

A STUDY ON THE LEADERSHIP STYLES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KHANH HOA

Lâm Thị Loan

Trường Đại học Khánh Hòa

Thông tin chung:

Ngày nhận bài: 27/05/2024

Ngày phản biện:

28/05/2024

Ngày duyệt đăng:

21/06/2024

*Tác giả chính:

lamthiloan@ukh..edu.vn

Title:

Nghiên cứu về phong cách lãnh đạo ở trường Đại học Khánh Hòa.

Từ khóa:

phong cách lãnh đạo, giáo dục đại học, nhà lãnh đạo, phong cách lãnh đạo dân chủ, phong cách lãnh đạo chuyên quyền.

Keywords:

leadership styles, Higher education, leaders, democratic leadership style, autocratic leadership style.

TÓM TẮT: Giáo dục đại học đóng vai trò quan trọng trong sự phát triển kinh tế - xã hội của mỗi quốc gia. Chất lượng giáo dục đại học phụ thuộc vào nhiều yếu tố, trong đó vai trò của lãnh đạo là vô cùng quan trọng vì có ảnh hưởng trực tiếp đến chất lượng giáo dục, môi trường học tập và sự thành công của sinh viên. Bài viết này tìm hiểu về Phong cách lãnh đạo của các nhà lãnh đạo, quản lý ở Trường Đại học Khánh Hòa. Với phương pháp nghiên cứu định lượng sử dụng bảng hỏi khảo sát online, bài viết này tìm hiểu quan điểm của các nhà lãnh đạo, quản lý về sáu phong cách lãnh đạo phổ biến hiện nay là phong cách chuyên quyền, phong cách tự do, phong cách dân chủ, phong cách chuyển đổi, phong cách giao dịch và phong cách hỗ trợ. Kết quả nghiên cứu thể hiện hai phong cách được sử dụng chủ yếu là phong cách chuyên quyền và phong cách dân chủ và xu hướng chuyển dịch dần từ phong cách lãnh đạo chuyên quyền sang phong cách lãnh đạo dân chủ nhằm mang lại hiệu quả hơn trong công tác lãnh đạo của người lãnh đạo, quản lý tại Trường Đại học Khánh Hòa.

ABSTRACT: Higher education plays an important role in the socio-economic development of every country. The quality of higher education depends on many factors, among which the role of leadership is extremely important because it directly affects on the quality of education, the learning environment, and the success of students. This article explores the leadership style of leaders and managers at the University of Khanh Hoa. Using quantitative research methods with an online survey questionnaire, this article examines the perspectives of leaders and managers on six popular leadership styles today: autocratic style, delegative (laissez-faire) style, democratic style, transformational style, transactional style and supportive style. The research results show the prominence of two main styles, the autocratic style and the democratic style and the gradual shift from an autocratic style to a democratic leadership style to achieve more effective leadership outcomes at the University of Khanh Hoa.

1. Introduction

Leadership plays an important role in directing and promoting the development of any organization, including higher education institutions. The leadership style of leaders and managers has a direct impact on the

performance of this educational organization in many aspects, such as educational quality, learning environment and student success.

A leader with an effective style will inspire and motivate officers, civil servants to join hands in achieving the common goals of the school. Additionally, the appropriate

leadership style of leaders and managers will contribute to some aspects, as follows [3]:

Appropriate leadership style will help optimize operating processes, effectively use resources and time, which create a professional working environment, and encourage creativity, innovation and responsibility of each individual. As a result, it can operate effectively, save costs and bring benefits to the community.

Human resource development: Leadership style plays an important role in attracting and nurturing staff, lecturers, and students. Effective leadership will help develop each individual's potential, and create conditions for their comprehensive intellectual, moral, and physical development. Consequently, an effective leadership style can contribute to building a high-quality workforce for the country.

Building a positive learning environment: Leadership style creates a friendly, open working and learning environment, encouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing. Thanks to that, officers, civil servants, and officials can effectively acquire knowledge, develop soft skills and train themselves to become useful people for the university.

Leadership style creates a friendly and open working and learning environment, encourages collaboration and sharing knowledge. As a result, officers, and civil servants can effectively acquire knowledge, develop soft skills, and train themselves to become valuable contributors to the university.

In summary, leadership style plays a key role in directing activities and ensuring the sustainable development of the higher education environment. Applying an appropriate leadership style would create an effective working and learning environment. This article will examine the leadership style which is considered as an effective leadership at the university of Khanh Hoa, and suggest some solutions to enhance the effective leadership style in the long term. With the

results, this article would support the current leaders and managers at the University of Khanh Hoa adjust their leadership style to the situation. This research results also promote potential leaders to take opportunity to be an effective leader.

2. Theoretical framework and research methods

2.1. Theoretical framework

a) Definition of leadership

There are different definitions of leadership. Leadership is a process that focuses on shaping or influencing people to achieve organizational goals [5]. Leadership is as a process of influence “whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” [8].

Leadership is considered as the process or ability of a person or group of people to guide, direct, motivate and create consensus within a group or organization to achieve a specific goal. In other words, leadership is the art of influencing, inspiring and motivating an organization and team to take action to implement strategic plans and achieve common organizational goals. Leadership plays an important role in every organization. An effective leader can make a huge difference to an organization's success, helping the organization achieve its goals, driving innovation and making a positive difference within the organization.

b) Leadership styles

Leaders who lead by motivating and inspiring their followers usually exhibit a style of leadership. Leadership style therefore, refers to the ways a leader chooses to lead and interact with their followers [9]. In other words, Leadership style is an expression of the leader's leadership approach and has a huge influence on how a leader makes decisions, communicates expectations, motivates followers, and creates a work environment. There are several leaderships styles and these different leadership styles can

impact the dynamics, productivity, and culture within an organization or group in several different ways.

Kurt Lewin who is a Psychologist has researched and discovered three typical leadership styles in 1939: Autocratic leadership, democratic leadership and delegative leadership [7]. In 1985 Bernard M. Bass proposed transformational leadership style and transitional leadership style [1]. The American scholar Likert (1961), after extensive experimental research on democratic leadership, formally introduced the concept of participative leadership in his book “A New Model of Management” [6].

In summary, there are some basic leadership styles, as follows:

Autocratic leadership style: Autocratic leaders concentrate power in their own hands, make their own decisions and rarely consult others. This style can be effective in some situations that require quick and decisive action, but it can also lead to a lack of engagement and sense of responsibility among staff, faculty, and students [1].



Figure 1: Leadership styles

Democratic leadership style: Democratic leaders encourage participation in decision making process. They regularly consult with staff, faculty and students before making important decisions. This style can help create a positive and cohesive work environment, but it can also be time-consuming and difficult to make quick decisions [1].

Delegative (Laissez-faire) leadership style: Leaders give autonomy to staff, lecturers and

students. They are less involved in the day-to-day running of affairs and allow people to make their own decisions. This style can be effective with highly qualified and self-managing people, but it can also lead to inefficiency and lack of accountability without close supervision [1].

Transformational leadership style: Transformational leaders inspire staff, faculty and students with a shared vision and mission. They focus on developing people's potential and helping them achieve common goals. This style can promote innovation and creativity, but it also requires leaders to have good communication and inspirational skills [2].

Transactional leadership style: A transactional leader focuses on exchanging rewards for good performance and punishment for poor performance. Transactional leaders often set clear goals and expectations for followers, and they closely monitor their performance. This style may be effective in boosting productivity in the short term, but it can also lead to a lack of employee motivation and creativity in the long term [2].

Participative leadership: Participative leadership is a unique leadership style, also commonly referred to as democratic leadership. Participative leaders guide their employees while encouraging them to provide feedback and participate in decision-making. Participative leaders recognize employees' significant role in their organization's success. They promote transparent communication, collaborative solutions, and inclusivity [5].

In addition to the six main leadership styles mentioned above, there are many hybrid leadership styles that combine elements of many different styles. Due to the time, and the scope of the research, we focused on the six leadership styles.

The most effective leadership style for a university depends on many factors, including the organizational culture, strategic goals, and characteristics of the leader and manager [4]. Choosing the appropriate leadership style plays an extremely important

role in the success of an individual, a group, and even an entire organization [10]. An effective leader will know how to use appropriate style to promote productivity and achieve common goals.

This article seeks to better understand the perspectives of leaders and managers at the University of Khanh Hoa on the leadership style that leaders, managers use to bring about effective leadership and meet the needs of the university.

2.2. Research method

The purpose of the survey is exploring the main leadership styles that most effective leaders and managers at the University of Khanh Hoa have been used. The data obtained from the online survey are the basis for us to determine research directions and propose solutions to enhance the effective leadership style. We selected 42 leaders and managers and conducted a survey online to gain their experience perspective in leadership styles.

The study uses qualitative research method through the use of survey questionnaires. The questionnaire has observed variables designed on a Likert-5 scale. The questionnaire was designed and used Question Pro tool for online survey. An email invitation to participate in the survey along with the survey link was sent to the leaders and

managers of the university, Board of Directors, Faculty and Department leaders, and Leader of social organizations in the university. The survey period was from February 2024 to March 2024, and collected 42 responses, of which 34 were valid. In addition, research also applies the method of analysis and synthesis, which is the process of understanding the parts of an object or problem to better understand its nature and combine the elements and components that have been analyzed into a unified, complete whole, thereby forming a new perception of the problem, object or phenomenon being researched.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Results

The study sample that this study collected in terms of male (53.22%) and female (46.88%) genders is relatively equal in number. quite balanced between male and female genders, and at the same time covering respondents of different ages. The age of the research sample is pyramidal, with the age range from 40 to under 45 being the highest age group (40.62%), the lowest being over 55 years old (3.12%). The highest number of total years of experience in leadership and management positions is from 10 to less than 20 years (58.82%). And experience under 5 years is 14.71%.

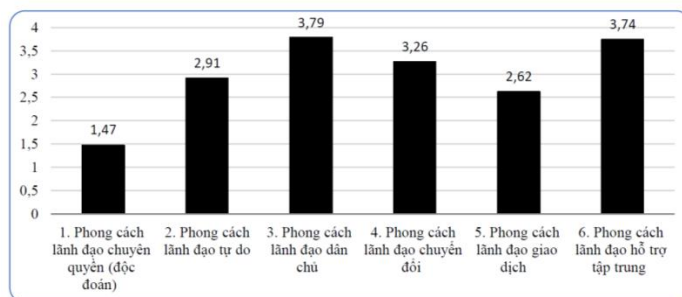


Figure 2. The frequency use of leadership styles

The study sample shows the extent to which different leadership styles are used. When comparing the Matrix Scorecard, the most used leadership style among the remaining styles is the democratic leadership style (score = 3.79), followed by the

supportive leadership style (score = 3.74). The least used are autocratic leadership style (score = 1.47) and transactional leadership style (score = 2.62) (see Figure 2).

When knowing the frequency of regular use of leadership styles, leaders and can also

assess the effectiveness level associated with each style. Corresponding to the frequency of use, leaders and managers who employ the democratic leadership style most often achieve the highest leadership effectiveness (score = 3.97), followed by the supportive

leadership style (score = 3.79). Conversely, the autocratic leadership style, used least often by managers, results in the lowest leadership effectiveness (score = 1.82), followed by the delegative (laissez-faire) style (score = 3.15) (see Figure 3).

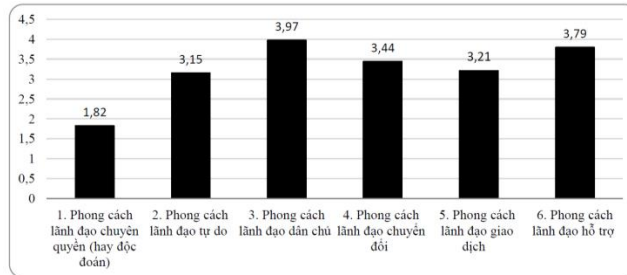


Figure 3. Level of effectiveness of leadership styles

The factors affecting work efficiency that the participants in this survey were responsible for had quite impressive results when the most influential factor was luck (score=9.54), followed by the level of complexity. job complexity (score=8.31) and work tools and equipment (score=7.15). The lowest are management and leadership skills (score=1.9) and experience and professional knowledge (score=2.5). This indicates that

external factors also significantly affect the work they are responsible for and managing.

Although the autocratic leadership style is the least used and is considered to be the least effective in leadership, almost participants believe that this leadership style is the most suitable for the working environment where they do their current job (score=4.2), while the democratic style is the least suitable (score=2.03) (see Figure 4).

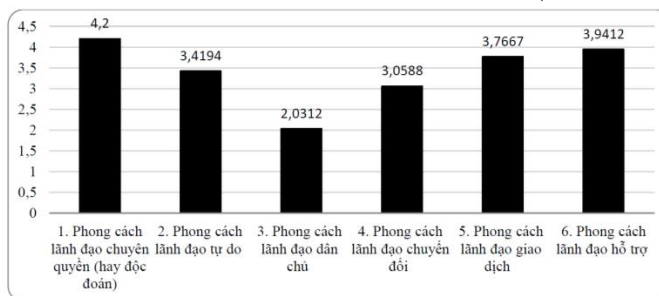


Figure 4. Leadership style appropriate to the working environment

This is really an impressive data of this study when most participants said that their leadership style is a democratic style,

specifically shown as follows: they rarely use or show power. in their leadership position (score=41.18%) (see Figure 5).

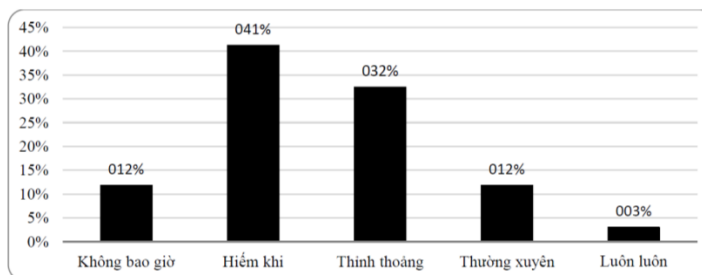


Figure 5. Degree of power expression

And they assign subordinates to do their own work, specifically monitoring their own work on a regular basis (67.65%), and

subordinates shape their own work on a regular basis (64.71%) (see Figure 6 and Figure 7).

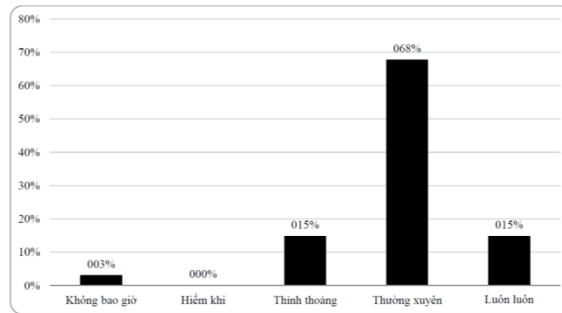


Figure 6. Subordinates supervise their work themselves

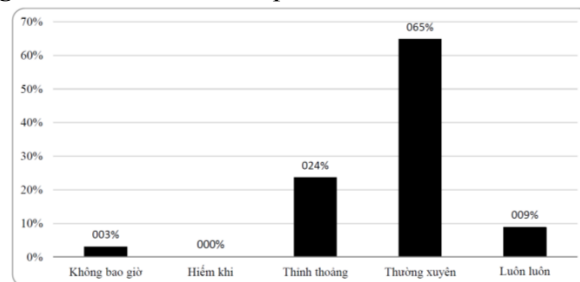


Figure 7. Subordinates shape their work themselves

However, when most of the participants encounter problems at work, these leaders and managers all believe that the level of effectiveness with which they solve the problem themselves is more effective than assigning subordinates to solve the problem

(see Figure 8 and Figure 9). In the Figure 8, the effectiveness when leaders and managers solve problems themselves is 47.06% while in the Figure 9, the effectiveness when subordinates solve problems themselves is 35.29%.

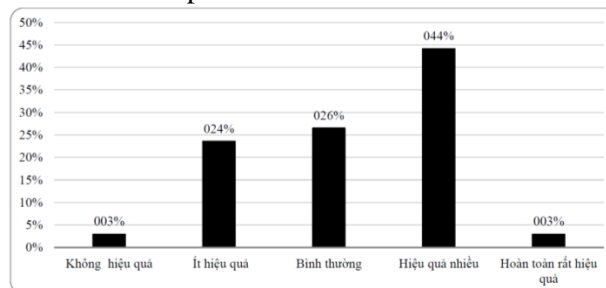


Figure 8. Level of effectiveness when leaders and managers solve problems themselves

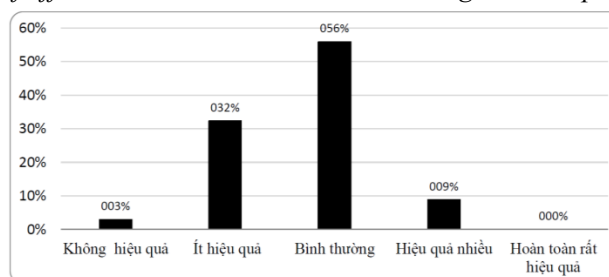


Figure 9. level of effectiveness when subordinates solve problems themselves

3.2. Discussion

With the survey's statistical results presented in the section above, we can summarize the highlights of this study as follows:

Most survey participants indicated that among the six standard leadership styles, the most frequently used style is the democratic style (score = 3.79). Additionally, the democratic style was rated by survey participants as having a higher level of leadership effectiveness compared to the other five leadership styles when used to solve daily tasks (score = 3.97).

Leaders trust and delegate work to subordinates (score = 3.94), but according to survey participants, the effectiveness of subordinates in solving problems is less compared to when they solve problems on their own. This is evident from the tasks assigned to subordinates, such as: subordinates monitoring their own work (score = 3.91) and subordinates shaping their own work (score = 3.76).

It can be seen that survey participants commented that they use a democratic style at work, and delegate tasks to subordinates to self-monitor and shape their own work. However, survey participants also commented that, it is still faster and more effective for them to solve tasks themselves compared to assigning them to subordinates. This suggests that, with the democratic leadership style identified by survey participants, they create conditions for subordinates to participate in decision-making and express their opinions. They also highly appreciate the individuality and contributions of their subordinates and commented that they do not use their position or power to influence their subordinates.

However, the subordinates' problem solving is not very effective, indicating that they are still confused in handling work. This is

because superiors tend to do for the employees, do not delegate authority, and do not trust that subordinates can handle difficult tasks (this is opinions of the survey participants (ID5450198).

Table 1: Breakdown of autocratic vs. Democratic leadership

	Autocratic leadership	Democratic
Decision-making	A leaders enjoys full authority With centralized power. Decisions are taken by the leader	A leader believes in power sharing, involves the team in the decision-making process
Communication	Communication is typically one-way	Communication is more open and two-way.
Authority and control	The leader maintains tight control over everything.	The leader empowers team members and shares some of the control.
Employee engagement	Employees may feel disengaged and unmotivated	Employees tend to feel more engaged and motivated.
Innovation	Can stifle innovation because new ideas are discouraged and employees are less likely to take risks	Encourages innovation because employees feel comfortable sharing ideas and experimenting with new approaches.

(Source: [1], [2])

Furthermore, the survey participants (ID5460387) said that: " Work will not be

effective when the superior is autocratic, domineering, or when the superior delegates power but lacks the necessary support for subordinates, leading them to work based on emotions, bias, and selfish thoughts”.

In addition, there are differences between the autocratic leadership style and the democratic leadership style in terms of decision-making, communication, authority and control, employee engagement and innovation (see Table 1).

The above analysis demonstrated that although survey participants stated that they are using the democratic style to achieve the best leadership effectiveness, they did not clearly demonstrate the necessary characteristics of the democratic leadership style, particularly for leader and manager participants, such as:

Although the leaders and managers seldom use their position power, they do not really delegate authority to subordinates.

Although the leaders and managers let their subordinates shape their work themselves, and assign work to subordinates, but they do not provide timely guidance and support.

Although the leaders and managers let their subordinates supervise their work themselves, but they do not place absolute trust in subordinates who can do the difficult task.

Despite of trying the democratic leadership style, having bias, egoism and indulgence still exist in the leaders and managers’ decision-making process.

In summary, through analyzing the survey results and comparing the differences between the autocratic style and the democratic style, we can see that the survey participants' style is influenced by the autocratic style which they believed exists in their working environment (see Figure 4). According to them, their working

environment contributes to an autocratic leadership style. In addition, from the survey participants' point of view, they identified and believed that the leadership style they were using was a democratic style (See Figure 2). However, it could be said that their leadership style did not clearly demonstrate the necessary characteristics of a democratic leadership style. In other words, their leadership style is tending to shift from autocratic leadership style to democratic leadership style. (see Figure 10).

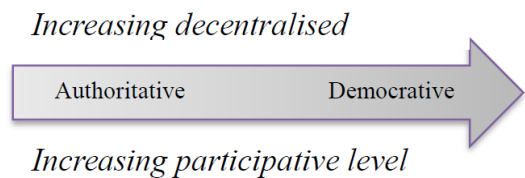


Figure 10. Leadership style shifting

3.3. Implications

The trend of shifting from autocratic and authoritarian leadership style to a democratic leadership style at the University of Khanh Hoa (see Figure 10) is a positive trend with many potential benefits. However, to ensure the success of this trend, some aspects need to be improved, specifically as follows:

a) Working environment

It is necessary to create motivation for development in the working environment. Leaders and managers need to have a clear vision and specific strategy while demonstrating trust, care, and inspiration to officers, civil servants, officials, and students. They should encourage the exchange of information, sharing of opinions and problem solving in an open and transparent manner. It is timely and worthy to reward individuals for their collective efforts and achievements. Leaders and managers should also create conditions that allow subordinates to balance

work and personal life, helping them reduce stress and maintain optimal working morale.

b) Professional development

Leaders and managers should provide appropriate training and development programs to improve skills and knowledge of officers, civil servants, officials. They should also establish a clear and fair promotion path, creating opportunities for these individuals to develop and advance in their careers.

c) Cultivating more situational

Leadership skills

Situational leadership skills involve the ability to evaluate and respond effectively to different situations in the work environment. This skill is crucial for anyone aspiring to be a successful leader, as it enables them to adapt flexibly to new challenges and opportunities. Some suggested ways to hone situational leadership skills are suggested: developing self-awareness, practicing problem-solving abilities, learning to manage conflict, and cultivating critical thinking skills.

d) Encouraging creativity and innovation

Leaders and managers should provide people with the tools, resources, and support they need to be creative and encourage them to share their ideas freely and openly. People need to feel comfortable generating new ideas without fear of judgment or punishment. Leaders and managers should facilitate receiving constructive feedback on ideas and promote creativity and innovation as a continuous process. By taking these steps, we can create an environment where new ideas can emerge and thrive.

4. Conclusion

Leadership styles is really important in working and leading effectively. To discover the leadership style that leaders and managers at the University of Khanh Hoa used, the research proposed six common leadership styles: autocratic style, delegative (laissez-

faire) style, democratic style, transformational style, transactional style and supportive style. The research results show the prominence of two main styles, the autocratic style and the democratic style.

In addition, the leadership style of leaders and managers at the University of Khanh Hoa is gradually shifting towards a democratic style. This is evident through the promotion of administrative reform, increasing the participation of individuals within the university in policy development, and enhancing the power and ownership of the institution. The trend which is shifting towards a democratic style is a long-term process, requiring the efforts of both leaders, managers and officers, civil servants, officials.

The shift towards a democratic leadership style is a long-term process that requires the efforts of leaders, managers, officers, civil servants, and officials. While the trend towards democratic leadership is widespread, it does not imply that leaders and managers always apply this style in every situation. A smart leader will know how to combine different styles to create a unique leadership approach that best aligns with the organization's goals and mission. There is no one-size-fits-all answer to which style is better; the most effective approach depends on the situation, the team, and the task at hand.

References

1. Bass, B. M, (1985), *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*, New York: Free Press.
2. Bass, B., & Avolio, B, (2002), *Developing potential across a full range of leadership: Cases on transformational and transactional leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
3. Bennis, W. G., & Nanus, B. (1985), *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper & Row.

4. Bush, T. (2007), *Educational leadership and management: theory, policy, and practice*. London: Sage Publication.
5. Griffin, M. A., Parker, S. K., & Mason, C. M, (2010), Leader vision and the development of adaptive and proactive performance: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95(1), 174–182.
6. Likert R, (1961), *New Patterns of Management*, New York: Mcgraw-Hill Book Company.
7. Lewin, K. et. Al, (1939), Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created Social Climates, *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Volume 10, 1939.
8. Northouse, P. G, (2004), *Leadership: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.), Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.
9. Northouse, P. G, (2018), *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (8th ed.), Sage Publications.
10. Yammarino, F. J., & Bass, B. M, (1991), *Person and situation views of leadership: A multiple levels of analysis approach*.