



The Effect Of Principals' Leadership Styles On Job Satisfaction Among Lecturers Of Undergraduate Colleges

¹ Gayatri Devi A, ²Shazia Khanum, ³Vaidehi P. S

¹Professor, ²Assistant Professor, ³Assistant Professor ,

¹Department Of Commerce & Management , ²Department of M.Com (HRD) , ³Department of Pyscology

¹FMKMC College Kodagu ,Madikeri, India , ^{2,3}Alvas College (Autonomous), Moodubidire, Dakshina
Kannada, India,

Abstract: This study investigates the effect of principals' Leadership Styles on the Job Satisfaction of lecturers in undergraduate colleges. The research employs a convenience sampling technique to gather data from lecturers. The objective of the study is to understand the relationship between principals' leadership styles- namely democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire and job satisfaction among lecturers. It also aims to examine the effect of these leadership styles on job satisfaction within the sample group. Data was collected using purposive sampling techniques, and the Leadership Styles Questionnaire was adapted from Donald Clark's 1998 survey. The Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ), developed by Lester, P. E. (1984) based on the work of Maslow and Herzberg, was used to assess job satisfaction. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 25. Spearman's rank correlation and regression analysis were performed to establish the results. The findings showed a moderate positive relationship between democratic leadership style and job satisfaction. However, the regression analysis revealed weak explanatory power, as indicated by the low R-squared (0.061). This suggests that while the democratic leadership style is positively associated with job satisfaction, other factors may play a more significant role in influencing it. This study seeks to provide insights into the nuanced interplay between leadership approaches and job satisfaction, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive understanding of institutional and individual factors in academic settings.

Index Terms - Leadership Styles, Job Satisfaction, Democratic Leadership, Academic Settings, Undergraduate Colleges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a dynamic and multidimensional process that involves influencing, motivating, and guiding individuals or groups toward achieving common goals (Northouse, 2018). Leadership is not merely confined to formal positions of authority but is a skill that can be developed and cultivated at all levels within an organization, society, or team (Bass & Bass, 2008). The combination of traits, behavior & situational adaptability plays a vital role in effective leadership, making these critical factors in organizational success and societal progress.

Leadership style is the manner/approach of behaviours engaged in by the leader when dealing with employees. In order to provide direction, implement plans and motivate them. Lewin, Lippit and White (1939) identified three leadership styles which are • Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire.

1.1 Democratic Leadership Style: This leader will make the final decision, he/she invites other members of the team to contribute the decision-making process. Which not only increases job satisfaction by involving employees or team members in organizational activities but it also helps to develop people's skills. Employees and team members will be focus of their own destiny, in terms of their career development they deserve and so are also motivated to work hard to accomplish their task.

1.2 Autocratic Leadership Style: The leadership style in which leader makes decisions unilaterally without seeking input or feedback from any employees and is often involved with strict control, clear directives, and limited employee involvement. Typically, autocratic leaderships make choices based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers. Autocratic leadership employs authoritarian control over staff and are not emphatic in their approach towards the employees.

1.3 Laissez-faire Leadership style: The word itself says let do" or "let it be," which determines leader's tendency to provide minimal guidance or direction. leadership style involves non-interference policy by the leader, which allows complete freedom to all workers and has no particular set direction or guidelines to achieve goals. This style of leadership does not contribute productively to any success or growth of both organization and employees, does not provide guidance or direction to focus on the task define and achieve the set goal rather creates the dissatisfaction in job.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ardichvili and Kuchenke (2010) and Egwunyenga (2010), an autocratic leader never allows staff decisions, and the leader is usually very far from staff. It is a leadership that is imposed on an organization and it is sometimes referred to as coercive leadership (Baughman, 2008). Decision making is done by autocratic leaders; and, inputs from staff may be wanted in the process, but barely taken into consideration. The reason is that they are benevolent autocrats. Autocratic leadership style opined Maqsood, Bilal and Baig (2013) are known for individual control over all decisions and little input from staff. Typically, autocratic leaderships make choices based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers. Autocratic leadership employs absolute, authoritarian control over staff. Some features of autocratic leadership as observed by Leadership Styles (2015) include little or no input from group members; leaders make the decisions; group leaders dictate all the work methods; group members are rarely trusted with decisions or important tasks

A Democratic leadership style is the one which influence others to work together to achieve goals which are of different form and prospect and are mutually defined between employees and employers which leads to the formation of employee centric approach which leads to consultative and participative decision making. Democratic leadership improves job satisfaction by fostering group collaboration and employee autonomy. Lewin et al. (1939) Glover et al. (2002): High employee participation in decision-making through democratic leadership improves satisfaction. Tannenbaum & Schmidt (1973): Leadership that involves employees in decision-making tends to have a strong positive effect on job satisfaction. Amundsen & Martinsen (2014): Democratic leaders positively influence job satisfaction by promoting work-related autonomy and cooperation.

On the contrary, Laissez-faire leadership is completely different in which actions are delayed, leaders have no interest in their responsibilities and decision making, and power remains uncounseled (Avolio & Bass, 2001). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), Laissez-faire leadership is not considered as potential leadership at all. The authors explicitly argue that it is subjected as a hands-off technique toward organizational development. This kind of leadership is not used as an active agent for change but the only position based. In this style of leadership, the leader only assumes that the employees will manage and organize themselves. In the same manner, style and behavior theory of leadership propose that Laissez-faire leadership is only assumed relevant in an innovative culture, where a team of highly motivated and skilled employees exist, and has an excellent past track record.

Employee job satisfaction defines the attitude of employees towards their jobs and the organization which support them fulfilling their task (Voon, et al, 2011). Job satisfaction is defined by Locke (1976) as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from one's job or job experiences" (p.1300). Armstrong (2003) describes that it's a feeling & attitude of individuals towards the job. He also mentioned that job

satisfaction is the result of favorable and positive attitudes of people and dissatisfaction means the unfavorable and negative attitude. Leadership plays a vital role in creating satisfaction level among the employee.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a correlational research design to determine the effect of principals' leadership styles on the job satisfaction experienced by lecturers of undergraduate colleges. The study examined principals' leadership styles, namely Democratic, Autocratic, and Laissez-Faire leadership styles, as well as job satisfaction among undergraduate lecturers.

The objective of the study was to explore the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction among lecturers of undergraduate colleges and to understand which types of principals' leadership styles influence job satisfaction. In this study, leadership style was considered the independent variable, while job satisfaction was the dependent variable.

The hypotheses of the current study were formulated as follows:

Ho1: There is a no relationship between principals' Democratic Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction among lecturers of undergraduate colleges.

Ho2: There is a no relationship between principals' Autocratic (Authoritarian) Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction among lecturers of undergraduate colleges.

Ho3: There is a no relationship between principals' Laissez-Faire (Delegative) Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction among lecturers of undergraduate colleges.

Ho4: Principals' Democratic Leadership Style has no effect on the Job Satisfaction of lecturers in undergraduate colleges.

3.1 Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprised lecturers teaching at undergraduate colleges in the Dakshina Kannada district, specifically within the Moodubidire region. A total of 70 lecturers participated in the research through convenience sampling, selected based on their availability and willingness to engage with the study's objectives. The diverse sample allowed for a comprehensive exploration of how principals' leadership styles relate to job satisfaction among undergraduate faculty.

3.2 Data and Sources of Data

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that combined two validated instruments. Principals' leadership styles were measured with a 15-item Leadership Styles Questionnaire adapted from Donald Clark's (1998) survey, covering democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire dimensions, with established reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.806$). Lecturers' job satisfaction was assessed using the 77-item Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ) developed by Lester (1984) and grounded in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory, demonstrating high internal consistency (overall $\alpha = 0.93$). All items employed a five-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), with reverse scoring applied to control for response bias. Demographic variables-gender, age, educational qualification, and years of teaching experience-were also collected. The combined questionnaire was administered offline, and responses were entered into SPSS Version 25 for subsequent statistical analysis.

3.3 Theoretical framework

The variables of the study include independent and dependent variables. The principal's leadership styles are the independent variable, and job satisfaction is the dependent variable. This study draws upon the foundational work of Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939), who established the seminal classification of three distinct leadership styles- democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire- that continues to serve as a cornerstone for understanding how leaders interact with their followers in organizational settings. The theoretical framework builds upon Locke's (1976) comprehensive definition of job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from one's job or job experiences," which captures both the emotional and cognitive aspects of how employees perceive and respond to their work environment. The conceptual foundation is further strengthened by Social Exchange Theory, which provides valuable insights into the reciprocal nature of leader-follower relationships, suggesting that when leaders demonstrate supportive and inclusive behaviors, employees tend to respond with higher levels of satisfaction and commitment to their organization.

Within this theoretical context, the study examines how different leadership approaches practiced by college principals influence the job satisfaction levels of their faculty members. Democratic leadership, which emphasizes collaborative decision-making and values employee input, is expected to foster higher job satisfaction among lecturers by creating an environment where they feel heard, valued, and empowered to contribute meaningfully to institutional goals. Conversely, autocratic leadership, characterized by top-down decision-making with limited faculty involvement, may potentially undermine job satisfaction by restricting academic freedom and reducing opportunities for professional input in matters affecting their work life. The laissez-faire approach, which grants considerable autonomy while providing minimal guidance, presents a more complex relationship with job satisfaction, as the lack of structured leadership may produce mixed results depending on individual faculty preferences and institutional context.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of these relationships, the study incorporates relevant demographic variables including gender, age, educational qualifications, and years of teaching experience, recognizing that individual characteristics may moderate how lecturers respond to different leadership styles. This theoretical framework provides a robust foundation for examining the nuanced ways in which educational leadership influences faculty well-being and satisfaction in the undergraduate college environment.

3.4 Statistical tools

All data analyses were carried out in SPSS Version 25. To determine the appropriate analytical approach, the Shapiro–Wilk test assessed the normality of leadership style and job satisfaction score distributions. Departures from normality guided the decision to employ nonparametric techniques for inferential testing. An alpha level of 0.05 was set as the criterion for statistical significance.

3.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provided a comprehensive overview of both sample characteristics and primary study measures. Categorical variables- gender, age cohort, educational qualification, and teaching experience were summarized using frequency counts and percentage distributions. Continuous measures from the 15- item Leadership Styles Questionnaire and the 77- item Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire were characterized by their means and standard deviations, enabling clear interpretation of central tendency and variability across both total scores and individual subscale scores.

3.4.2 Inferential Statistics

Non parametric methods were used for hypothesis testing due to non- normal data distributions. Spearman's rank correlation coefficients (ρ) quantified the strength and direction of associations between each leadership style (democratic, autocratic, laissez- faire) and overall job satisfaction. In addition, simple linear regression analysis examined the extent to which democratic leadership predicted job satisfaction. The regression model reported the coefficient of determination (R^2) to indicate explained variance, the unstandardized regression coefficient (β) to reflect effect size, and the associated p- value to evaluate statistical significance.

According to Richardson and Smith (1993) to make the model more effective and efficient the selection criteria for the shares in the period are: Shares with no missing values in the period, Shares with adjusted $R^2 < 0$ or F significant (p-value) > 0.05 of the first pass regression of the excess returns on the market risk premium are excluded. And Shares are grouped by alphabetic order into group of 30 individual securities (Roll and Ross, 1980).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Details and Study Variables

Table 4.1.1: Descriptive Statics of Demographic Details

Demographic Details	n (%)
Gender (N=70)	
Female	52 (74.3)
Male	18 (25.7)
Age (in years) (N=70)	
24-32	33 (47.14)
33-40	25 (35.71)
41-48	9 (12.86)
49-56	3 (4.29)
Education Qualification (N=70)	
LL.M	2 (2.9)
M.com	61 (87.1)
MSc & B.Ed.	2 (2.9)
MA	2 (2.9)
MBA	1 (1.4)
Ph.D.	2 (2.9)
Experience (in years) (N=70)	
01-08	26 (37.14)
09-16	31 (44.29)
17-24	11 (15.71)
25-32	2 (2.86)

Table 4.1.1 presents the demographic information of the participants. Out of 70 participants, 52 were females (74.3%), and 18 were males (25.7%). The table also shows the age distribution, where the largest group falls within the 24-32 years range, with 33 participants (47.14%). The second-largest group is the 33-40 years range, with 25 participants (35.71%). The 41-48 years group consists of 9 participants (12.86%), while the smallest group is the 49-56 years range, with only 3 participants (4.29%). Regarding educational qualifications, most participants (61 out of 70, or 87.1%) hold an M. Com degree, indicating a strong presence of commerce graduates. Other qualifications are less common, including LL.M, M.Sc. & B.Ed., MA, and Ph.D., each held by 2 participants (2.9%). The least common qualification is an MBA, with only 1 participant (1.4%). The data also highlight the distribution of participants based on work experience. The highest number of participants, 31 (44.29%), have 9-16 years of experience, followed by 26 participants (37.14%) with 1-8 years of experience. The 17-24 years group includes 11 participants (15.71%), while the 25-32 years category has the fewest participants, with only 2 (2.86%). Overall, most participants have between 1 to 16 years of experience, while those with more than 17 years are significantly fewer.

Table 4.1.2: Descriptive Statics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Democratic leadership style	12.94	2.707
Autocratic leadership style	10.29	2.777
Laissez-faire leadership style	12.51	2.775
Job satisfaction	164.23	23.619

Table 4.1.2 presents the mean and standard deviation of participants' leadership styles and job satisfaction. The Democratic leadership style has the highest mean (12.94) with a standard deviation of 2.707, indicating that it is the most prevalent leadership approach with relatively low variation. The Laissez-faire leadership style follows with a mean of 12.51 and a standard deviation of 2.775, showing similar distribution patterns. The Autocratic leadership style has the lowest mean (10.29) with a standard deviation of 2.777, suggesting it is the least preferred style among participants. For job satisfaction, the mean score is 164.23, with a standard deviation of 23.619, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction among participants with some variability in responses.

4.2 Results of Inferential Statistics

Table 4.2.1: Spearman's correlation between Leadership Styles and Job satisfaction

Leadership Style	Job satisfaction	
	Spearman's ρ	p-value
Democratic leadership style	0.330**	0.005
Autocratic leadership style	- 0.207	0.085
Laissez-faire leadership style	0.029	0.809

Note: ρ denotes Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. ** indicates significance at $p < 0.01$.

Table 4.2.1 presents the Spearman's correlation between leadership styles and job satisfaction. The results show that there is a positive and moderate correlation between the Democratic leadership style and job satisfaction (0.330, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that participants who exhibit a democratic leadership style tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. The positive relationship indicates that inclusive and participative leadership may contribute to a more satisfied workforce.

In contrast, the Autocratic leadership style shows a negative correlation with job satisfaction (-0.207), though it is not statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. This suggests that autocratic leadership, characterized by top-down decision-making and limited employee involvement, may be associated with lower job satisfaction. The Laissez-faire leadership style shows a correlation of 0.029, which is very close to zero, indicating almost no relationship between laissez-faire leadership and job satisfaction. This suggests that allowing employees a high degree of autonomy in decision-making may not necessarily impact overall job satisfaction in a meaningful way.

Based on the data analysis, the research findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between the Autocratic (Authoritarian) Leadership Style and job satisfaction among lecturers at undergraduate colleges. Hence, the null hypotheses Ho2 and Ho3, stating that there is no relationship between principals' Autocratic (Authoritarian) Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction and that there is no relationship between principals' Laissez-Faire (Delegative) Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction among lecturers of undergraduate colleges, are accepted. Similarly, there is no significant relationship between the Laissez-Faire (Delegative) Leadership Style and job satisfaction. However, the results show a positive moderate correlation between the Democratic Leadership Style and job satisfaction, hence rejecting the null hypothesis Ho1, which states that there is no relationship between principals' Democratic Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction among lecturers of undergraduate colleges.

Table 4.2.2: Regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.247a	.061	.047	23.055
a. Predictors: (Constant), Democratic				

Table 4.2.2. shows the regression analysis. This shows a weak relationship between democratic leadership style and the job satisfaction, with an R value of 0.247 and an R-Square of 0.061, indicating that only 6.1% of the variance is explained by the predictor. The Adjusted R-Square (0.047) suggests minimal improvement with additional predictors, and the Standard Error (23.055) indicates high variability in predictions. Hence, the null hypothesis Ho4, stating that principals' Democratic Leadership Style has no effect on the job satisfaction of lecturers in undergraduate colleges, is rejected

CONCLUSIONS

The study, Effect of Principals' Leadership Styles on Job Satisfaction Among Lecturers of Undergraduate Colleges, found a moderate positive relationship between Democratic Leadership Style and job satisfaction. However, the regression analysis revealed weak explanatory power, as indicated by the low R-Square (0.061), suggesting that while Democratic Leadership Style is positively associated with job satisfaction, other factors may play a more significant role in influencing it.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Sincere gratitude is extended to all of the lecturers who took part in this study, whose collaboration and insightful comments were crucial to its accomplishment. Our families' constant patience, support, and encouragement during our research journey are greatly appreciated. Lastly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the scholars whose theories and research served as the basis for our investigation and directed our analysis.

REFERENCES

- [1] job satisfaction in primary schools in Ekiti state, Nigeria. *Educational Leadership and Management Journal*.
- [2] Basu, M.A., & Mohanty, R.K. (2019). Relationship between principals' leadership styles and job satisfaction among schoolteachers. *International Journal of Educational Management*.
- [3] Bass, B. M. (1990). *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*. Free Press.
- [4] Brown, M. E., & Treviño, L. K. (2014). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(1), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.11.002>
- [5] Cabuhat, J.I.S. (2023). The Principals' Leadership Style and Its Impact on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy and Job Satisfaction in Selected Secondary High Schools. *Journal of Educational Research*.
- [6] Chiaburu, D. S., & Harrison, J. K. (2008). Do coworkers' attitudes toward organizational citizenship behavior influence individual employee outcomes? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(2), 357-369.
- [7] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- [8] Eisenberger, R., et al. (2001). Perceived organizational support and employee diligence, commitment, and innovation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 1103-1124.
- [9] Esia-Donkoh, K. (2022). Effect of Principals' Leadership Styles on Tutors' Job Satisfaction in Public Colleges of Education in Ghana. *Educational Research Review*.
- [10] Esia-Donkoh, K. (2022). Principals' Leadership Styles and Tutors' Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
- [11] Gastil, J. (1994). A definition and illustration of democratic leadership. *Human Relations*, 47(8), 979-1003.
- [12] George, B. (2003). *Authentic leadership: Rediscovering the secrets to creating lasting value*. Jossey-Bass.
- [13] Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam Books.
- [14] Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.
- [15] Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2013). *Primal leadership: Unleashing the power of emotional intelligence*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- [16] Greenhaus, J. H., & Allen, T. D. (2011). Work-family balance: A review and extension of the literature. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 78(2), 183-197.
- [17] Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.
- [18] Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 16(2), 250-279.
- [19] Hersey, P., Blanchard, K. H., & Johnson, D. E. (2013). *Management of organizational behavior: Utilizing human resources* (10th ed.). Pearson Education.
- [20] Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review*, 94(3), 319-340.
- [21] Josanov-Vrgovic, I., & Pavlovic, N. (2014). Relationship between the school principal leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction in Serbia. *European Journal of Educational Research*.
- [22] Koutouzis, M., & Malliara, K. (2017). Teachers' job satisfaction: The effect of principal's leadership and decision-making style. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*.
- [23] Lazo, R.L. (2015). The effects of principals' leadership style on teachers' job performance and satisfaction. *Education Journal*.
- [24] Lewin, K., Lippitt, R., & White, R. K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 10(2), 271-299.
- [25] Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (pp. 1297-1349). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- [26] Lyubomirsky, S., et al. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131(6), 803-855.
- [27] Nadarasa, T., & Thuraisingam, R. (2014). The influence of principal's leadership styles on school teachers' job satisfaction – Study of secondary school in Jaffna district. *Asian Education Review*.
- [28] Noe, R. A. (2010). *Employee training and development*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- [29] Northouse, P. G. (2018). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). Sage Publications.
- [30] Puckett, J.A., & Perkins, A.L. (2020). The Role of Leadership Styles in Shaping Job Satisfaction in K-12 Schools. *Journal of Educational Leadership*.

- [31] Rizzo, J. R., et al. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15(2), 150-163.
- [32] Sethi, S.R., & Gupta, M.K. (2018). The impact of leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in schools across New Delhi. *Journal of Educational Psychology*.
- [33] Shrivastava, M., & Agarwal, S. (2021). Relative effectiveness of the leadership style of primary school heads on teachers' job satisfaction. *Educational Leadership Journal*.
- [34] Suazo, A.C., & Villocino, R.P. (2023). The Effect of Principal Leadership Styles on Job Satisfaction Among School Administrators. *Journal of Educational Research*.
- [35] Traynor, E.N., & McCarthy, K.A. (2021). Transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*.
- [36] Williams, T.R., & Johnson, P.L. (2020). The impact of authoritarian leadership on teacher satisfaction in UK schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*.
- [37] Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Pearson

