

## The attitude of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences staff towards the relationship between leadership style and management practices, 2012

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**Abstract:Objective:** One of the main tasks of the manager in the process of management is the leadership of the organization. The present study aims to investigate the attitude of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences staff towards the relationship between leadership style and management practices. **Methods:** This cross-sectional study (descriptive-analytical) was performed on the 145 of the staff of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences that were selected through the quota sampling – random method. The study data were collected using two questionnaires. Frequency distribution, standard deviation, and percentages were used in order to describe the data. Chi-square and ANOVA were also used to analyze the data. **Results:** Among the 145 subjects, 114 ones were selected to complete the questionnaires. The study results revealed a significant difference between the single and married subjects' attitudes toward the leadership style. Attitudes also varied in different age groups and this difference was statistically significant. In this study, none of the subjects considered their managers' leadership style as collaborative. The study findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between leadership and management experience. **Discussion:** None of the study subjects mentioned collaborative leadership style for the managers of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences. This implies that managers are more attentive to the work environment and identify the employees' tasks, but pay less attention to the employees' participation. In a specialized center, collaborative management should replace authoritarian leadership style.

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### 1. Introduction

Today, large organizations' management and advances owe to the efforts of their competent managers who with the use of knowledge management techniques have been successful in accomplishing this task. Development of modern technology and its growing applications in different organizations have made a difficult task for the management. One of the main tasks of the manager in the process of management is the leadership of the organization. In fact, the essence of leadership is that leader's increasingly significant influence on the actions of subordinates and the manager is an institutional priority. The outstanding characteristics

of leadership trait are the real essence of each director. In order to be successful and play effective roles in the organization, in addition to having a contingency approach to environmental variables, managers should consider the organization and management as a system. They should also use this approach to investigate their employees' behavior and select their leadership style based on the circumstances, the nature of the tasks, and the employees' characteristics and responsibilities. Today, managers are faced with multiple challenges. Therefore, successful organizations need leaders with scrutiny to determine the future direction of the

organization, guide the employees toward that direction, and motivate them to make changes (1).

Effective leadership is an integral part of creating an environment to foster employee empowerment. Unlike traditional managers who due to weakening their subordinates are not being able to empower their employees, strong managers act as a leader, facilitator, and mentor (2). By adopting effective leadership styles, managers can be an important factor in the acceptance of change in the optimal delivery of care, increase of productivity, and employees' empowerment (3). When a leader's style fits a particular situation, it is called effective and if it is inappropriate for a particular situation, it is called ineffective (4). Researchers compared the leadership styles and behaviors of old and young workers with those of the managers of American and Canadian organizations and found that young employees may feel more comfortable in rapidly changing environments. In addition, they are willing to take the risk, focus on novel tendencies, work more energetically, are more interested in discovering opportunities, and competitively try for their development. Researchers also found that older employees deal with problems using old styles in order to minimize the risks. They are calm, are less affected by crisis, improve their knowledge and use the knowledge to solve the problems, cooperate more, and show higher degrees of attention and empathy toward the colleagues.

Factors that mainly affect the individuals' performance are working experience, job retention, and managers' age and attitude. However, sex is rarely considered as a determining factor. Most experienced managers and leaders have better attitudes (6). In general, several factors influence the employees' attitudes and behavior two most important of which being knowledge and age. Age is important since it affects the attitudes and behaviors of both generations. Overall, experience refers to past events and humans are mainly distinguished from animals by learning from past experiences (7). Today's learning humans benefit from past sciences and civilizations to gain a higher level of experience and knowledge, think beyond the past, and always modify their thoughts and behaviors (8). Many researchers and scholars have emphasized learning through experiences. In their opinion, expert refers to those who have profound knowledge in specific fields, have learnt through practice and experience, and have been tested and become experienced due to special conditions in specific work stages (10, 9).

By definition, experience is the process of gaining knowledge or skill in a particular time which is obtained by observation and action. In other words,

we can say that experience is obtained by being directly involved in the realization of the work (11).

Leadership has been considered by many researchers and the results of these researches have led to the development of many theories on leadership style. Reviewing these theories has revealed a variety of leadership styles, such as authoritarian, anarchist, bureaucratic, advisory, participative, and transformational styles (12). It should be noted that a particular style is not appropriate for all the situations; thus, a manager can choose different leadership styles for its employees in different situations depending on the organizational culture.

Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences as one of the most important universities in West of Iran has the basic responsibility of teaching, research, and healthcare. Therefore, studying its managers' leadership style can have a significant impact on organizational goals. Considering the fact that no studies have been conducted in this field in Kermanshah, the present study aims to investigate the attitude of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences staff towards the relationship between leadership style and management practices.

## 2. Methods

This cross-sectional study (descriptive-analytical) was performed on a sample selected from the staff of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, including the departments of Health, Education, Research and Technology, Cultural and Student Affairs, and Human Resources. According to the previous studies and using the sample size formula, a 145-subject sample size was determined for the study. The samples were selected through the quota sampling – random method by considering the proportion of the staff in each deputy to the entire staff. The study data were collected using two questionnaires. One of the questionnaires was related to leadership style and consisted of two parts, one involving the participants' demographic characteristics (8 items), and the other measuring the personnel's leadership style through 24 five-choice questions on a Likert scale (very low, low, medium, high, and very high). The validity of the questionnaire was determined by five technology specialists and its reliability was confirmed by the Cronbach's alpha of 0.85. Considering the fact that the questionnaire included five-choice questions, the maximum score was calculated as 120 and using the literature, scoring the leadership style was performed as follows (14, 15):

- 1- Authoritarian – exploitation styles: 24 to 53.
- 2- Authoritarian – charitable styles: 53 to 75.
- 3- Consultation style: 75 to 98.
- 4- Participative style: 98 or higher.

The second questionnaire was related to the comparison of experienced and novice managers. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire had been confirmed in the previous studies (16). The questionnaire included 17 questions. If the senior managers' experience was much less or more than that of the younger managers, it was scored as 5 and 1, respectively and the total score was computed. If the score is between 51 and 85, it shows that in many aspects, such as communications, management, training, and loyalty, younger managers are better than the experienced ones. On the other hand, the scores between 17 and 52 indicate that more experienced managers have performed better than the younger ones. The study data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical software (version 16). Frequency distribution, standard deviation, and percentages were used in order to describe the data. Chi-square and ANOVA were also used to analyze the data.

### 3. Results

**Table1.** The relationship between the age and marital status of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences staff and their attitude toward their managers' leadership styles

leadership style		authoritarian-exploitation %	Authoritarian – charitable %	Consultation style %	Participative style %	P value
Variables						
marital	single	20	66.7	13.3	0	0.028
	married	24.2	61.6	14.2	0	
age	20-30	29.7	51.4	18.9	0	0.032
	31-40	29.7	69.4	11.1	0	
	41-50	14.3	67.9	17.9	0	
	>50	33.3	66.7	0	0	

The majority of both single and married subjects declared their leadership style to be authoritarian – charitable. No significant difference was observed between the two sexes' scores of the managers' leadership styles ( $P=0.126$ ). Also, no significant difference was found between the subjects with different working experiences and educational levels regarding the attitude toward the leadership style ( $P=0.829$ ). In different age groups and working experiences, the highest percentage was related to the authoritarian – charitable style, while the lowest

Among the 145 subjects, 114 ones were selected to complete the questionnaires. Among these, 67 participants (58.8%) were male and 47 ones (41.2%) were female. Besides, 15 subjects (13.2%) were single, while 99 ones (86.6%) were married. The majority of the employees had between 1 and 10 years working experience. Considering the level of education, the majority (47.4%) and minority (5.3%) of the subjects had undergraduate and PhD degrees, respectively. In addition, the field of study of 2.63% of the subjects was clinical sciences, while that of the others was basic sciences and humanities.

The study results revealed a significant difference between the single and married subjects' attitudes toward the leadership style ( $P=0.028$ ); such a way that most of the single subjects (66.7%) mentioned their managers' leadership style to be charitable. Attitudes also varied in different age groups and this difference was statistically significant ( $P=0.032$ ) (Table1).

percentage was related to consultative leadership style. In this study, none of the subjects considered their managers' leadership style as collaborative. The study findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between leadership and management experience ( $P=0.032$ ). Furthermore, most of the staff (46.5%) believed that young managers had authoritarian – charitable leadership style. In addition, 6% believed the expert managers' leadership style to be consultative (Table 2).

**Table2.** Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences staff's view on the relationship between the managers' leadership style and working experience

Experience	Experienced managers	Young managers	P value
Leadership style			
authoritarian-exploitation	14	13	0.032
Authoritarian - charitable	18	53	
Consultation style	7	9	
Participative style	0	0	

#### 4. Discussion

The results of the present study showed that 62.5%, 23.5%, and 13.5% of the subjects had authoritarian – charitable, authoritarian – exploitative and collaborative leadership styles, respectively. None of the study subjects mentioned collaborative leadership style for the managers of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences. This implies that managers are more attentive to the work environment and identify the employees' tasks, but pay less attention to the employees' participation. Also, managers are more committed to the rules and policies of the organizations. Basically, directors do not involve the employees in making decisions. In this study, 22.4% of the subjects believed that their manager's leadership style was autocratic – exploitation. In other words, they believed that the university administrators did not value their opinions and felt exploited. Similar results have also been obtained in other studies (14, 17, 18, and 19). All these studies have concluded that managers have responsibility-oriented leadership style which is similar to authoritarian – charitable style. Yet, the results of some other studies on leadership style are inconsistent with those reported in this study. In most of these studies, the subjects have mentioned their managers' leadership styles to be consultation and participation (15, 20, 21, and 22).

In a study conducted in Shiraz hospitals, no significant association was found between the managers' performance and the employees' satisfaction with the leadership style (23). One other study which was conducted in 63 nursing units in 4 hospitals in the United States indicated that the units were directed through participatory management style and there were high levels of cooperation and low levels of job stress among the employees. This reduction of work stress increased the quality of nursing care and collaborative management increased both staff's and patients' satisfaction (24).

In this study, age and marital status were significantly associated with the attitudes toward leadership style. This means that older people, who are more experienced, have a more detailed view of the recognition of university administrators' leadership styles.

The findings of this study showed that the individuals who believed the leadership style to be authoritarian – charitable stated that young individuals' management was better than that of the old individuals in various aspects, such as communication, education, and loyalty. This might be due to the fact that younger managers usually have more courage and are more comfortable in communication. On the other hand, older people are less demanding towards the fundamental changes,

changes in communication, and changes in life and working styles.

Characteristics of a leader and his motives are effective in selecting the leadership style and development of the organization depends on the managers' motivation in organizational management (25). Overall, qualified and motivated individuals who follow collaborative rather than authoritarian leadership style are much stronger managers (26). Leadership style is an important part of leadership (27). Selecting the type of leadership style is one of the managers' important responsibilities and performance of the manager depends on the leadership style (28). Each person's leadership style is defined as what others think about his/her behavior when influencing the others' activities (29). Nonetheless, one particular style is not appropriate for all situations; a manager can choose different leadership styles in various conditions with respect to organizational culture and organizational maturity. It is only possible through long-term training programs to enhance the managers' knowledge and insight in the field of knowledge management. According to the findings of this study, conflict in management should not lead to conflict in practice. Moreover, in a specialized center, collaborative management should replace authoritarian leadership style. University administrators also have different styles for leading their staff in different situations considering the organizational maturity.

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