

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND PRACTICES AMONG INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVES IN CHENNAI

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Abstract

The present study examined the Leadership Styles and Practices among Information Technology (IT) Executives in Chennai, with a focus on understanding how leadership behaviors influence organizational effectiveness in the IT sector. A purposive sampling method was employed to select respondents who hold executive or managerial positions in various IT firms across the city. A total of 500 structured questionnaires were distributed through a self-administered survey, out of which 372 valid responses were received and used for further analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS software version 21, employing both Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis to test the relationships among key variables. The findings revealed a strong and positive correlation between various dimensions of Decision-Making Skills (Time Management, Unassured, Clarity of Thought and Delegating Decision-Making Task), Leadership Styles (such as Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire), and Leadership Qualities (including Assertiveness, Emotional Stability, Team Spirit, Innovativeness and Dominance). The regression analysis further confirmed that these leadership dimensions significantly predict the effectiveness of leadership practices among IT executives. The study concludes that leadership styles and practices among IT executives in Chennai are not only positively correlated but also play a crucial role in shaping organizational performance, employee satisfaction, and innovation capacity. The results highlight the importance of fostering effective leadership development programs tailored to the dynamic and technology-driven IT environment.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Decision-Making Skills, Information Technology.

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, effective leadership is essential for driving organizational success, particularly in technology-driven industries. Information Technology (IT) executives, who play a critical role in steering technological innovations, managing operations, and ensuring business growth, adopt diverse leadership styles to meet the dynamic challenges of their industry. Chennai, a prominent IT hub in India, hosts a variety of technology-driven enterprises, ranging from startups to multinational corporations, each facing unique leadership demands. This research aims to explore and analyze the leadership styles and practices among IT executives in Chennai, understanding how these approaches influence organizational performance, employee satisfaction, and innovation within the sector. By investigating different leadership frameworks such as autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire this study seeks to provide insights into how leadership impacts decision-making, employee engagement, and organizational adaptability in the fast-paced IT industry. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics and may offer valuable recommendations for enhancing leadership effectiveness within Chennai's IT sector.

Problem Statement

The Information Technology (IT) sector in Chennai has seen significant growth, becoming a hub for both national and international businesses. As IT organizations strive for competitive advantage, effective leadership becomes a critical factor in driving innovation, team performance, and organizational success. However, little research has been conducted on the specific leadership styles and practices employed by IT executives in Chennai and how these strategies impact organizational outcomes such as employee motivation, productivity, and overall company performance. Despite the availability of global leadership models, it remains unclear how these models are adapted to the unique cultural and operational challenges in the Chennai IT context. With the increasing pressure to adapt to technological advancements, manage diverse teams, and achieve business targets, it is essential to understand the leadership preferences and behaviors of IT executives in this region. This research aims to explore the leadership styles and practices of Information Technology executives in Chennai, examine how these leadership approaches align with the cultural and operational dynamics of the region, and identify their effectiveness in fostering organizational growth and employee satisfaction.

Literature Review

Bennet (2009) studied the subordinate's perception of the Transformational, Transactional and Passive Leadership Styles of IT Managers against three dependent measures; predicting subordinate extra effort, manager effectiveness and satisfaction with management.

A multifactor leadership questionnaire 5x short form, measuring all nine full range leadership variables were administered to 150 IT professionals from Association of Information Technology Professionals. The results of multiple regressions brought out a partial support for all the three hypotheses. The study substantiated that Transformational, Transactional and Passive Leadership were able to forebode managerial effectiveness.

Zareen, Razzak, and Mujtaba (2015) examined the impact of Transactional, Transformational, and Laissez-faire leadership styles on employee motivation among banking sector employees. Data was collected from a sample of 100 full- time employees working on non-managerial positions in five different commercial banks. The research questions were empirically answered using regression analysis. The results revealed significant positive relationship between all three styles and motivation.

R. Indira (2018) research concentrates on the IT professionals in Chennai. It may be a fact that a prominent study across other urban centres in India would have disclosed better results. The findings exclusively hinge upon the responses, which are rational and circumstantial. A mixture of constructs stays undiscovered and should be covered in the future research, like Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Servant Leadership, Role Efficacy and Organizational adaptability.

Dr. M. Ganesan @ Kanagaraj (2019) concluded that the Team Leader plays a major role in maintaining the depression level of the employees. For any field, if the leader is perfect and efficient, the subordinates will also be efficient, resulting in the overall benefit of the employers as well as the employees. Similarly, if the team leader can manage the employees well, by equally distributing workload among the team members, by maintaining equality and transparency among the team members, and micromanaging the team members, the depression level of the employees will be low resulting in the satisfaction of the companies as well as the employees.

N. Suresh Kumar and Dr. Shikha Kapoor (2021) aimed to find the impact of technology on different leadership styles to support distanced working, particularly, after the spread of the global pandemic. For this, 328 respondents working in service sector of Delhi & NCR were surveyed through structured questionnaire. Findings of the study revealed that technology has an influence on different leadership styles in supporting distanced working by providing clear communication, skill management, participation, or guiding work behavior. Additionally, technology plays significant role of enabling distanced working through contribution of technology in supporting communication and mobility, determination of technology task-fit, or creating of sense of unity. Thus, using the practices like cloud based

internal communication portal or the reward and recognition facility, the benefit of technology could be derived and business continuity.

Setiawan, Roy et al., (2021) examined the effect of styles of leadership over the performance of the employees. The authors had done a comparative research study amidst the varied styles of leadership. The leaders who are successful refer to the facilitators who target committed and skilled employees. Research regarding the organizational psychology and studies regarding the organizational actions proposed that the staff motivation and the leadership styles are the major factors towards the success or the failure of a business. The present study was done to explore the effect of leadership over the employee performance. The study was done in the context of the employees of education ministry as well as the higher education, Somaliland. The authors had also defined four forms of leadership styles like transactional, democratic, transformational and autocratic. The impact of leadership over the efficiency of the employees had been analyzed. The outcomes revealed that the model of autocratic leadership affected the efficiency of the department and this was reflected by way of decrease in the job satisfaction, rotation, bad morale and high level of absenteeism. The execution of transformative, transactional and egalitarian leadership had an optimistic effect over the success of employees and was reflected through dedication, engagement, efficiency and high morale of the employees. It was found that disruptive, transactional and democratic leadership were optimistically related with the performance of the employees. On the contrary, autocratic leadership was negatively related with employee performance.

Beauty. M and Aigbogun. O (2022) explored the impacts of the styles of leadership over the performance of the employees. The authors had explored the effect of leadership styles like laissez-faire, transactional and transformational. The sample population comprised of 255 workers. Among them 156 employees were selected through stratified random sampling. The study was descriptive and quantitative and data was collected through questionnaire. SPSS ver.23 was employed for data analysis. The styles of leadership were assessed with the help of multi-factor leadership questionnaire. The performance of the employees was assessed with the help of Yousef scale (2000). Analysis was done through Cronbach's Alpha, reliability test, demographic analysis, descriptive analysis and regression. The coefficient of regression was used to evaluate the effect of leadership style over the employee performance. The findings revealed that laissez-faire and transformational styles had a positive effect over the performance of the employees. On the other hand, transactional leadership had a negative effect.

Tamimi. M and Sopiah. S (2022) studied the effect of leadership style over the performance of the employees. The study was done with the help of preferred reporting items. Meta-analysis and Systematic Review were done. The method of data collection was done using comparisons, interventions and population. The style of leadership is considered to be a significant element for achieving the goals of the organization. The organization can achieve the goals when the employees perform better.

Uzma Sarwar et al. (2022) aimed to discover a leadership style practiced by females and discover the relationship between leadership style and the innovative performance of female leaders. Several female leaders, including faculty members, heads of departments, deans, coordinators, and directors, from public and private universities of Punjab (a province of Pakistan), were involved in this study. A sample of one hundred female leaders was selected using a multistage sampling method. In the first stage, five public and five private sector universities were selected through a simple random method. In the second stage, ten female leaders (five from each of the social science and basic science departments) were selected from each university through a purposive sampling method. The researchers adopted a reliable instrument to collect the survey data. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Mean scores and Pearson correlation coefficients were used to discover the relationship between various variables. The investigation revealed that most female leaders practice the transactional leadership style in their universities. This study also discovered a moderate positive relationship between both leadership styles, namely transactional and transformational, and innovative performance.

Dr. B. Sivaraj (2024) emphasizes the strategic importance of human resources within an organization, asserting that they play a pivotal role in determining both organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The study underscores that human resources must be effectively managed in terms of acquisition, maintenance, and development to ensure optimal employee performance and the achievement of organizational goals. Sivaraj further argues that leadership style is a critical factor in influencing, guiding, and assessing employee behavior and performance within the workplace. In this context, the study was conducted to examine the impact of leadership style on employee performance, specifically within the Information Technology sector. Using a convenience sampling technique, data were collected from a sample of 100 IT employees through a structured questionnaire. The analysis, conducted using regression techniques, revealed a positive relationship between leadership style and employee performance. These findings reinforce the idea that appropriate leadership approaches can significantly enhance employee outcomes and contribute to overall organizational success.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the relationship among various dimensions of Decision-Making Skills.
2. To examine the relationship among various dimensions of Leadership Styles.
3. To analyses the relationship among various dimensions of Leadership Qualities.

Methodology

The study is basically an empirical one based on data gathered from the Information Technology Executives. A sample of 372 respondents has been chosen for the purpose of the study. The primary data was gathered using the questionnaire method administered by a prefixed schedule in person with each respondent. For this study, the researcher used a well-structured questionnaire to collect the data from the respondents. The questionnaire related to various dimensions of Decision-Making Skills, Leadership Styles and Leadership Qualities. The researcher used Correlation analysis to identify the relationship among various dimensions of Leadership Styles. IBM SPSS 21 version was used for statistical purpose.

Results and Discussions

Relationship among dimensions of Decision-Making Skills

In this study, Decision-Making Skills consists of four factors that measure Time Management, Unassured, Clarity of Thought and Delegating Decision-Making Task.

Table 1

Relationship among dimensions of Decision-Making Skills

Decision-Making Skills	Time Management	Unassured	Clarity of Thought	Delegating Decision-Making Task
Time Management	1.000	0.056	0.039	0.204
Unassured		1.000	0.312**	0.256
Clarity of Thought			1.000	0.064
Delegating Decision-Making Task				1.000**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table explored the relationships between variables related to decision-making skills, including time management, feelings of being unassured, clarity of thought, and

the tendency to delegate decision-making tasks. The results revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between feeling unassured and clarity of thought ($r = 0.312$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that individuals who experience uncertainty or self-doubt may also engage in more reflective or analytical thinking processes. Additionally, a significant positive correlation was found between being unassured and the tendency to delegate decision-making tasks ($r = 0.256$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that individuals lacking confidence may prefer to rely on others when making decisions. In contrast, the relationship between clarity of thought and delegating decision-making was weak and not statistically significant ($r = 0.064$), implying little to no association between these two constructs. Furthermore, time management showed very weak correlations with all other variables, none of which reached statistical significance, suggesting that time management operates independently of un assuredness, clarity of thought, and delegation tendencies in the context of decision-making. Overall, the findings highlight the role of self-assurance in influencing both cognitive clarity and decision delegation behavior.

Relationship among dimensions of Leadership Styles

In this study, Leadership Styles consists of three factors that measure Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire.

Table 2
Relationship among dimensions of Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles	Autocratic	Democratic	Laissez-faire
Autocratic	1.000	0.538**	0.434**
Democratic		1.000	0.394**
Laissez-faire			1.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table examined the interrelationships among three leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. The results revealed statistically significant positive correlations between all pairs of leadership styles at the 0.01 level. Specifically, autocratic leadership demonstrated a strong positive correlation with democratic leadership ($r = 0.538$, $p < 0.01$), as well as a moderate positive correlation with laissez-faire leadership ($r = 0.434$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, democratic leadership was moderately correlated with laissez-faire leadership ($r = 0.394$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that individuals or leaders may not strictly adhere to a single leadership style but instead exhibit characteristics associated with multiple styles simultaneously. The positive intercorrelations indicate that elements of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire approaches may coexist within leadership behavior,

reflecting a flexible or situational leadership tendency depending on context and organizational needs.

Relationship among dimensions of Leadership Qualities

In this study, Leadership Qualities consists of five factors that measure Assertiveness, Emotional Stability, Team Spirit, Innovativeness and Dominance.

Table 3
Relationship among dimensions of Leadership Qualities

Leadership Qualities	Assertiveness	Emotional Stability	Team Spirit	Innovativeness	Dominance
Assertiveness	1.000	0.156**	0.258**	0.314	0.336**
Emotional Stability		1.000	0.322**	0.120**	0.137
Team Spirit			1.000	0.132**	0.241**
Innovativeness				1.000**	0.060*
Dominance					1.000**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above table investigated the relationships among various leadership qualities, including assertiveness, emotional stability, team spirit, innovativeness, and dominance. The results revealed several statistically significant correlations, indicating meaningful associations between key leadership traits. Assertiveness showed significant positive correlations with emotional stability ($r = 0.156$, $p < 0.01$), team spirit ($r = 0.258$, $p < 0.01$), and dominance ($r = 0.336$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that assertive leaders are more likely to exhibit emotional resilience, foster team collaboration, and demonstrate a commanding presence. Innovativeness also showed a notable positive correlation with assertiveness ($r = 0.314$), though the significance level was not marked. Emotional stability was positively correlated with team spirit ($r = 0.322$, $p < 0.01$) and to a lesser extent with innovativeness ($r = 0.120$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that emotionally stable leaders may contribute to a more cohesive and innovative team environment. Furthermore, team spirit was significantly associated with both innovativeness ($r = 0.132$, $p < 0.01$) and dominance ($r = 0.241$, $p < 0.01$), implying that leaders who prioritize collaboration also tend to bring new ideas and exhibit authority. Interestingly, a weak yet statistically significant correlation was observed between innovativeness and dominance ($r = 0.060$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting a subtle link between creative thinking and

leadership control. Overall, the findings highlight the interconnected nature of core leadership traits, reinforcing the idea that effective leadership is multidimensional and built upon a balanced combination of emotional, interpersonal, and strategic competencies.

Impact of various dimensions of Leadership Styles and Leadership Qualities on Decision-Making Skills

Regression is the determination of statistical relationship between two or more variables. In simple regression two variables are used. One variable (independent) is the cause of the behaviour of another one (dependent). When there are more than two independent variables the analysis concerning relationship is known as multiple correlations and the equation describing such relationship is called as the multiple regression equation.

Regression analysis is concerned with the derivation of an appropriate mathematical expression is derived for finding values of a dependent variable on the basis of independent variable. It is thus designed to examine the relationship of a variable Y to a set of other variables $X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_n$. the most commonly used linear equation in $Y = b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \dots + b_n X_n + b_0$

Here Y is the dependent variable, which is to be found. X_1, X_2, \dots and X_n are the known variables with which predictions are to be made and b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n are coefficient of the variables.

In this study, the dependent variable is Decision-Making Skills; Independent variables are Leadership Styles and Leadership Qualities:

- Dependent Variable – Decision-Making Skills (Y)
- Independent Variable
 - i. Leadership Styles (X_1)
 - ii. Leadership Qualities (X_2)
- Multiple R value: 0.619
- R Square value: 0.548
- Adjusted R square value: 0.543
- F value: 9.315
- P value: 0.000

Table 4
Variables in Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	p-value
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Constant	3.316	0.226	-----	14.688	0.000**
Leadership Styles	0.244	0.057	0.236	4.313	0.000**
Leadership Qualities	0.101	0.057	0.098	1.784	0.075

** Denotes significant at 1% level.

The multiple correlation coefficient is 0.619 measures the degree of relationship between the actual values and the predicted values of the Decision-Making Skills. Because the predicted values are obtained as a linear combination of Leadership Styles (X_1) and Leadership Qualities (X_2) the coefficient value of 0.619 indicates that the relationship between Decision-Making Skills and the two independent variables is quite strong and positive.

The Coefficient of Determination R-square measures the goodness-of-fit of the estimated Sample Regression Plane (SRP) in terms of the proportion of the variation in the dependent variables explained by the fitted sample regression equation. Thus, the value of **R square** is 0.548 simply means that about 54.8% of the variation in Decision-Making Skills is explained and R square value is significant at 1 % level.

The multiple regression equation is

$$Y = 3.316 + 0.244 X_1 + 0.101 X_2$$

Here the coefficient of X_1 is 0.244 represents the partial effect of Leadership Styles on Decision-Making Skills, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implies that such effect is positive that Decision-Making Skills would increase by 0.244 for every unit increase in Leadership Styles and this coefficient value is significant at 1% level. The coefficient of X_2 is 0.101 represents the partial effect of Leadership Qualities on Decision-Making Skills, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implies that such effect is positive that Decision-Making Skills would increase by 0.101 for every unit increase in Leadership Qualities and this coefficient value is not significant at 1% level. Based on standardized coefficient, Leadership Styles (0.236) is the most important factors to extract Decision-Making Skills, followed by Leadership Qualities (0.098).

Conclusion

The present study concluded that effective leadership is characterized by a flexible, situational approach rather than strict adherence to a single style. Leaders often display a blend

of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire behaviors, adapting based on context. Decision-making skills are significantly influenced by leadership styles, particularly through self-assurance, which affects clarity of thought and delegation tendencies. While leadership qualities such as assertiveness, emotional stability, and team spirit are interrelated and contribute to leadership effectiveness, their impact on decision-making is less pronounced. Overall, the findings emphasize that adaptable leadership styles, more than personal traits alone, are key drivers of decision-making effectiveness among IT executives in Chennai.

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