

## **Female Principal And Her Leadership Style In Higher Education**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigates the Leadership style of college principals in Kanyakumari District. It is also sought to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between the Leadership style and Gender. Researches on managers (formal leaders) in different settings suggest that Leadership style, managerial decision-making style, and Motivation profile are the three important factors for managerial effectiveness (Bass, 1990). The study surveyed 130 college principals (51 males and 79 females) in Kanyakumari District. A null hypotheses is framed to check the statistically significant relationship existed between the Leadership style and Gender. Applied frequency and percentage analysis and Mean and SD to explore the Leadership style of College Principals and to test the Hypothesis applied Pearson t-test using SPSS. The finding reveals that there is a difference in the frequencies of male to female among the College Principals in Kanyakumari District. The majority (61.0%) n=79 of the Principals were female, compared with (39.0%) n= 51 male Principals. It reveals that most of the College Principals in Kanyakumari District lead their college in Democratic way. "Male and Female principal has difference in Leadership Style" and it also reveals that Female (Woman) Principals are having very high range of intensity for Democratic Leadership style.*

**Keywords:** *Democratic, Gender, Leadership Style, Woman*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

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 paper investigates the important dimensions of principals' behavior: i.e., Leadership style. Leadership

style describes the behavior of the leader by Autocratic Leadership, Democratic Leadership and Laissez-Faire Leadership.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychology and management studies find gender-based differences in behavior due to differences in risk taking, overconfidence, conservatism, ethical behavior, and diligence (Byrnes, et al., 1999; Nettle, 2007; Schmitt et al., 2008). Recent behavioral economics literature also shows that economic behavior differs by gender because women are more averse to risk and competition and because their preferences are more situation-specific (Barber and Odean, 2001; Croson and Gneezy, 2009; Niederle, and Vesterlund, 2007).

Empirical evidence supports gender-based differences in financial and business decision making (Sunden, and Surette, 1998; Hoppe and Korb, 2013). According to recent work, some of the differences may persist as the focus shifts from an average woman to financial experts like female CEOs of financial institutions. For example, female mutual fund managers are found to be as overconfident as men but maintain the gender specific higher aversion to risk and competition (Beckmann and Menkhoff, 2008). While performance of mutual funds with female CEOs may not differ from that of male managed funds, female CEOs have more consistent performance over time suggesting that female managers' past performance is a better indicator of future performance (Lofton, 2011). According to the Hedge Fund Research Inc., female hedge fund managers' return outperforms that for the industry as a whole.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives of the present study:

- To examine the Leadership style of the College principals in Kanyakumari District.
- To study the relationship between the Leadership style of College principals in Kanyakumari District and their Gender.
- To check the level of intensity for Democratic Leadership style among the female college Principals in kanyakumari District.

## HYPOTHESIS

On the basis of predefined objectives of the present study the following null hypothesis was formulated:

**Ho.** There is no relationship between the Leadership style of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Gender.

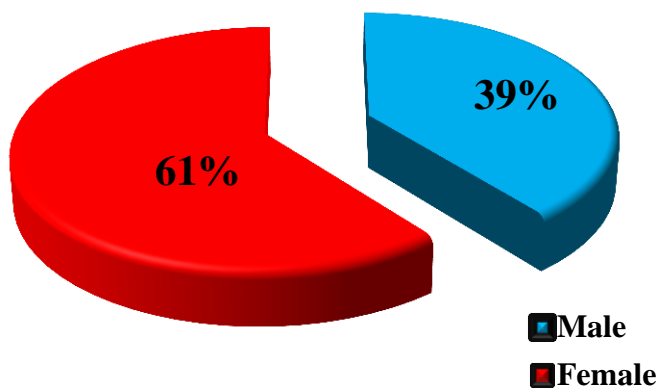
**METHODOLOGY**

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. The questionnaire included two parts: Demographic Questions are the first part of the questionnaire which includes Age, Gender, Type of college, Teaching experience and Administrative experience of the college principal. Leadership Style Questionnaire (Lewin, Lippit and White (1939), aims to testing the preference towards Principals’ Leadership style by Autocratic, Democratic or Laizzes-faire. To explore the Leadership style of College Principals in Kanyakumari District applied descriptive statistics (mean and percentage) using SPSS. The t-test for quality of means was employed to test the significant differences between the Male and Female Principals.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION**

Frequency and percentage of Gender of the respondents shows that 51 Principals were male and 79 Principals were female, as shown in figure. 1. There was found to be a difference in the frequencies of male to female among the College Principals in Kanyakumari District. The majority 61.0% of the Principals were female, compared with 39.0% male Principals.



**Figure 1. Percentage Distribution by Gender**

**LEADERSHIP STYLE**

Frequency and percentage of the respondents Leadership style is shown in Table.1. It shows that the majority of the respondents 33.1% (n= 43) scored very high range level of intensity for the Democratic leadership style followed by 31.5% (n= 41) in Autocratic leadership style. It also shows that 26.9% (n= 35) 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 1**  
**Leadership Style of the college principal (Frequency and Percentage)**

<b>LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<b>VERY LOW RANGE</b>	<b>LOW RANGE</b>	<b>MODERATE RANGE</b>	<b>HIGH RANGE</b>	<b>VERY HIGH RANGE</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>AUTOCRATIC</b>	n 19 (14.6%)	n 19 (14.6%)	n 23 (17.7%)	n 28 (21.5%)	n 41 (31.5%)	130 (100%)
<b>DEMOCRATIC</b>	n 22 (16.9%)	n 12 (9.2%)	n 18 (13.8%)	n 35 (26.9%)	n 43 (33.1%)	130 (100%)
<b>LAISSEZ-FAIRE</b>	n 36 (27.7%)	n 26 (20.0%)	n 15 (11.5%)	n 24 (18.5%)	n 29 (22.3%)	130 (100%)

Source: Primary data

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND GENDER.**

**Ho. There is no relationship between the Leadership styles of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Gender.**

**Table. 2**  
**Independent Sample T-Test for Gender and Leadership style of respondent**

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</b>	<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>
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			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>AUTOCRATIC</b>	Equal variances assumed		17.688	0.000	-8.578	128	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed				-7.717	72.578	0.000
<b>DEMOCRATIC</b>	Equal variances assumed		38.22	0.000	-9.831	128	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed				-8.576	65.091	0.000
<b>LAIZZES-FAIRE</b>	Equal variances assumed		0.877	0.351	-6.872	128	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed				-6.543	89.573	0.000

Source: Primary data

The t-test results in Table 2. shows, Democratic Leadership Levene's Test for Equality of Variances significance level is below 0.05 and the F value is large (F=38.220, p=.000). This indicates that the variances are heterogeneous, therefore 'equal variances not assumed' rows result was considered. The t-test of Equality of means score in the 'equal variances not assumed' row is (p=.000) which is less than 0.05 significance level; therefore there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the two group.

As per the result, in all the three Leadership style there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the two group viz., male and female principal. Therefore the null hypothesis is not accepted. **“Male and Female principal has difference in Leadership Style”**

**DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE AMONG THE FEMALE COLLEGE PRINCIPALS**

The cross tabulation of the leadership style of male and female college principals is shown below.

**Table. 3. Cross Tabulation of Gender and Leadership Style**

		DEMOCRATIC					Total
VERY LOW RANGE	LOW RANGE	MODERATE RANGE	HIGH RANGE	VERY HIGH RANGE			

<b>PRINCIPALS</b>	<b>Male</b>	22	11	8	0	10	<b>51</b>
<b>GENDER</b>	<b>Female</b>	0	1	10	35	33	<b>79</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>130</b>

Source: Primary data

It reveals that females are having high range and very high range of intensity for Democratic Leadership style.

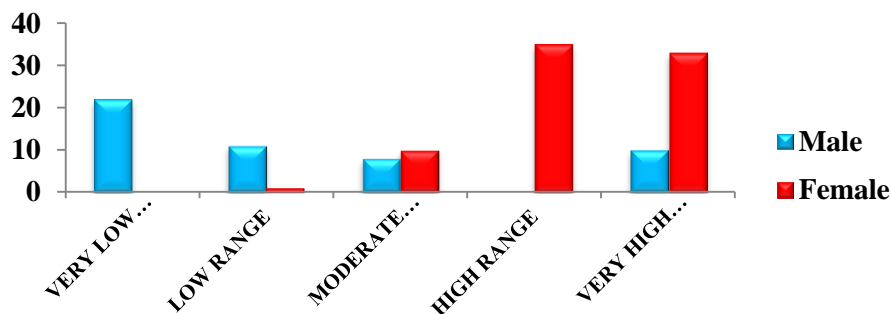


Figure. 2. Cross Tabulation of Gender and Leadership Style

**FINDINGS**

- Based on the data collected, there was found to be a difference in the frequencies of male to female among the College Principals in Kanyakumari District. The majority (61.0%) n=79 of the Principals were female, compared with (39.0%) n= 51 male Principals. This result may give us an indication that females position as Principal than male.
- The majority of College Principals, n=43 (33.1%) has scored in the Very high range of intensity for Democratic Leadership style. Comparatively higher than the score of all the other styles. 35 Principals have scored high range of intensity for this style. And only 22 respondents have scored the low range of intensity for this style. It reveals that most of the College Principals in Kanyakumari District lead their college in Democratic way.
- As per the result, in all the three Leadership style there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the two group viz., male and female Principal. Therefore the null hypothesis is not accepted. There is statistically significant relationship existed between the Leadership style of college principals in Kanyakumari District and their Gender. **Gender plays a role in adoption of Leadership style.**
- Female Principals are having very high range of intensity for Democratic Leadership style.

**SUGGESTIONS**

The researcher made the following suggestions from the findings of the study :

- The study reveals that less than 50 percent of the college principals are in very high range of intensity for democratic Leadership Styles. That shows that the remaining 50% or more than 50% of principals are having a very low level of intensity for these Leadership Behaviours. Thus it is suggested that effective leadership training should be given to the college principals in Kanyakumari District focusing on managerial Leadership behavior.
- As there is a statistically significant relationship existed between Gender and Leadership style, and females are having very high range of intensity for Democratic Leadership style, female may be given a preference to lead the institution in Democratic way.

## CONCLUSION

From the study it is clear that the College Principals in Kanyakumari District are not alike in the adoption of their Leadership style. Each Principal has his or her own style. As there is a statistically significant relationship existed between Gender and Leadership style, Gender played a role in the adoption of Leadership style of the College Principals in Kanyakumari District. Thus, it was inferred that leadership emerges from within the person based on gender. And from the study it is also evident that female are democratic leader. According to Lewin's study democratic style of leadership is considered as the most effective leadership style. Here the leaders offer all helps to group members, and they themselves participating in the group. The leader believes in allowing participatory management and group members are free to give their opinion, decision-making is cooperative and members having a sense of belonging. In Lewin's study, children in this group were less productive than the members of the Autocratic group, but their contributions were of a much higher quality. Participative leaders encourage group members to participate, but retain the final say over the decision-making process. Group members feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative.

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