.5%)	n 52 (21.7%)	n 76 (31.6%)	240 (100%)
DEMOCRATIC	n 41 (17.0%)	n 22 (9.2%)	n 33 (13.8%)	n 65 (27.0%)	n 79 (33.0%)	240 (100%)
LAISSSEZ-FAIRE	n 66 (27.5%)	n 48 (20.0%)	n 28 (11.7%)	n 44 (18.3%)	n 54 (22.5%)	240 (100%)

Source: Primary data

Frequency and percentage of the respondents Leadership style is shown in the above table It shows that the majority of the respondents 33.0% (n= 79) scored very high range level of intensity for the Democratic leadership style followed by 31.6% (n= 76) in Autocratic leadership style. It also shows that 27.5% (n= 66) scored high range level of intensity for the democratic leadership style followed by Autocratic Leadership style. That means the majority of respondents scored within high range and very high range for the Democratic leadership style.

Table – 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Leadership Styles Scale

SCALE	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
AUTOCRATIC	240	3.52	1.454
DEMOCRATIC	240	3.60	1.479
LAIZZES-FAIRE	240	2.98	1.565

Source: Primary data

The result of the study reveals that the score of the Autocratic leadership is 3.52. The range of this style is between 1 to 5. And 3 is the midpoint, 5 is the highest possible score. The Standard Deviation is 1.454. The score of Democratic leadership is 3.60. The range of this style is also between 1 to 5. And 3 is the midpoint, 5 is the highest possible score. The Standard Deviation is 1.479. The score of Laizzes-faire leadership is 2.98. The range of this style is also between 1 to 5. And 3 is the midpoint, 5 is the highest possible score. The Standard Deviation is 1.565. Thus, the result proves that the Democratic styles are

predominant among the principal of Kanyakumari District.

Summary of Findings

Demographic Profile of Respondents

- The age of the school principals ranged from 38 to 60 years, with the most common age groups being 51-55 and 46-50.
- A significant majority of the principals were female, accounting for 60.8%, while 39.2% were male.
- The highest number of respondents were from middle schools (26.2%), followed by primary schools (23.8%).

Leadership Styles

- The distribution of leadership styles indicated that 33.0% of the principals exhibited a very high intensity for the Democratic leadership style, with 31.6% showing a very high intensity for the Autocratic leadership style.
- Additionally, 27.5% of the principals displayed a high intensity for the Democratic leadership style, followed by a high intensity for the Autocratic leadership style.
- This suggests that Democratic leadership is the most prevalent style among the school principals in the district, with many scoring within the high and very high ranges for this style.

Statistical Analysis of Leadership Styles

- The mean score for Autocratic leadership was 3.52, with a standard deviation of 1.454, on a scale ranging from 1 to 5.
- The Democratic leadership style had a mean score of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 1.479.
- The Laissez-faire leadership style had a mean score of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 1.565.
- These findings further confirm that the Democratic leadership style is predominant among the school principals in Kanyakumari district, with higher average scores and greater prevalence compared to Autocratic and Laissez-faire styles.

Suggestions Based on Major Findings

1. Encourage Democratic Leadership Development

- Given the prevalence and effectiveness of the Democratic leadership style among principals, it is recommended to provide targeted professional development programs that enhance democratic leadership skills. Workshops and training sessions focusing on participatory decision-making, team building, and effective communication can help strengthen these skills.

2. Support Female Leadership

- With a significant majority of principals being female, it is essential to support and promote female leadership in educational administration. Creating mentorship programs and leadership networks specifically for female principals can provide them with additional resources and support to excel in their roles.

3. Address Gender Disparity

- Although female principals are in the majority, efforts should be made to address any underlying issues that might contribute to gender disparity in leadership roles. Encouraging more balanced representation through targeted recruitment and offering leadership training to

potential male candidates can help achieve a more balanced gender distribution.

4. Customized Leadership Training

- Given the diverse age range and types of schools, it is beneficial to offer customized leadership training that addresses the specific needs of different school levels (primary, middle, etc.) and different age groups of principals. Tailoring training programs can help ensure that principals at various stages of their careers and from different school contexts receive relevant and practical guidance.

5. Enhance Autocratic Leadership Awareness

- While democratic leadership is predominant, a notable percentage of principals also exhibit autocratic leadership traits. It is important to provide training on the potential downsides of excessive autocratic leadership and promote a balanced approach that incorporates democratic principles while maintaining necessary authority.

6. Promote Reflective Practices

- Encouraging principals to engage in reflective practices can help them better understand their leadership styles and the impact on their schools. Regular self-assessment, feedback from peers and staff, and professional coaching can aid principals in refining their leadership approaches.

7. Further Research and Monitoring

- Conducting ongoing research and monitoring the leadership styles of principals can help in understanding the evolving dynamics of educational leadership. Longitudinal studies and periodic surveys can provide insights into trends and inform continuous improvement efforts. By implementing these suggestions, the educational administration in Kanyakumari district can foster effective leadership, enhance school performance, and create a supportive environment for both principals and their schools.

5. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the leadership styles and demographic profiles of school principals in the Kanyakumari district. The findings reveal that Democratic leadership is the predominant style among principals, characterized by high levels of participation, collaborative decision-making, and support for group members. This leadership approach is associated with positive outcomes in school management and staff morale. The demographic analysis highlights a significant presence of female principals, suggesting progress in gender representation within educational leadership. However, there is still a need to address gender disparities and ensure balanced representation. The data also shows that principals are predominantly from middle and primary schools, with a concentration in the age ranges of 51-55 and 46-50 years. The statistical analysis underscores the prevalence and effectiveness of the Democratic leadership style, with higher mean scores and broader acceptance compared to Autocratic and Laissez-faire styles. These insights point to the importance of fostering democratic principles in leadership development programs and supporting principals in implementing inclusive and participatory management practices. In summary, the study highlights the critical role of leadership styles in educational administration and offers valuable recommendations for enhancing leadership effectiveness. By focusing on professional development, gender equity, customized training, and reflective practices, the Kanyakumari district can continue to improve the quality of its educational leadership and, consequently, the overall educational experience for students and staff.

6. REFERENCES

1. Catherine, E. N. S. (2002). A Study of Identified Principals' Leadership Styles, School Climate and Parental Involvement as Perceived by Teachers and Parents, in Selected School districts in Louisiana. Ph. D. Education.
2. Iqbal, M. (2005). A Comparative Study of Organizational Structure, Leadership Styles and Physical Facilities of Public and Private Secondary Schools in Punjab and Their Effect on School Effectiveness. Ph. D. Education Punjab University.
3. Pascale Hajal-Chibani (2016) has studied for leadership Style of school principals. PhD. Thesis
4. Dr.C.Subathra (2014) has studied the college Principals leadership Style, Decision making Style and motivation profile in Kanyakumari district. Ph.D Thesis, Manonmaniam Sundranar University, Tamilnadu, India
5. Heba, Dr.Salem Alhajri and Dr abdulmuhsen (2013) The relationship between school Principals Leadership Styles and Teachers Achievement Motivation, 3rd Asia- Pacific Business Research Conference
6. Ninama K.C.(2011) A Study of Leadership Principals of primary school of Bhiloda Taluka. Doctor of Philosophy in Education
7. Sushil Kumar Dubey (2012) " A comparative study of Leadership Styles of Principals of secondary Schools. Ph.D Thesis, Bhavnagar University