



LEADERSHIP STYLE OF EMPLOYEES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) INDUSTRY BASED ON DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

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ABSTRACT

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One of the concerns of the changing global economy is leadership. As time goes by, the enormous difference in results of previous studies show that leadership styles are continually changing. Additionally, the integral part of IT industry is concentrating for long on utilizing global resources with ability to lead and change. This study focuses on an analysis of Leadership Styles of the respondents in IT industry basis the demographic characteristics (age, gender, religion, educational qualification and marital status), since the demographic factors are expected to have bearing on the respondent's exhibition of Leadership style at work place. A total of 512 samples have been collected from the top 5 Indian IT companies of the year 2015, based on revenue, profit and market capitalization as published by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) were selected for this study. Descriptive research method is used to analyze the responses from participants.

1. INTRODUCTION

Leading is a process of influencing and directing the activities of an organized group to accomplish goals by communicating with them. Leadership is therefore premised on interpersonal relationship. An effective leader is a person, who creates an inspiring vision of the future, motivates and inspires people to engage with that vision, manages delivery of the vision, coaches and builds a team, so that it is more effective at achieving the vision. Leadership brings together the skills needed to do these things. Blake Mouton Managerial Grid is a popular framework for thinking about a leader's "task versus person" orientation. Also known as the Managerial Grid, or Leadership Grid, it was developed in the 1964 by management theorists Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. It plots a manager or leader's degree of task-centeredness versus her person-centeredness, and identifies five different combinations of the two and the leadership styles they produce. They are as follows:

Impoverished Management – Low Results/Low People: The Impoverished or "indifferent" manager is mostly ineffective. With a low regard for creating systems that get the job done, and with little interest in creating a satisfying or motivating team environment, his results are inevitably disorganization, dissatisfaction and disharmony.

Produce-or-Perish Management – High Results/Low People: Also known as "authoritarian" or "authority-compliance" managers, people in this category believe that

their team members are simply a means to an end. The team's needs are always secondary to its productivity.

Middle-of-the-Road Management – Medium Results/Medium People: A Middle-of-the-Road or "status quo" manager tries to balance results and people, but this strategy is not as effective as it may sound. Through continual compromise, he fails to inspire high performance and also fails to meet people's needs fully.

Country Club Management – High People/Low Results: The Country Club or "accommodating" style of manager is most concerned about her team members' needs and feelings. She assumes that, as long as they are happy and secure, they will work hard.

Team Leader Management – High Production/High People: According to the Blake Mouton model, Team management is the most effective leadership style. It reflects a leader who is passionate about his work and who does the best he can for the people he works with.

Leadership within an IT company taps into the differences of individuals to unify the team and/or the company, and to develop distinctive ideas and strategies. The IT industry benefits from networking and collaboration skills. The leader creates a diverse and analytical culture that nurtures innovation, awareness and insight. IT is a complex structure and it takes a team of leaders to make it manageable and secure for all those who embrace it. The IT industry mainly

recruit people based on their leadership skills as leadership qualities are majorly attributed to the success of the individual, team and the organization.

This study focuses on analyzing the leadership styles of employees in IT industry based on their demographic characteristics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tahir Saeed et al. (2014) in their study examined the relationship between leadership styles and conflict management styles among managers, while handling interpersonal conflict (managers and subordinates). Middle-level managers (N = 150) from different private sector manufacturing industries were included in the study to seek responses through questionnaire based on instruments for conflict management and leadership styles. The findings are that Managers who perceived to exhibit more on transformational leadership style adopted integrating and obliging style of conflict management. Those who perceived to exhibit more on transactional style opted for compromising style of conflict management. Whereas, managers perceived to exhibit laissez-faire leadership style adopted avoiding style to manage conflicts with subordinates.

Mingjian Zhou et al. (2014) studied the role of leaders in team relationship conflict. Leader-member exchange (LMX) differentiation was hypothesized to be positively related to team relationship conflict. Additionally, ethical leadership was hypothesized to moderate relations between LMX differentiation and team relationship conflict. Hypotheses were examined in a sample of 79 working teams. Data were collected via a questionnaire containing measures of LMX, team relationship conflict and ethical leadership. Hypotheses were supported by the data. LMX differentiation was positively related to team relationship conflict, and ethical leadership weakened the relationship between LMX differentiation and team relationship conflict.

The IT organizations are getting tuned to agile fashion of delivering to customers. Any conflict situations will lead to non-productive efforts and will be detrimental to the organizations productivity. It is the leadership ability of an individual that enables an associate to manage and resolve conflicts. It is of paramount importance to understand the leadership styles of employees in IT industry. There has been very limited study conducted so far on this subject in IT organizations.

The previous studies have the following research gaps, which has been addressed in this study.

- Very limited studies in IT industry in India
- Only few studies on analyzing the leadership styles of employees in IT industry based on the demographic characteristics.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section explains the research objectives and a suitable methodology to achieve those objectives. This section describes the pilot study, participants of the study, Sampling Procedure, instrumentation used for the study, data collection, and data analysis procedures adopted for the study. Descriptive Research method was used to analyze the responses from participants. The data was obtained by distributing the physical questionnaires to the respondents and also through the use of an online survey using the platform surverygizmo.com. The top 5 Indian IT companies of the year 2015, based on revenue, profit and market capitalization as published by the National Association of Software and

Services Companies (NASSCOM) were considered for the study. NASSCOM is a trade association of Indian Information Technology (IT) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. The top 5 IT companies are as follows:

- TCS - Tata Consultancy Services
- Infosys
- WIPRO
- HCL technologies and
- Tech Mahindra

The top 5 Indian IT Companies selected for the study majorly have their delivery centers in the Information technology hubs like Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

The following procedure has been followed in order to arrive at the sample:

- Cluster Sampling is applied to identify Chennai and Bangalore as 2 cluster samples for the study.
- Cluster Sampling is again applied on the 5 IT companies to identify TCS as the cluster sample for the study
- Simple Random sampling is applied in TCS Chennai and TCS Bangalore to identify the sample for the study.

The size of the population is approximately 12 Lakh employees and the empirical sample size is 400 with 5% margin of error, however a total of 512 samples have been taken for this study.

The data was obtained by distributing the physical questionnaires to the respondents and also through the use of an online survey using the platform surverygizmo.com. The data was collected over a period of 180 days. In general nearly 500 e - mails were sent to the employees and physical questionnaires were distributed to around 500 employees of IT Companies. Each questionnaire or e-mail contained information about the topic, instructions to fill, the length of the survey and the privacy conditions. First reminder was sent after 30 days of the first email followed by second reminder with the gap of 15 days. Information was finally gathered through questionnaire and in very few cases, interviews were also held in order to substantiate the data gathered. Separate appointments were scheduled with Delivery Heads of large accounts to explain the objective of the study. Only 547 filled in questionnaires were received out of which only 512 were found to be fully filled in, the rest 20 were discarded due to incomplete information. While analyzing the data, the focus was put on:

- **Frequencies** - Frequencies were used to determine how many answered each answer possibility for each question.
- **Means** - Means were used to find out the average score for some questions.
- **Association** - The independent and dependent variables were further tested using Chi - square test with the confidence level of 95% and the significance level of 5% respectively.

The research hypotheses are as follows;

H1: Age of the employees has a strong association with Leadership styles.

H2: Gender of the employees has a strong association with Leadership styles.

H3: Religion of the employees has a strong association with Leadership styles.

H4: Educational Qualification of the employees has a strong association with I Leadership styles.

H5: Marital Status of the employees has a strong association with Leadership styles.

4. ANALYSIS

This section analyses the Leadership styles of employees based on their background characteristics.

Table 5.1 shows that, irrespective of age groups, the high proportion of respondents follow team leader style of leadership which denotes the leaders in IT industry are concerned both on achieving the tasks and also employee satisfaction. It is observed from the table that there is an

increase in maturity in exhibiting team leader leadership style with increase in age. This is evident from the fact that 100 percent of respondents in age group 41 – 45 years exhibit team leader style of leadership. The percentage of people practicing authoritarian leadership style across age groups in this study is relatively low compared to other leadership styles (Country Club and Impoverished), which could be one of the major factors attributed to the success of IT companies. The chi-square result supports the statistically high association between the age group and the leadership style of the respondents ($p < 0.05$).

Table 5.1 Percentage Distribution of Leadership Style of respondents by Age Group

Age_Group_Range	LEADERSHIP_RESULT				Total	
	COUNTRY CLUB	IMPOVERISHED	TEAM LEADER	AUTHORITARIAN		
21-25	Count	10	10	168	4	192
	%	5.2%	5.2%	87.5%	2.1%	100.0%
26-30	Count	16	22	138	6	182
	%	8.8%	12.1%	75.8%	3.3%	100.0%
31-35	Count	0	8	76	4	88
	%	0.0%	9.1%	86.4%	4.5%	100.0%
36-40	Count	2	0	32	0	34
	%	5.9%	0.0%	94.1%	0.0%	100.0%
41-45	Count	0	0	16	0	16
	%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	28	40	430	14	512
	%	5.5%	7.8%	84.0%	2.7%	100.0%

Chi-square Test result: Significant at 5 percent level (Pearson chi-square value: 25.031 at 12 d.f).

Table 5.2 shows that there is no significant difference in exhibiting leadership styles between gender. It is observed from the table that Females (3.8 percent) exhibit more authoritarian leadership than males (2.0 percent) and males (5.9 percent) exhibit more county club style than females (4.8 percent). Interestingly Males (8.6 percent) are more

impoverished than Females (6.7 percent), which infers that in this study population, males adopt “delegate and disappear” management style than females meaning males compared to females are not committed to either task accomplishment or maintenance. The chi-square result shows that there is only least significant association between gender and leadership style of the respondents.

Table 5.2 Percentage Distribution of Leadership Style of respondents by Gender

Gender		LEADERSHIP_RESULT				Total
		COUNTRY CLUB	IMPOVERISHED	TEAM LEADER	AUTHORITARIAN	
Female	Count	10	14	176	8	208
	%	4.8%	6.7%	84.6%	3.8%	100.0%
Male	Count	18	26	254	6	304
	%	5.9%	8.6%	83.6%	2.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	28	40	430	14	512
	%	5.5%	7.8%	84.0%	2.7%	100.0%

Chi-square Test result: Least significant at 5 percent level (Pearson chi-square value: 2.405 at 3 d.f).

Table 5.3 shows that irrespective of religion, most of the associates exhibit team leader style of leadership. It is noted that Muslims exhibit more authoritarian style of leadership followed by Hindus. Christians and other religion respondents do not exhibit authoritarian style of leadership. It is interesting to note that high proportion of Christians

exhibit country club and Impoverished style followed by Hindus. Muslims neither exhibit Country club nor Impoverished styles but only Team leader and Authoritarian styles. The chi-square result supports the association and statistically high significance between the religion and the leadership style of the associates (p<0.01).

Table 5.3 Percentage Distribution of Leadership Style of respondents by Religion

Religion		LEADERSHIP_RESULT				Total
		COUNTRY CLUB	IMPOVERISHED	TEAM LEADER	AUTHORITARIAN	
Christian	Count	4	6	26	0	36
	%	11.1%	16.7%	72.2%	0.0%	100.0%
Hindu	Count	22	34	386	12	454
	%	4.8%	7.5%	85.0%	2.6%	100.0%
Muslim	Count	0	0	12	2	14
	%	0.0%	0.0%	85.7%	14.3%	100.0%
Other	Count	2	0	6	0	8
	%	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	28	40	430	14	512
	% within Religion	5.5%	7.8%	84.0%	2.7%	100.0%

Chi-square Test result: Significant at 5 percent level (Pearson chi-square value: 22.938 at 9 d.f).

Knowledge is a chief weapon in the hand of a leader and therefore a leader is expected to be a qualified person. A leader in IT industry must be equipped with the knowledge on the technology of the project, depth of the subject he/she is handling and most importantly educated on the art of getting things done from the team. Table 5.4 shows that all the graduates who hold only Diploma degree are Impoverished which infers that they neither pay attention towards task

accomplishment nor people management. The associates who had pursued under graduation exhibit more authoritarian style of leadership while the associates who pursued post graduation are seen to be exhibiting more team leader style of leadership. The chi-square result supports the association and statistically high significance between the educational qualification and the leadership style of the associates (p<0.01).

Table 5.4 Percentage Distribution of Leadership Style of respondents by Educational Qualification

Education_Qualification		LEADERSHIP_RESULT				Total
		COUNTRY CLUB	IMPOVERISHED	TEAM LEADER	AUTHORITARIAN	
Diploma	Count	0	2	0	0	2
	%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Under Graduation	Count	24	26	322	12	384
	%	6.3%	6.8%	83.9%	3.1%	100.0%
Post Graduation	Count	4	10	106	2	122
	%	3.3%	8.2%	86.9%	1.6%	100.0%
Doctorate	Count	0	2	2	0	4
	%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	28	40	430	14	512
	%	5.5%	7.8%	84.0%	2.7%	100.0%

Chi-square Test result: Significant at 5 percent level (Pearson chi-square value: 36.518 at 9 d.f).

Here an attempt is made to analyze the respondents' marital status, which can be an important factor in influencing the leadership style. The marital status categories include single/unmarried, married, widowed, Divorced, Separated, etc. The respondents of this study are either single or married. Table 5.5 shows that married respondents (92.4 percent) exhibit more team leader style leadership than respondents

with single status (8.1 percent). Also, it is evident from the table that married respondents are less authoritarian and impoverished compared to unmarried respondents, which could be attributed to the higher maturity level of married respondents. The chi-square result supports the association and statistically high significance between the marital status and the leadership style of the associates ($p < 0.01$).

Table 5.5 Percentage Distribution of Leadership Style of respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status		LEADERSHIP_RESULT				Total
		COUNTRY CLUB	IMPOVERISHED	TEAM LEADER	AUTHORITARIAN	
Single	Count	22	34	236	10	302
	%	7.3%	11.3%	78.1%	3.3%	100.0%
Married	Count	6	6	194	4	210
	%	2.9%	2.9%	92.4%	1.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	28	40	430	14	512
	%	5.5%	7.8%	84.0%	2.7%	100.0%

Chi-square Test result: Significant at 5 percent level (Pearson chi-square value: 19.515 at 3 d.f).

5. CONCLUSION

Irrespective of age groups, higher proportion of respondents follows team leader style of leadership. There is an increase in maturity in exhibiting team leader leadership style with increase in age and the percentage of people practicing authoritarian leadership style across age groups is relatively low compared to other leadership styles. There is no significant association between age group and leadership styles of employees in IT industry. Females exhibit more authoritarian leadership than males and males exhibit more country club style than females. Interestingly males are more impoverished than females. There is a significant association between gender and leadership styles of employees in IT industry. Married respondents exhibit more team leader style leadership than respondents with single status. Also, it is

evident that married respondents are less authoritarian and impoverished compared to unmarried respondents. There is a significant association between marital status and leadership styles of employees in IT industry.

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