

**A Comparative Study of the Leadership Styles of Principals of Secondary Schools as Perceived by Self and Teachers in Relation to School Effectiveness**

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**Abstract:**

The researcher, in the present study, attempts to study the leadership styles of principals of secondary schools and its relation to school effectiveness. The theory of transformational and transactional leadership styles were considered for the study since it was found from the related literature that no research had been conducted on the basis of the same, in the context of Indian school system. The study is the descriptive research of the correlational type as it seeks to find the relationship between the leadership styles of principals and school effectiveness. The questionnaires for leadership styles and school effectiveness were administered on 42 principals and 608 teachers from 42 secondary schools in the region of Greater Mumbai. The data obtained were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. It was found that there is no significant relationship between the leadership styles of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by principals while a significant relationship was found between the transformational and laissez-faire style with school effectiveness as perceived by teachers.

**Introduction:**

“As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.”

- Bill Gates

All through history, leadership has been a part of human societies. When leadership is considered as a function, it is an important dimension of management whose presence and existence depends on several skills which can be taken as methods or styles of leadership and guidance on the part of a group of people in order to achieve a certain goal (Bennett and Anderson, 2003). Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization (Gary Yukl, 2009, p 21).

The success of an organization usually relies on the effective management by its leader. Any organization would never succeed without an effective and inspiring leader who can motivate his or her followers to work toward the accomplishment of the group's vision. Thus, the key to high achievement lies

in consistency and coherence among three elements; a leader's personal values, a leader's aspirations for his organization and a leader's actions (John Storey, 2004, p. 44).

Leaders and Leadership skills have always been a curious subject for everyone. In the beginning, the leaders were distinguished from the common man based on their inherent qualities while, in the later years the leaders have been identified on the basis of other variables such as situational factors and skill levels. Since the earlier days, several leadership theories have been proposed by various theorists. Each theory has its influence and value in an era in certain contexts. Of these theories, transactional and transformational theories have been taken into consideration in the present study.

Transactional theory was first described by sociologist Max Weber in 1947, and further explored by Bernard M Bass in the early 1980s. According to this, leadership is based on a system of rewards and punishments. The transactional leadership style is composed of three dimensions like contingent reward, active management-by-exception and passive management-by-exception.

Concept of transformational leadership was initially introduced by leadership expert and presidential biographer James MacGregor Burns (1978). Transformational theory focuses upon the connections formed between leaders and followers. Transformational leaders motivate and inspire people by helping group members see the importance and higher good of the task. Also, they lead to positive changes in those who follow. They are generally energetic, enthusiastic and passionate.

Transformational leadership style, including the new competencies of leadership such as sense making, ability to deliver, inter-organizational representation, has been known as one of the effective leadership styles in recent theories. It is composed of four dimensions, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Storey, 2004). Considering the present challenges facing educational organizations, this style has been introduced as the appropriate one in accordance to the current conditions of the universities (Maccadory, 2004, Nicolina, 2003) (Webb, 2003).

Besides these transactional and transformational leadership constructs, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1989) also measures a non-leadership dimension. This non-leadership is known as laissez-faire leadership and reflects the absence of leadership and avoidance of intervention. In sum, the MLQ claims to measure eight distinct leadership dimensions which are grouped into broader categories : Transactional, Transformational, and Non-Leadership.

Therefore, the main issue in this study was to find out the extent to which the eight dimensions of leadership are applied by the principals of secondary schools as perceived by self and teachers, in Greater Mumbai and if there is any correlation between these dimensions of leadership and school effectiveness.

School effectiveness can be examined in terms of student outcomes such as academic achievement, physical and social development as measured by achievement in sports and co-curricular activity, parents' involvement in the school activities, security provision in the premises and the overall atmosphere of the school surrounding.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED STUDY**

Several studies have been conducted across different cultures and countries on transactional and transformational leadership styles. Most of these studies have been conducted either abroad or in the corporate world. Studies found in the field of education are not many. Also, based on the literature review, it is observed not many researches are found that are in the Indian context pertaining to the school system.

#### **Studies on Leadership Styles**

Leadership is widely considered to be an important aspect for any organization and as such extensive research has been done in this field to ascertain the best and effective leadership style.

**Heba Alfahad, Salem Alhajri and Abdulmuhsen Alqahtani (2013)**, revealed that a transformational leadership style was prevalent among principals. A positive correlation was found between the principals' transformational leadership style and the teachers' achievement motivation. **Arham Ahmad and Muenjohn Nuttawuth (2012)**, found the behaviours that associated with transactional leadership

seems to play more important role than transactional leadership in Entrepreneurial Orientation. **Shibru Bekele and Darshan G M (2011)**, tried to describe the concept of transformational leadership and its correlation with subordinate satisfaction with the leader. The study confirmed that transformational leadership is an important leadership style to increase subordinate satisfaction with the leader. **Deota N. P. (1990)**, studied the characteristics of effective leadership behaviour of secondary school Principals and found that there was positive and significant correlation between administrative behaviour and leadership behaviour.

#### **Studies on School Effectiveness**

**Obasanmi Jude & Obasanmi Pius Olu (2012)**, indicated that a balance of school effectiveness characteristics and indicators are required to render an overall quality programme for the benefit of the students. **Ekundayo (2010)**, examined the relationship between principal's leadership behaviour and effectiveness of secondary schools in Nigeria. The descriptive research design showed that the schools were effective in the affective and the psychomotor domains but not all that effective in the cognitive domain. The study further showed significant relationship between principal's leadership behaviour and secondary school effectiveness. **Liang Xin, He Bin & Landry Richard (2002)**, examined the content validity of a locally developed questionnaire to measure school effectiveness for NCA COS (North Central Association of Commission on Schools) accreditation in a rural Midwestern school district. Comparisons were made to link the NCA COS standards and they observed five domain areas of the NCA School Improvement Questionnaire (NCASIQ). The results indicated that the five sub-content domains derived from the analysis only measured two of the five NCA COS standards. **Pandya S. R. (1992)**, concluded that, students' perception of their relationship with principal, teachers and peers make great impact on students' outcome as compared to their *perceptions of teaching processes, the evaluation processes and the planning processes*.

Thus, several researches have been made in the field of education to study the effectiveness of an institution. One of the factors responsible to bring about the effectiveness of an institution is the leadership of the principals of these institutions. It has been found that there exists a relationship between the leaders and the led with regards to the perception of the leaders with respect to age, experience, gender, locality, type of school, board of school etc. In the present study, the researcher wanted to study the leadership styles of principals of secondary schools as perceived by self and teachers in relation to school effectiveness. The researcher believes that there is always a conflict between the perception of the leaders and the led. The leaders feel that the leadership style adopted by them is one of the best in the system while the followers always feel that there is a better way of leading a group. This, as a result, most often, creates a lot of misunderstanding among the group which in turn may result in the ineffectiveness of the institution.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

2. To determine the relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

3. To determine the relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

4. To determine the relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

5. To determine the relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

6. To determine the relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

### HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

2. There is no significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

3. There is no significant relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

4. There is no significant relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

5. There is no significant relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

5. There is no significant relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The present research was conducted as a controlled quantitative research study in which data was collected from the secondary school principals and the teachers of the same schools. The study is the descriptive research of the correlational type as it seeks to find the relationship between the leadership styles of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self and teachers.

#### **SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

In the present study, the sample has been drawn based on the demographic factors associated with schools. The schools selected for the sample were decided on the basis of the location of school. 42 principals and 608 teachers from 42 schools selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique, formed the sample for the study.

## TOOLS OF THE RESEARCH

In the present study, the following ready-made tools were used, for both, the principals and the teachers to study the leadership styles of principals and the school effectiveness :

- (a) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, Form 5X, Short, Bass & Avolio, 1997)
- (b) NCA School Improvement Questionnaire (Liang Xin et al, 2002)

In MLQ, thirty-six questions are linked to nine subscales relating to transformational, transactional, or passive avoidant leadership while nine questions are linked to effectiveness. Since a separate questionnaire was used to collect data for the school effectiveness, the nine questions linked to effectiveness were rejected. Thus, the questionnaire used to measure the leadership styles of the principals had 36 items.

The NCA School Improvement Questionnaire consisted of 60 items covering seven sub-domains. The seven domains were further categorized into two major groups, viz., Academic and Infrastructure.

## TECHNIQUES OF DATA ANALYSIS

For the present study, the **descriptive statistics used were** mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. The inferential statistics used was Pearson's correlation coefficient 'r' for determining the relationship between the variables.

## TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

2. There is no significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

The following table 1 shows the significance of coefficient of correlation between transformational leadership style and school effectiveness as perceived by self with respect to academic and infrastructure domains.

**Table 1**  
**Significance of 'r' for Transformational Leadership Style and School Effectiveness as perceived by Self**

SE	Sample Size	df	r	Level of Significance
AC	42	40	-0.086	Not Significant (P = 0.590)
IS	42	40	0.002	Not Significant (P = 0.991)

From table 1, it is observed that in case of academic domain as well as infrastructure domain, the value of 'r' is not significant. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. There is no significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self.

2. There is no significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

The following table 2 shows the significance of coefficient of correlation between transformational leadership style and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers with respect to academic and infrastructure domains.



**Table 2**  
**Significance of 'r' for Transformational Leadership Style and School Effectiveness as perceived by Teachers**

SE	Sample Size	df	r	Level of Significance
AC	608	606	0.101	Significant (P = 0.013)
IS	608	606	0.118	Very Significant (P = 0.004)

From table 2, it is observed that in case of academic domain (P = 0.013) as well as infrastructure domain (P = 0.004), the value of 'r' is significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers.

3. There is no significant relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

The following table 3 shows the significance of coefficient of correlation between transactional leadership style and school effectiveness as perceived by self with respect to academic and infrastructure domains.

**Table 3**  
**Significance of 'r' for Transactional Leadership Style and School Effectiveness as perceived by Self**

SE	Sample Size	df	r	Level of Significance
AC	42	40	0.014	Not Significant (P = 0.930)
IS	42	40	0.156	Not Significant (P = 0.323)

From table 3, it is observed that in case of academic domain as well as infrastructure domain, the value of 'r' is not significant. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. There is no significant relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self.

4. There is no significant relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

The following table 4 shows the significance of coefficient of correlation between transactional leadership style and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers with respect to academic and infrastructure domains.

**Table 4**  
**Significance of 'r' for Transactional Leadership Style and School Effectiveness**  
**As perceived by Teachers**

SE	Sample Size	df	r	Level of Significance
AC	608	606	0.035	Not Significant (P = 0.390)
IS	608	606	0.065	Not Significant (P = 0.112)

From table 4, it is observed that in case of academic domain as well as infrastructure domain, the value of 'r' is not significant. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. There is no significant relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers.

5. There is no significant relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

The following table 5 shows the significance of coefficient of correlation between laissez-faire style and school effectiveness as perceived by self with respect to academic and infrastructure domains.

**Table 5**  
**Significance of 'r' for Laissez-faire Leadership Style and School Effectiveness**

**As perceived by Self**

SE	Sample Size	df	r	Level of Significance
AC	42	40	0.039	Not Significant (P = 0.808)
IS	42	40	0.245	Not Significant (P = 0.118)

From table 5, it is observed that in case of academic domain as well as infrastructure domain, the value of 'r' is not significant. Hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. There is no significant relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self.

1. There is no significant relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers on the following sub-domains :

- (i) Academic
- (ii) Infrastructure

The following table 6 shows the significance of coefficient of correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers with respect to academic and infrastructure domains.

**Table 6**  
**Significance of 'r' for Laissez-faire Leadership Style and School Effectiveness**

**as perceived by Teachers**

SE	Sample Size	df	r	Level of Significance
AC	608	606	-0.087	Significant (P = 0.031)
IS	608	606	-0.138	Extremely Significant (P = 0.001)

From table 6, it is observed that in case of academic domain ( $P = 0.031$ ) as well as infrastructure domain ( $P = 0.001$ ), the value of 'r' is significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers.

### MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. There is no significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self.
2. There is a significant relationship between the transformational style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers.
3. There is no significant relationship between the transactional style of principals and school Effectiveness as perceived by self.
4. There is no significant relationship between the transactional style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers.
5. There is no significant relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by self.
6. There is significant relationship between the laissez-faire style of principals and school effectiveness as perceived by teachers.

The principals do not perceive that there is any relationship between their leadership style and school effectiveness. This contradicts most of the findings in the previous research. May be the principals feel that there are other factors that lead to the success of any institution and that their leadership behaviour has got little to do with it. This is, probably, the reason the principals do not take their leadership behaviour seriously or they feel there is a lot of interference from other groups, such as, the management, teachers, parents, students and society at large. They tend to, as a matter of fact, behave exhibiting their personal traits.

The teachers, on the other hand, strongly feel that principals' transformational style has a positive correlation with the school effectiveness while laissez-faire has a negative correlation. This can be explained on the basis of the fact that the teachers believe they can perform better to make their school more effective if the principals provide better support and encouragement. Also, the teachers feel that principals' non-leadership attitude can result in an ineffective school environment. Without appropriate

motivation and inspiration from the principals, the teachers feel, can do little to bring about the desirable change in the school environment.

### CONCLUSION

The organizational concerns that the people face in an organization might reduce the effectiveness and performance. There are several factors that cause such concerns in any organization. School principals' leadership behaviour is accepted to be one of the reasons for the concerns that occur in the organization and these in turn prevent the organization from reaching its objectives (O'Driscoll & Beehr, 1994). Thus, leadership style of the head of organizations is an important aspect to be studied and researched. With recent changes brought about in the education system and everyday challenges faced by the organization, it becomes all the more important to expect a competent leadership functioning from the head of the school. It is assumed that after unpacking the relationship between school principals' leadership styles and the school effectiveness, one can find solutions pertaining to the concerns raised.

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