

# A comparative study of perceived transformational, transactional and passive avoidant leadership styles effectiveness within the Ethiopian Public Universities

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## Abstract

*This study aimed at comparing (i) the perceived ratings of leaders', non-leaders' and students' on leadership effectiveness and (ii) perceived ratings of various levels of leadership against transformational, transactional; and passive avoidant dimensions of leadership using a pragmatist philosophy and a quantitative-qualitative, concurrent, mixed cross-sectional descriptive design. Addis Ababa University (AAU), Debre Berhan University (DBU), and Welkite University (WKU) were randomly selected from each of the three-generation Ethiopian public universities. This study was conducted based on original primary data collected from a total of 506 respondents who filled the survey. These included 333 students and 35 teachers; and 5 top, 16 middle, and 34 lower-level- leaders; and 49 non-leaders among the academic; and 4 top, 5 middle, and 7 lower-level- leaders among administrative staff; and 18 others. About 19 interviewees and 3 FGDS were made. A comprehensive LS and LE questionnaire were adapted, besides in-depth interviews, observation, and document analyses. Each respondent rated his/her immediate supervisor. Descriptive and inferential statistics and ANOVA were employed with corresponding tests of hypotheses. The data proved LS midway between transactional and laissez-faire (MD= 2.5) in the five-point scale. The findings included a moderate score of (M=2.73) for administrative staff middle level leaders and (M=3.37) for top-level academic leaders. Further, LS and LE scores varied favoring ratings made by the academic leadership of the top-level across the hierarchy implying ineptitude. Students' and faculties' and administrative staffs' satisfaction, and LS effectiveness were only found slightly above average. Transactional (TRNAL) rather than transformational LS prevailed in the universities. Findings had several practical implications and because of this MoSHE, the boards and the leadership of the universities and future researchers were advised to take their share.*

## Key words

Perception, leadership styles, organizational effectiveness, public university, higher education, the university community, leadership levels

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## Introduction

Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth (Burns, 1978). While it was said that there existed as a large number of definitions of leadership as there were writers on leadership (Stogdill, 1974); leadership can be defined as a process by which a certain body called a leader directs the efforts of certain other bodies called followers towards a commonly agreed goal (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982 in Tipton, 2007, p.17; Northouse, 2010, p.3). Effective organizations require effective leadership. Nevertheless, leading organizations for effectiveness is not found to be an easy job. Human

capital otherwise called social capital, or to be more technical human resource development to which leadership or effective higher education leadership remains a key player in bringing transformation and development of a given nation (Helesbein, 2011; Armstrong, 2006, pp. 35-36; 2009, p.31; 2011, pp. 39-40; Saint, 2015, p.2). Presumably, cognizant of this fact, there has been a considerable higher education expansion in Ethiopia for the last two decades.

However, educational access rather than quality and relevance issues appeared to have been the strategic focus, despite the government's introduction of a 70:30 quota shift (i.e. until very recently) from the teaching of social science to the teaching of science and technology fields (FDRE, 2016, p.43); and the recent mention of the need for working on quality and relevance by Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II). This being so, leadership style, particularly in the Ethiopian context, has little been researched, perhaps, partly for the same reasons of the complex nature of the concept of leadership itself and partly because of the less-developed research culture in the academic circle of the nation. There is a huge gap in higher education leadership style effectiveness studies. Thus, the present researcher deems fit to conduct this study. Ethiopia has been involved in large scale "massification" of university education now for over a decade or more. The government claims to have already demonstrated a huge commitment to the higher education sector by assigning about 4.5 % of the GDP (Saint, 2004, p. 880; Tebeje, 2012) or 21 % rise in its share of the ESDP IV budget of 2015 /16 (Woldegiorgis, 2015, p.26); and more recent sources are proving this figure (i.e., in 2016/17 as large as 28 %). On the other hand, it is somehow provoking that even some of the reputed Ethiopian first generation universities only ranked in the Top thousands' list as per impact and effectiveness criteria (Kefyallew, 2014). This ranking has a potential threat in the global fierce competitive world that is facing academics and their graduates. The desperate ranks of Ethiopian universities in effectiveness and impact surveys; and of course, the impecunious staff motivation; which is evident from high staff turnover and minimal participation in research and publication, are also manifestations of problems.

The Ethiopian higher education was also famous for its conservative, patriarchal, and less democratic culture depicting a "Slave-to-master" type relationship between the teacher and the students, or the leaders and the "to be led." It appeared automatic for a non-democratic environment whereby a poor sense of collegiality, threatened institutional autonomy, low educational quality to result in desperate staff motivation. More on this, because Ethiopian public universities heavily depend on public funding, they need to demonstrate a high sense of accountability. In this connection, Article 64 (1) of the FDRE Higher Education Proclamation 650/2009 declared that "the university president shall conduct the financial affairs of the institution following the law and with the principles of efficiency, efficacy, frugality, and transparency." Public universities in Ethiopia, in general, have not a good record, though (OFAG, 2016). The multifarious problems which may hamper the nation from achieving the intended goals of expanding higher education and producing the expected manpower required for the economic development and social transformation planned in GTP I and GTP II were indicative of the need for an intervention. In light of this, the present study aimed at comparing the overall perceived ratings of (a) leaders', non-leaders', and students' on leadership effectiveness and (ii) perceived ratings of various levels of leadership against transformational, transactional; and passive avoidant dimensions of leadership.

### **Theoretical underpinning**

Leadership is the process of persuasion or setting example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers (Gardner, 1990). Effective leadership refers to the process of moving a group/s in some direction through mostly non-coercive means. For instance, for Yukl, leadership refers to the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it should be done, and the process of

facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Gardner, 1990, p.10; Yukl, 2006, p.8). Northouse (2013, p.14) defines leadership as the process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes (Rost in Rickards and Clark, 2006). There is so far no conclusive theory that asserts the existence of what is called the best and/or the most effective leadership in general, and literature depicted absence of any as such (Yukl, 2006, p.8.; Northouse, 2013, p.14). Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) followed the post-1970s 360<sup>0</sup> measures of performance (Cox, et al., 1997, pp 185-209; Martz, 213, & Kang & Jin, 2015). According to this 360<sup>0</sup> of a performance measure, the person who undergoes evaluation like a leader in the case of the present study attains dependable evaluation when the following two coincide: the evaluation by him/her- self and the evaluation by the followers of different groups. This means the leader should not rate her/himself both significantly higher and lower than what the other groups do. When the leader rates her/him self-lower, it may be an indication of lack of self-efficacy; and when she/he does the reverse that may be overconfidence.

### Review of Related Literatures

There has been an endless question if there had existed what was called the best and/or the most effective leadership in general, but literature depicted absence of any as such despite Bass (1999) argued that the best leaders are transformational and transactional. Both depended on the situational and other variables (Middlehurst, 2012, p.6). However, it is also important today that, not few of the practitioners and the great majority of scholars involved in leadership research mention of 'transformational leadership' as their most favorite style. According to Belias and Nye, "transformational leadership" is a specific leadership style applied by superiors who motivate their subordinates to perform at a higher level by inspiring them, offering them intellectual challenges, and paying attention to their individual needs. Experts and editorialists generally prefer transformational leaders and consider them both more effective and more ethical (Nye, 2013, P.1; Belias, 2014, P.1).

A review of empirical literatures depicts the following. Better leaders are transformational more frequently; less adequate leaders concentrate on correction and passivity (Waas, 2012). Transformational Leadership is more successful. One of a few recent studies conducted in the area of leadership styles and organizational effectiveness included Bekele (2011). This researcher studied, "The effect of transformational leadership on subordinate job satisfaction in leather companies in Ethiopia using a Multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ)." A regression analysis result found that transformational leadership explained 40.6% of the variance in subordinate job satisfaction. The coefficient part of the regression model also found that only two factors of transformational leadership: idealized influence and individualized consideration are significant determinants in predicting subordinate job satisfaction. Finally, he concluded that transformational leadership practice increases subordinate job satisfaction (Bekele, 2011, p. 284).

By using Bass and Avolio's multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ), 5X Shrestha (2012) studied the relationship between leadership styles and employee and organizational outcomes in a Nepali telecommunication company. This researcher used Structural Equation Modelling to test hypothesized relationships. Path analysis results indicated that (i) transformational leadership is positively related with outcomes; (2) transformational leadership is a stronger predictor of employees' satisfaction with the leader, leader effectiveness and work-unit effectiveness than transactional leadership; (3) the relationship between transformational leadership and leader effectiveness and work unit effectiveness were partially mediated by employees' satisfaction with the leader. Consistent with the findings of previous studies, the findings of this study indicated that the transformational leadership style significantly contributed to

leader effectiveness and work-unit effectiveness and gave more satisfaction to the subordinates. These findings highlight the importance of transformational leadership style in achieving desired individual and organizational level outcomes (Shrestha, 2012, p. 2).

Again, by using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5x), Sadeghi & Pihie (2012) studied "The predictive effects of transformational leadership on leadership effectiveness" by taking the case of academic department-heads of the Malaysian research universities (RUs). The study employed 298 lecturers of three Malaysian RUs. Results indicated that lecturers perceived the heads of departments exhibited a combination of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. The result of regression analysis demonstrated that contingent reward, idealized influence (attribute), inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, laissez-faire, intellectual stimulation, and management-by-exception (active) were significant predictors of leadership effectiveness. These factors accounted for 82% of the variance in leadership effectiveness. Besides, the results suggested that contingent reward had important effects on leadership effectiveness. Muluken (2007) also assessed "The degree of transformational leadership practices within the Ethiopian Airlines with emphasis on top and middle-level management based on subordinates' perceptions of leadership qualities of their supervisors." The study found that transformational leadership qualities were not well developed in Ethiopian Airlines.

Thus, while the studies appear to have consensus on the predictive effects of Transformational leadership components on job satisfaction and leadership effectiveness, they have either implied for other leadership styles to also have a predictive effect or kept silent. Besides, the studies chose to approach the leadership effectiveness study using respondents' perception as a main source of information. In addition to this, while some of them involved top-level and middle-level leaders, others heavily depended on non-leader staff members (e.g., lecturers within academic departments of colleges) to rate their technical level academic leaders (department heads). Hence, the present researcher approached the study from the perspective of the leadership continuum and perceived ratings of groups.

Although transformational leadership applies to most organizational situations, the emergence and effectiveness of this style may be facilitated by some contexts and inhibited by others. For example, Johnson and Dipboye (2008) examined "The moderating effect of task type on the effectiveness of charismatic leadership, along with the charisma conduciveness of performance tasks;" and found that visionary content and expressive delivery resulted in higher attributions of charismatic leadership. Besides, visionary content led to a better quality of performance on more charisma-conducive tasks (Johnson and Dipboye, 2008 in Ramachandran and Krishnan, 2009). Highly transformational leaders demonstrated to have more effective organizations (Taylor, 2014). The findings demonstrate that leader actions can result in positive perceptions of employees, which increases the likelihood that long-term successes might be met by the organization (Taylor, 2014. P. 576).

The continued interest to know more on the subject of leadership also gave rise to numerous studies on styles of leadership ranging from autocratic versus democratic which also include aristocratic versus charismatic, strategic versus servant, and spiritual leadership among others. Here most studies prove that the democratic model yields in both moderate up to a better level of productivity and with sustained achievement supported by employees' job satisfaction, while the autocratic model also sometimes producing poor or occasionally higher result but not sustaining the high achievement and with a poor or very poor level of employees' satisfaction (Mintzberg, 2013). The other most studied aspect was the search for the most effective leader behavior. In general, researchers concluded that a focus on people rather than production brought higher work-unit productivity, whereas over-emphasis on production at the expense of relationships damaged worker satisfaction and loyalty (Reave, 2005, p. 6).

A great majority of researchers have explained the effects of leadership styles on various organizational variables. Consequently, transactional leaders were found to be fewer inspiring employees

to go above and beyond to execute the organization's goal (Loveren, 2007, p. 31). In contrast, transformational leadership results in more engaged and devoted employees who go above and beyond the job requirements to achieve organizational goals. In a study that evaluated "The effect of leadership style on job satisfaction," it was found that employees who reported to transformational leaders rated their jobs as more challenging, meaningful and significant, and the researchers believed this was in large part because their jobs were linked to the broader purpose, goals, and mission of the organization. These employees were more willing to do things that help others when it is not part of their job, work for the overall good of the company, do things to promote the company and help the company maintain a positive work environment.

There are also studies indicating that transformational leadership is positively related to subordinates' perception of leaders' effectiveness and higher levels of job satisfaction (Voon, Lo2, Ngui, & Ayob2, 2011) and motivation (Givens, 2008 in Bekele 2011, PP. 286-2287). These studies depicted a negative relationship between leadership effectiveness and transactional leadership styles.

### **Transformational leadership research models**

In the 1980s, Bennis and Nanus's discovered four strategies that leaders use to take charge of their organizations. These included: (i) attention through vision, (ii) managing meaning through communication, (iii) trust through positioning, and (iv) deployment of self. In 2002, Kouzes and Posner's contributed Five Best Practices. This challenge model of leadership was associated with what exemplary leaders widely quoted and used in higher education settings. This model is in some way a continuation of the transformational leadership concept of Burns (1978) and Bass (1987), or Bass and Avolio (1995) who developed a survey instrument (the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) transformational leadership into the development and practice domain. The challenge model consists of five practices, (i) modeling the way; (ii) inspiring a shared vision; (iii) challenging the process; (iv) enabling others to act; and (v) encouraging the heart. This study followed the Full-range leadership theory to test the leadership style's effectiveness against what is called transformational, transactional and passive avoidant (*laissez-faire*) styles of leadership (Avolio and Bass, 1985; Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

### **Methodology and Design of the Study**

This university leadership style effectiveness study followed a pragmatist philosophy which uses both positivist and interpretivist perspective for both objectivity and meaningfulness for perception studies like this (Collis & Hussey, 2014). It followed a quantitative and qualitative concurrent, mixed cross-sectional descriptive survey. The explanatory part described and compared mean leadership style effectiveness between and among different groups. The exploratory design targets to answer why the result turned that way against certain qualitative criteria. Such triangulation would make a study more valid and reliable (Creswell, 2009, p. 203-23 & Bryman, 2012, p.35). The study employed multi-stage, stratified, and purposive random sampling as appropriate. The sampling units of the study were individual members of the sample universities, students, teachers, academic leaders, and administrative service workers, Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) officers, governing board members of the universities, and members of student unions. As of April 2018, there existed between 36 up to 44 Ethiopian public universities that had graduated students. The study involved three sample universities, namely AAU, DBU, and WKU (i.e., one university from each of the first three generation-universities) using a simple random technique of the lottery method. As of 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018, a preliminary survey of YIII-V students in the pipeline added up 45,394 (Source: Researcher's survey October 2018). Using Slovene (1960) formula  $n = N / [1 + N (0.05)^2]$  and a 0.05 error margin,  $n$  was determined to be 397 participants. The study by and largely used field data from the university community and covered documentary sources-both primary and secondary. Rater groups and leadership effectiveness made the respective independent and



dependent variables of the study. Ten dimensions 37 item leadership style effectiveness questions were prepared based on, a multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ-5X) Bass and Avolio (2004, p.193). The confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) came up with a construct validity that identified a three-factor solution, constructive, aggressive-defensive, and passive-defensive, which together accounts for 65% to 72.9% of the variance in scale responses. Again, the Cronbach's alpha scale items proved.50 attainments.

The quantitative data generated through the close-ended questionnaire was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, and the results were interpreted. The first quantitative design one-way analyses of between-group variance ANOVA that compared the perceived mean ratings among the groups. An F ratio was calculated and post hoc tests conducted as demanded (Pallant, 2010, p. 249). The study used a specific strategy called Qualitative Matrix Analyses. The information collected through interviews and observation was analyzed using an analytical approach of describing and interpreting the phenomenon using extended narration.

### **Measurement model**

For validating the measurement model, Awang (2012) suggests running a pooled Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Figure 1 offers the results of the measurement model. The factor loading and squared multiple correlations (R<sup>2</sup>) for each item should not be less than 0.6 and 0.4 respectively (Awang, 2012). Accordingly, the present researcher found most of our items to outscore .05 which is very good and above factor loading. Again, the researcher performed CFA using AMOS 21 by adopting the maximum likelihood method (ML). In the validated model, factor loadings for perceived leadership styles were over .70 factor loadings. The pooled measurement model also satisfied the acceptance level of fit indices. For reliability and validity analysis, Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recommend checking the factor loadings (FLs), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity. Composite reliability (CR) is a more robust measure than Cronbach's alpha and it should be more than 0.70 (Hair et al., 1992; Nunnally, 1978). This research reported the CR value for all four constructs within a range of 0.821 to 0.906. AVE is a variance measurement extracted by the latent variable to random measurement error (Netemeyer et al., 1990). The AVE scores of all the three constructs ranged (0.552 to 0.706), which is well above the minimum limit of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The results from FLs, CRs, and AVEs established the convergent validity of the measurement model. Discriminant validity can be established if the correlation between a pair of latent variables is less than the square root of AVE of each variable.

### **Structural model testing**

The model with n=506 achieved the minimum with  $\chi^2:464.691$ ,  $df=80$ , and with 0.000 P-value. The model proved fit with 2.8 CMIN, 0.949 CFI, 0.723 PCFI, 0.098 RMSEA, and 0.000 Pclose with significant P-value for all the indicators. This means most of the measures were either within the acceptable criteria or tolerable enough. The r between .551 and .744 are admissible. The inter-item correlation coefficients within the range of .50 -.80 values confirmed that the variables are suitable for use.

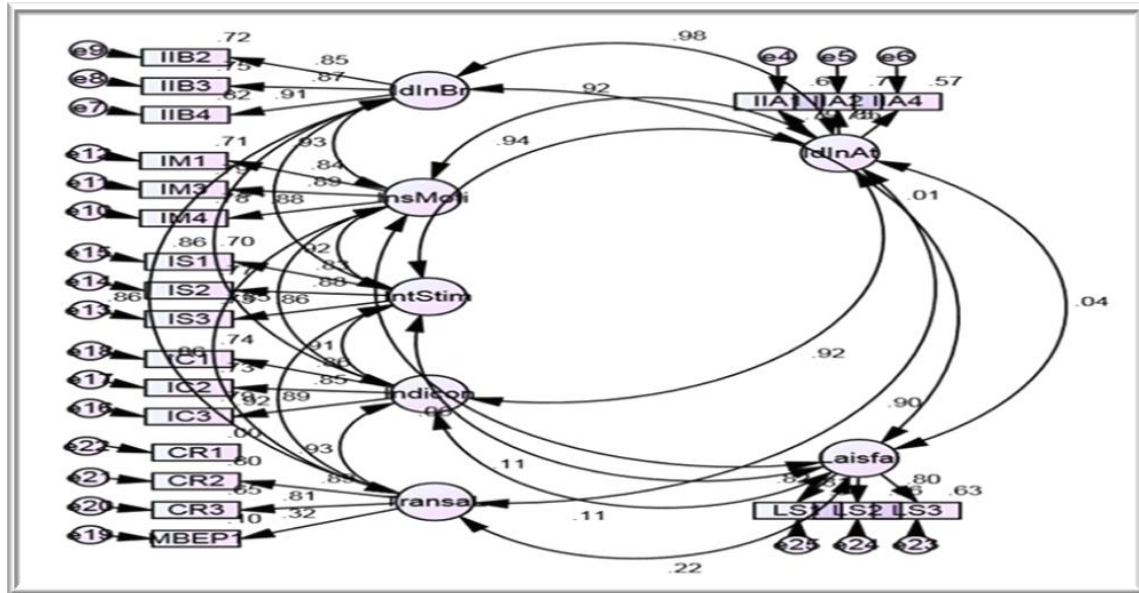


Figure 1: CFA Results of Full-Range Leadership Style Scale  
 Source: Researcher based on AMOS

Data Analyses and Interpretation

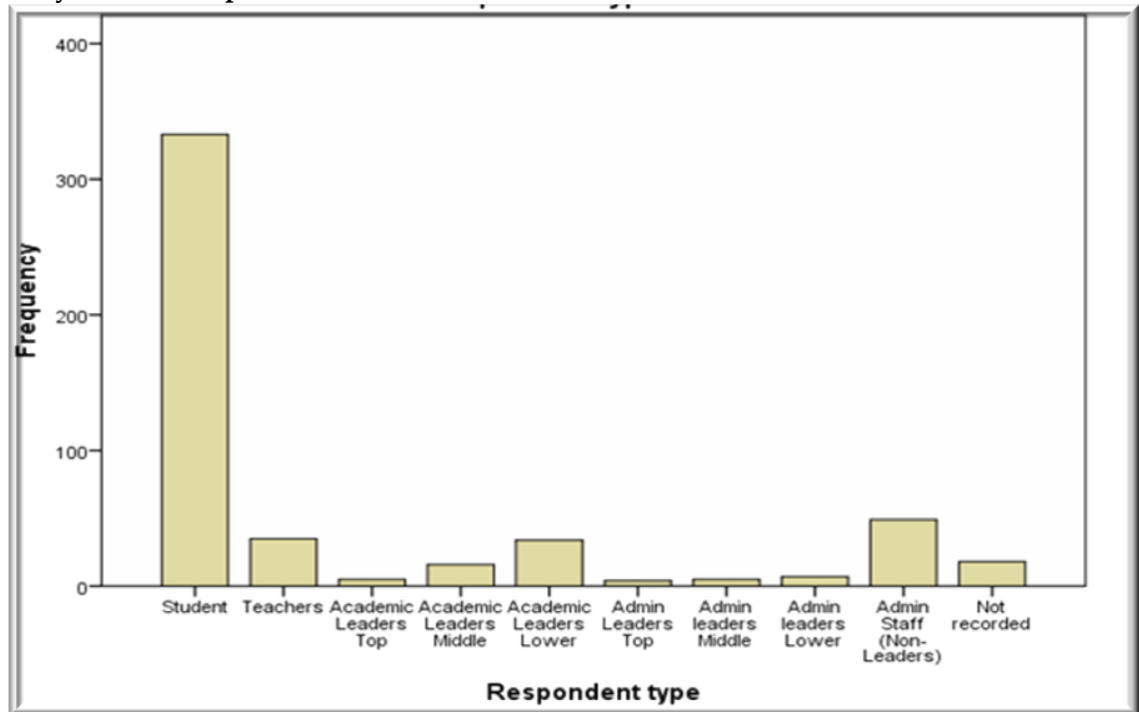


Figure 2: profile of the respondents  
 Source: Researcher's survey, June 2019

This study aimed at comparing the perceived leadership styles effectiveness within Ethiopian public universities as rated by different groups. The questionnaires were sent to 550 potential respondents and 506 of these papers were completed and returned, yielding in a response rate of about 92 %.

## Discussion

### The Descriptive Analyses

Items were interpreted as <1.49 as Very low, 1.50-2.49 as low, 2.50-3.49 as moderate, 3.50 -4.49 as high, and > 4.50 as very high. Figure 3 depicted a 1.95 (39%) which is a very low transformational; a 0.32 (6.4%) which is again very low transactional, and again a 0.37 (7.4%) very low PAL; but a 2.85 (57%) moderate on overall leadership style effectiveness. However, the same respondents rated the style type that characterized the leadership practiced within their universities mid-way between transactional and laissez-faire (i.e., a median rating of 2.5 in the five points scale). Figure 3 further depicted that leader concern for task and leader concern for people was unanimously rated about 0.32 (6.4%), and institutional autonomy as regards leadership effectiveness was rated 1.24 (24.8%) only. The client's and stakeholders' participation were rated at 0.56 (2.8%). Individual and corporate level achievements contributed 0.32 (6.4%) each, and group achievements contributed 0.45 (9%), and the three-level efforts altogether contributed 1.22 (24.4%) for the overall university level organizational effectiveness. Moreover, the same respondents rated the style type that characterized the leadership practiced within their universities mid-way between transactional and laissez-faire (i.e., a median rating of 2.5 in the five-points scale). Thus, the type of leadership being exercised by the sample universities was too much transactional (contingent reward and management by exception passive).

Figure 3 further depicted a 2.22 (44.4%) students' satisfaction in the university leadership; 0.69 (13.8%) faculty' and administrative staffs' satisfaction; and 1.44 (28.8%) students' and staff satisfaction. The bar graph also stipulated a 0.32 (6.4%) leader effectiveness; a 0.32 (6.4%) leader concern for people, and a 0.31 (6.2%) leader concern for task. Northouse (2013, p.80) called this leadership style as low relationship management an impoverished management (1,1) (i.e. as per what the leadership Grid of Blake and Mouton figure it out in their popular model). This may, in other words, imply situations of poor leader-follower relations, unstructured tasks, and potentially resulting in weak leader position power. Besides, the qualitative data labeled the type of leadership being exercised to have been too much of transactional (contingent reward and management by exception passive) styles (A-Kr1-T)." While, leadership styles can be categorized into different ways, such as autocratic, democratic, directive, and participative, we may also categorize them based on leadership style orientations of either employee or task. A key respondent who was well-versed with educational leadership had to put his view as next. He preferred the employee relationship approach to study leadership style. However, it was for a different reason that the leadership at ... was found choosing to be of a laissez-faire style. Those who mount the leadership role do so with their purpose of using the position not to serve, but to use the placement as a ladder to a certain ministerial or 'investorship /ambassadorial appointment' to thereby fulfilling their interest of financial gain only (A\_KR-Ex-L). Nevertheless, despite the data, as per the objective model, the frame of reference for judging the effectiveness of public Organizations had to be the national objectives, and in the case of this research Transformational leadership (TRFL) (i.e., education for economic and social transformation GTP Goal).



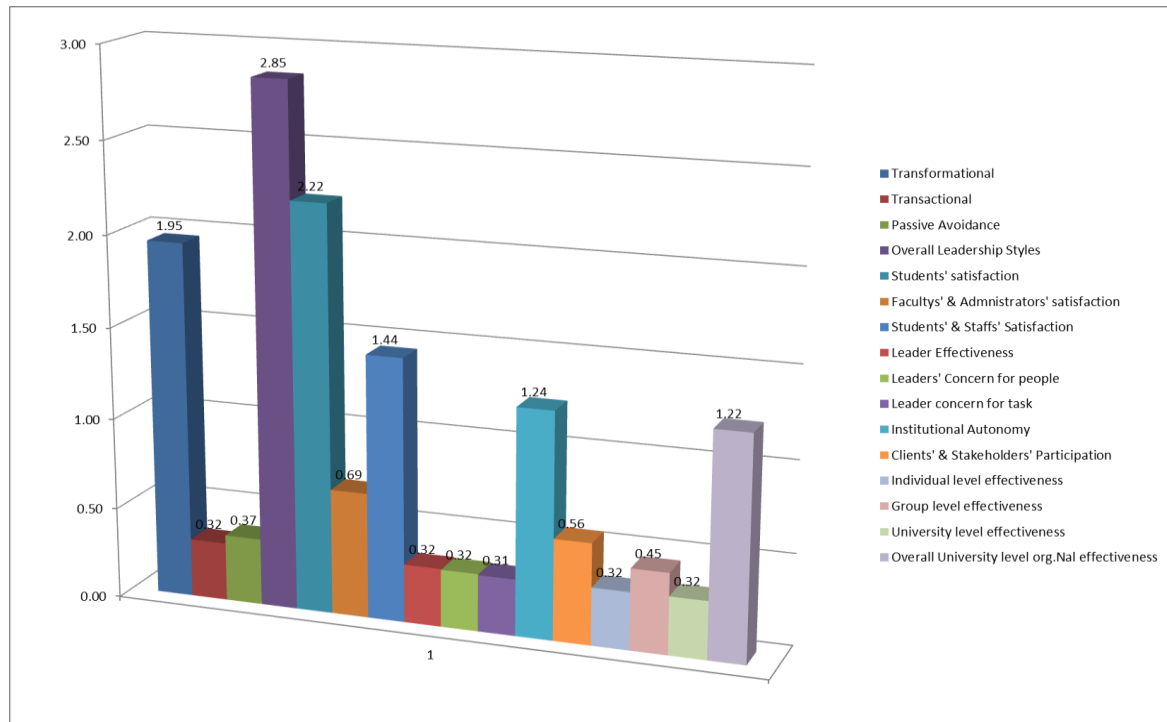


Figure 3: Results of the descriptive survey  
Source: Researcher's survey, June 2019

## The ANOVA

### Hypotheses 1

Ho1<sub>a</sub>: There is no significant difference in perceived mean transformational (TRFL) leadership style effectiveness as rated by leaders of top, middle and lower level.

Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, which tests whether the variance in scores is the same for each of the groups; is the test for proof of whether or not the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met to employ ANOVA. As per this test, if the sig. value is less than .05, then it means the data have violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance. In this analysis, the Sig. value was .000 far less than .05 implying assumption for homogeneity of variance had not been met. The Welch test and the ANOVA with a sig. value .000 were both below .05 proving the existence of significant difference somewhere among the mean scores of the groups at  $p = .05$ ; with an effect size of  $\eta^2 = 0.064291$  which is very small, however.

Table 1  
Descriptive Statistic on TRFL against level of leader

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Top	30	4.2244	.67387	.12303	3.9728	4.4761
Middle	57	4.0784	.68268	.09042	3.8972	4.2595
Lower	100	3.4907	.87830	.08783	3.3164	3.6649
Not recorded	319	3.3152	1.14473	.06409	3.1891	3.4413
Total	506	3.4897	1.06985	.04756	3.3963	3.5832

Source: Researcher's own survey, June 2019

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) compares the variance (variability in scores) between the different groups (believed to be due to the independent variable) with the variability within each of the groups (believed to be due to chance). An F ratio is calculated, which represents the variance between the groups divided by the variance within the groups. A large F ratio indicates that there is more variability between the groups (caused by the independent variable) than there is within each group (referred to as the error term). A significant F test indicates that we can reject the null hypothesis, which states that the population means are equal. Here the sig. value .000 was far less than .05 and there was a significant difference somewhere between the mean scores on your dependent variable for the groups being compared.

The ANOVA test proved a sig. value of .000 far less than  $p=.05$  implying a rejection of the  $H_0$ . A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of a leader's level of leadership on Overall TRFL Effectiveness, as measured by a Likert scale. The result was a statistically significant difference somewhere among the level of leadership in the TRFL Effectiveness score for the four groups.

Table 2  
ANOVA TRFL against level of the leaders

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	45.666	3	15.222	14.354	.000
Within Groups	532.345	502	1.060		
Total	578.011	505			

Source: Researcher's own survey, June 2019

A Post-hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the leader's level: Top-level ( $M=4.22$ ,  $SD=.67$ ) was significantly different from the rank of the Middle level ( $M=4.08$ ,  $SD=.68$ ), and Lower level ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=.88$ ).

Moreover, while the quantitative data depicted the existence of notable differences among the leader's leadership level, the mean plots in the graph next displayed the same. It showed a negative slope down from top to the middle (i.e., 28 %); and top to lower level (i.e., 53 %) difference. This consolidated the argument based on the qualitative data that universities should be led by senior professors. This comparison here is a measure of coincidence by different groups.

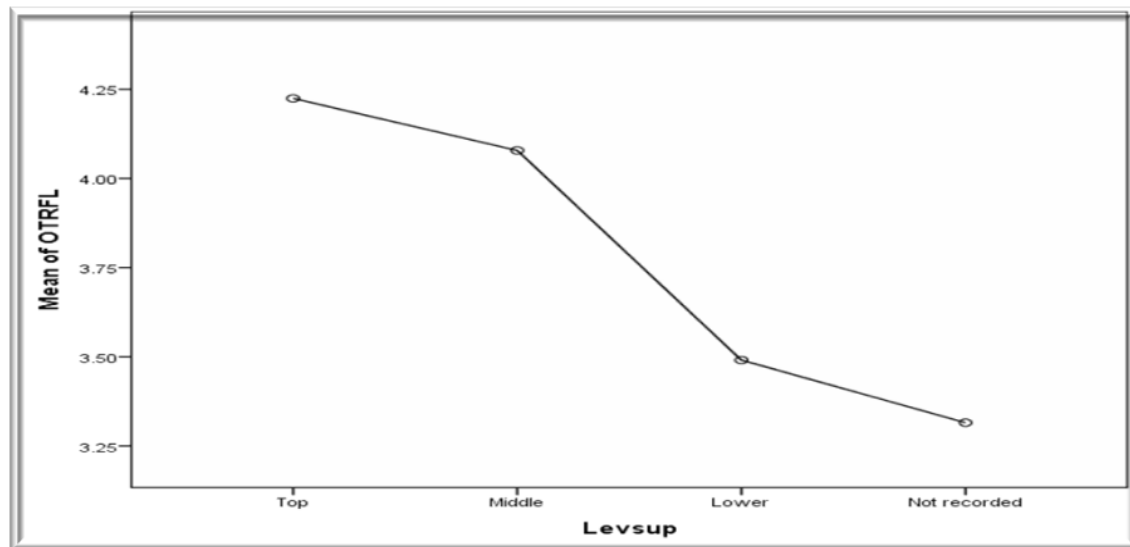


Figure 4: Mean plots on transformational style (TRFL) against leadership level

Source: Researcher's own survey, June 2019

## Hypotheses 2

Ho1b: There is no significant difference in perceived mean transformational (TRFL) leadership style effectiveness as rated by leaders and followers.

There was a statistically significant difference at  $p < .05$  level in TRFL Effectiveness score for the three groups:  $F = 13.380$ ,  $p = .000$ . The actual difference in mean scores between the groups was quite small with a very small effect size  $\eta^2$  of 0.050515. A Post-hoc comparison using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for leaders ( $M=4.06$ ,  $SD=.86$ ), followers ( $M=3.38$ ,  $SD=1.09$ ), and not specifically categorized respondents ( $M=3.86$ ,  $SD=.52$ ) differ significantly from each other. Moreover, while the quantitative data analyses depicted significant differences among rater groups, the mean plot in the figure next stipulated a sharp negative slope from leaders to followers (i.e., up to 67 % variation) in favor of leaders. The qualitative explanation here highlighted a difference in the leadership effectiveness evaluation which could be attributed to followers' dissatisfaction in such factors as missing incentive systems especially for those high-level academicians and lower-level administrative staff in particular and both the teaching and the administrative staff.

Post-hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score for Top-level leaders ( $M=4.22$ ,  $SD=.67$ ) was significantly different from that of Middle-level leaders ( $M=4.08$ ,  $SD=.68$ ), and from that of Lower-level leaders ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=.88$ ) as well. This is a rejection of the  $H_0$  and hence acceptance of the  $H_1$  which is at least the mean of one group differs significantly from the mean of the rest of the groups. It is a negative slope down from Top level leaders to Middle-level leader (i.e., 28 %); and from Top level leaders to Lower level leaders (i.e., 53 %) differences. The qualitative data that the universities overall are not being led by senior professors consolidates the same.

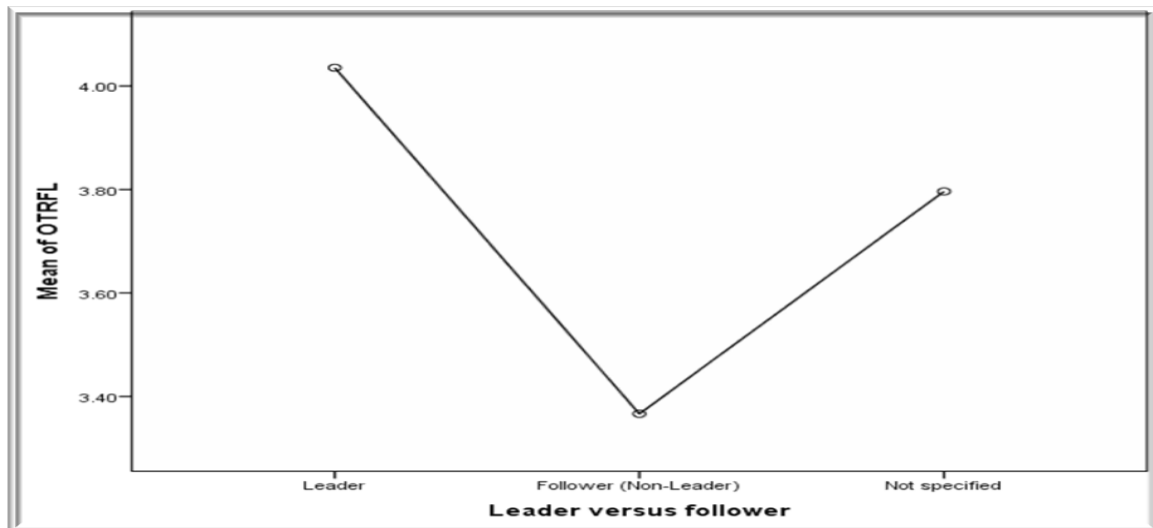


Figure 5: Mean plots on transformational style (TRFL against leader-follower  
Source: Researcher's own survey, June 2019

### Hypotheses 3

Ho1c: There is no significant difference in perceived mean transformational (TRFL) leadership style effectiveness as rated by academic and administrative staff.

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the effect of respondent type on overall TRFL effectiveness, as measured by a Likert scale. Participants were divided into ten groups as in table 3 next. Both the Welch test and the ANOVA test proved the statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level in the TRFL Effectiveness score for the ten groups indicated.

While the respective mean ratings of all respondent types were far higher than the average 2.50 mean of the scale, the Tukey test next depicted what was also seen in the mean plot in the next graph with the respective mean descriptive ratings 4.03, 4.34, 4.26, 4.10, 3.03 and 3.38 mean values. These were 3.31, 3.51, and 3.80 for students, administrative non-leader staff members, and teachers. The further Tukey test depicted between 52 up to 71 % difference which is very huge.

While the preceding quantitative data analysis depicted a few significant differences among rater groups, the mean plot in Diagram 6 next, stipulated a sharp positive slope from students to teachers first; and then to the leaders. The further shift among the leaders showed a gentle positive slope from top-level academic leader to middle and lower-level academic leaders, but slightly steep slopes to top-level and a sharp negative to lower and middle-level administrative leaders.

The qualitative data also came up with explanations, such as missing promotional opportunities for teachers especially as we move high on the ladder; on the one hand, and professor-respondents who in not few cases were those who already in some senior positions, proving the consistency of the argument, on the other hand. The Welch test confirmed assumptions not met with a sig value .000 which is below .05 and hence we cannot conduct ANOVA, however.

Figure 6 next depicted clear differences among the leadership effectiveness rating between academic and administrative staff members besides the level of leadership. Again, this implies the rejection of the Ho and hence acceptance of the H<sub>1</sub> which is at least the mean of one group differs significantly. The qualitative explanation attributed this fact to followers' dissatisfaction in such factors as missing incentive packages or systems of remuneration especially for senior faculty members and

administrative staff as a whole. The data further depicted that the admin wing was not in its good shape and was found both little managed resulting in low work morale. As far as the leadership effectiveness theme is considered, there is a tendency of taking the leader effectiveness for the effectiveness of the university as a whole. This key respondent furthered a scenario of an attempt for a leader working for effectiveness, which is task-orientation which doesn't work, and the law enforcement power of the leaders is limited.

Table 3  
Descriptive statistics on TRFL against staff

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Student	333	3.3093	1.14251	.06261	3.1861	3.4325
Teachers	35	3.7962	.78265	.13229	3.5273	4.0650
Academic Leaders Top	5	4.0267	.27729	.12401	3.6824	4.3710
Academic Leaders Middle	16	4.3375	.67702	.16925	3.9767	4.6983
Academic Leaders Lower	34	4.2569	.68227	.11701	4.0188	4.4949
Administrative Leaders Top	4	4.1000	.84063	.42032	2.7624	5.4376
Administrative leaders Middle	5	3.0267	1.34792	.60281	1.3530	4.7003
Administrative leaders Lower	7	3.3810	1.03903	.39272	2.4200	4.3419
Administrative Staff (Non-Leaders)	49	3.5102	.77179	.11026	3.2885	3.7319
Not recorded	18	3.8593	.52088	.12277	3.6002	4.1183
Total	506	3.4897	1.06985	.04756	3.3963	3.5832

Source: Researcher from SPSS

Hence, the system appeared to have been less attractive for both the teachers and university leaders.

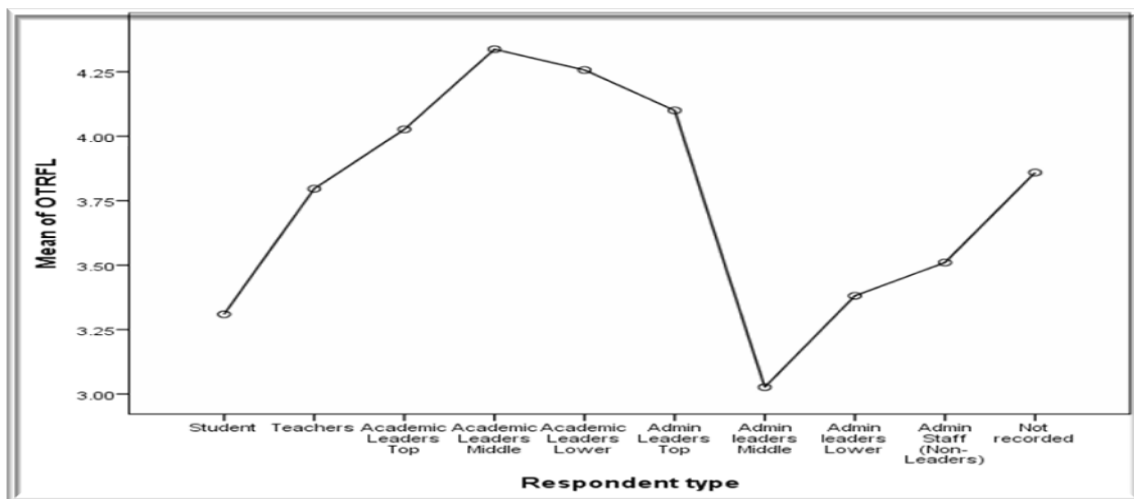


Figure 6: Mean plots on transformational (TRFL) style against respondent types  
Source: Researcher from SPSS



Another key respondent corroborated his version of effectiveness in the university in absolute qualitative terms that run as NEXT.

*"As far as the effectiveness of the leadership is considered, the teaching-learning no question is ineffective. The arrow pointed down continuously across time. ... There is an observable difference; the young generation teachers are uncompromising in getting assigned to courses. However, they de facto finish a four-credit hour course after three or four lecture hours; both the teacher and the students are happy about it. ...So, teaching-learning cannot be effective where courses are only partially provided. Where the "Point" actually is not there in the so-called "Power-point" technology; the teachers pretend to provide the partial coverage of courses...It's the same with research. It is hardly possible to say that there is research. There are units whose regular duties and responsibilities are doing research. These institutes even didn't produce any research in the name of the university except that ...Some people aspire for community service here and there. However, it lacks consistency." (A-Kr1-T).*

Effectiveness was presumed to be an outcome of motivated staff and hence this question was presented to participants. Two of the key respondents, they were governing board members and professors, commented on their desperation with the leaders' and the faculty's level of commitment. The response from the third key respondent was no different. However, this A-Kr1-T respondent appeared to have a different view in that the problem was intense with the administrative staff.

### **Summary of Findings**

The type of leadership being exercised by the sample universities was too much of transactional (contingent reward and management by exception passive).

The study depicted a 3.44 (i.e. 68.8%) leader effectiveness; a 3.25 (65%) effectiveness in students' and faculty's' and administrative staffs' satisfaction on a five-point scale.

There was a statistically significant difference among mean ratings by groups at  $P=.05$ ; major irregularities being between top-level academic leadership rating high (i.e. well over 4.00 in most of the indicators) on the five-point scale, and usually with a step-down slope from top-level academic leadership towards administrative leaders.

The leaders' rated transactional leadership style effectiveness 40% higher than what followers did. This finding aligned with missing incentive systems for followers stipulated by the qualitative data.

The leaders rated the leadership effectiveness scale 53 percent higher than what followers did. This follows the 39% and the 5% respective figure for transactional and transformational leadership style earlier.

### **Conclusion**

This study aimed at comparing the perceived leadership style effectiveness within Ethiopian public universities. There existed significant differences among (a) the leaders', followers' and students' ratings on perceived leadership style effectiveness, (b) leadership levels against transformational, transactional and passive avoidant dimensions of leadership styles; and in IM and IS dimensions of TRFL leadership dimensions. Transactional rather than transformational leadership styles prevailed in the Ethiopian public universities which plunge in disarray with what was in their plan.

### **Recommendations**

The Ethiopian Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) should encourage the university leadership to align its leadership style to the economic and social transformation national goal, by adopting transformational rather than the prevailing transactional leadership style.

It should work to give Ethiopian public universities a good shape so that the latter can attract the required pool of human resource for leadership positions of all levels.

MoSHE and the governing board of Ethiopian public universities today more than ever should work for the full attainment of Impartiality among its subunits.

They should also oversight the university leadership's level of commitment towards improving faculty's and administrative staffs' satisfaction in job conditions, and faculty's and staffs' satisfaction in administrative remuneration.

MoSHE, the governing board and the leadership of the universities should closely and in unison work for the recruitment and selection as well as capacity building of all level leaders to attain leadership effectiveness of the institutions through enhancing transparency among others so that the senior professors (those who know the way, walk the way and who can show the way) lead the universities towards a higher level of excellence.

The university leaders should live and learn with and understand society. They should make a role model for the faculty to start with what the students know; and build with what the latter have. The leaders should help faculty come up with students that say that they have done it themselves when departments achieve.

### Suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers who have the passion and courage for some innovative way of investigating the study to yield in findings that effectively control the perception related error factors; develop a framework for what are called qualities of effective leadership within the context of Ethiopian universities; expand this study into the context of other Ethiopian private universities, and of course other public sectors organizations which may somehow differ from the higher education sector.

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