

**LEADERSHIP STYLES PREFERED BY SCHOOL  
PRINCIPALS IN RELATION TO ORGANIZATIONAL  
ROLE STRESS**

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**Abstract**

The study examined the leadership styles preferred by private senior secondary school principals of Punjab. Data was collected by multistage random sampling technique from a sample of 250 principals of private senior secondary schools of five districts of Punjab ( Moga, Ludhiana, Patiala, Ferozpur and Jalandhar) .Standardized tools (leadership style scale and Organizational role stress scale) were used in this study. The data were analyzed by employing mean, SD ,t ratio and r. Results showed that both male and female principals use Participative style (LS5) i.e. 35% and 39% respectively as the most dominating style. But female principals use participative style (LS5) more as compare to male principals. Implications- Leadership style is helpful in policy making and curriculum framing. It also helps the principal to solve day to day problems of the schools.

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## INTRODUCTION

In an educational institution, principal is to be a good leader. He must have insight into the human problems and capacity to analyze the emotional forces that motivate the conduct of the teachers and the students. Leadership is the driving force of an organization. It determines the quality and success of an organization. Leadership is a process of developing and coordinating a group's activities towards certain goals accomplishment in a given situation" (Dutta 2009). The leader is a catalyst to inspire and motivate the rank and file in the organizations. He sets the tone and culture of the organization.

Halpin, (1966) Bennis (2004) is of the view that "Leadership is a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues, and taking effective action to realize your own leadership potential."

Northouse (2007) hold the view that "Leadership is process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve goals."

Keith (2007) is of the opinion that "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen."

Leadership is defined in so many different ways that it is hard to come up with a single working definition. Leadership is not just a person or group of people in a high position; understanding leadership is not complete without understanding interactions between a leader and his or her followers. Neither is leadership merely the ability or static capacity of a leader.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS

"Role stress refers to the conflict and tension due to the roles being enacted by a person at any given point of time." (Pareek, 2003) Enacted in the context of organizations, such role stresses are called organizational role stress. Any organization may be perceived as a system of roles. These roles are different from positions or offices in the organization. According to Katz and Kahn (1966) "office is a relational or power related concept. Office is concerned with the hierarchical positions and privileges, whereas role refers to the obligations attached to that

office.” Thus, “office defines the power of the holder.” (Mintzberg, 1983) Role determines the obligation of the person holding that office. Pestonjee (1992) explain “Role as the totality of formal tasks, informal tasks and acts as organized by an individual. Each individual is a member of social systems and the expectation as well as demand of one may put pressure on the other.”

“There are 2 role systems: Role Space and Role Set.

**Role Space-** “Role Space has three main variables: self, the role under question, and the other roles one occupies. Any conflict among these is referred to as role space conflict. These conflicts may take several forms as Inter-Role Distance, Self/Role Conflict, Role-Expectation Conflict, Personal Inadequacy, and Role Stagnation.” (Pareek 2005)

**Role Set-**“Role Set is the role system within the organization of which roles are part and by which individual roles are defined. Role Set conflicts take the forms of Role Ambiguity, Role Overload, Role Erosion, Resource Inadequacy, and Role Isolation. The above dimensions of conflict are worth considering in relation to organizational role stress.” ( Pareek 2005).

Kahn et al (1964) were the first to describe “Organizational stress in general and role stress in particular.” Katz and Kahn (1966) continued this research and suggested that “An organization can be defined as a system of roles and they used three categories to define role stress: role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload.” Pareek (1976) many researchers have used Katz and Kahn (1966) definition of role stress, but recent studies do not capture the entire work experience of those being researched. “Each role is a system of functions, and there are two important aspects of an individual’s role that should be considered when examining role stress: (1) role set, which is the role system in an organization that defines individual roles; and (2) role space, which is the roles people occupy and perform.” (O’Driscoll & Cooper, 1996) Ramirez (1996) associated “Stress with work overload, resources inadequacy, dealing with patients, suffering keeping up to date, being responsible for the quality of work of other staff and having to deal with relatives.” Pareek (2005) “Role stress refers to the conflict and tension due to the roles being enacted by a person at any given point of time.”

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out with the following objectives:-

1. To study the leadership styles of principals with respect to gender.
2. To study the levels of organizational role stress of principals with respect to gender.
3. To find out the relationship between dimensions of organizational role stress and leadership styles of principals.
4. To find out the difference in the leadership styles preferred by principals with respect to gender.
5. To find out the difference in leadership styles among principals perceiving high and low organizational role stress.

### HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out with the following Hypotheses:-

1. There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of the organizational role stress and leadership styles of male principals.
2. There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of the organizational role stress and leadership styles of female principals.
3. There will be no significant difference in (LS1) Authoritarian as leadership style preferred by principals with high and low organizational role stress.
4. There will be no significant difference in (LS2) Bureaucratic as leadership style preferred by principals with high and low organizational role stress.
5. There will be no significant difference in (LS3) Nurturant as leadership style preferred by principals with high and low organizational role stress.
6. There will be no significant difference in (LS4) Task-oriented as leadership style preferred by principals with high and low organizational role stress.
7. There will be no significant difference in (LS5) Participative as leadership style preferred by principals with high and low organizational role stress.

**SAMPLE :** In the present study the investigator has adopted multistage random sampling technique and selected a sample of 250 senior secondary school principals of five districts of Punjab. These were Moga, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala and Ferozepur.

## PROCEDURE

Descriptive survey method of research was employed for the present study. The Standardized tools for assessment of leadership style and Organizational role stress were employed on school principals. Data was collected personally by the investigator by multistage random sampling technique from a sample of 250 principals of private senior secondary schools of five districts of Punjab (Moga, Ludhiana, Patiala, Ferozpur and Jalandhar). The data was analyzed by employing mean, SD, t ratio and r.

## MEASURES

Keeping the objectives of the study in mind following tool were used in the present study:

1. Leadership style Scale by Sinha (1983)
2. Organizational role stress scale developed by Pareek (1993)

## STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

For the data analysis, the researcher employed various statistical techniques which were as follows:-

1. Descriptive Analysis such as Mean, Median, Standard deviation were computed to study the nature of distribution for scores for all the variables of the study. Pie charts and bar diagrams were used to depict the results.
2. Bi-variate correlation was employed to study the relationship between the different leadership styles and dimensions of organizational role stress of male and female school principals.
3. Differential Analysis was employed to determine if there were any statistically differences in the mean score of leadership styles, and organizational role stress.

## MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### (A) The findings related to objective no-1, and 2 are enlisted as no 1 to 4

1. Participative (LS5) was the most preferred leadership style among principals with i.e. (37%). On comparing different leadership style with respect to gender.

**Table1. Mostly Preferred Leadership Styles by School Principals**

Leadership Styles	No. of Principals using the Styles	% of Principals using the Styles
Authoritarian (LS1)	11	4%
Bureaucratic (LS2)	32	13%
Nuturant (LS3)	47	19%
Task Oriented (LS4)	36	15%
Participative (LS5)	93	37%
Mixed	31	12%

Table1. Revealed that Participative (LS5) is the most frequently preferred style among principals with 37% of them reporting it as their mostly preferred style.

2 .On comparing different leadership style with respect to gender it was found that both male and female principals use Participative style (LS5) i.e. 35% and 39% respectively as the most dominating style. But female principals use participative style (LS5) more as compare to male principals.

**Table2. Most Dominating Style Used by Male and Female School Principals**

Leadership Styles	No. of Male Principals	No. of Female Principals	% of Male Principals	% of Female Principals
Authoritarian (LS1)	5	6	4%	5%
Bureaucratic (LS2)	16	16	13%	13%
Nuturant (LS3)	26	21	21%	17%
Task Oriented (LS4)	22	14	17%	11%
Participative (LS5)	44	49	35%	39%
Mixed	12	19	10%	15%

Table2. Revealed that both male and female principals use Participative style (LS5) i.e. 35% and 39% respectively as the most dominating style. But female principals use participative style (LS5) more as compare to male principals.

Principals with high organizational role stress prefer Participative (38%) as the most dominating style followed by Bureaucratic (17%), Nuturant (16%), Task Oriented (14%) and Authoritarian (2%).

**Table3. Most Dominating Style Used by School Principals with High Organizational Role Stress**

Leadership Styles	No. of Principals	% of Principals
Authoritarian (LS1)	3	2%
Bureaucratic (LS2)	21	17%
Nurturant (LS3)	20	16%
Task Oriented (LS4)	17	14%
Participative (LS5)	46	38%
Mixed Style	16	13%

Table 3.shows that principals with high organizational role stress prefer Participative (LS5) as the most dominating leadership style i.e. 38% of them reporting it as their dominant Leadership styles .

4. Principals with low organizational role stress prefer Participative (37%) as the most dominating style followed by Nuturant (22%), Task Oriented (15%), Bureaucratic (9%) and Authoritarian (2%).

**Table 4. Most Dominating Style Used by School Principals with Low Organizational Role Stress**

Leadership Styles	No. of Principals	% of Principals
Authoritarian (LS1)	8	6%
Bureaucratic (LS2)	12	9%
Nurturant (LS3)	27	22%
Task Oriented (LS4)	19	15%
Participative (LS5)	47	37%
Mixed Style	14	11%

Table 4.shows that principals with low organizational role stress prefer Participative (LS5) as the most dominating leadership style.

**(B)-The findings related to hypotheses no 1 (There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of organizational role stress and leadership styles of male principals.) concerning correlation are listed from 5 to 9**

5. 51% school principals had low organizational role stress. Dimensions of organizational role stress i.e. (ORS<sub>1</sub>) inter- role distance -0.18, (ORS<sub>2</sub>) role stagnation-0.19, (ORS<sub>3</sub>) role expectation conflict -0.18, (ORS<sub>4</sub>) Role erosion -0.19, (ORS<sub>5</sub>) role overload-0.19, (ORS<sub>7</sub>) personal inadequacy-0.20 and (ORS<sub>9</sub>) role ambiguity 0.21 were significantly correlated with (LS<sub>1</sub>) Authoritarian style of male principals.
6. Inter- role distance (ORS<sub>1</sub>) 0.18 was significantly correlated with (LS<sub>2</sub>) Bureaucratic style of male principals.
7. Inter- role distance (ORS<sub>1</sub>) 0.23 was significantly correlated with (LS<sub>3</sub>) Nurturant style of male principals.
8. Role stagnation (ORS<sub>2</sub>) -0.18 and (ORS<sub>10</sub>) resources inadequacy -0.17 were significantly correlated with (LS<sub>4</sub>) Task oriented style of male principals.
9. Inter- role distance (ORS<sub>1</sub>) -0.22, (ORS<sub>3</sub>) role expectation conflict -0.19, (ORS<sub>9</sub>) role ambiguity -0.24 and (ORS<sub>10</sub>) resources inadequacy -0.24 were significantly correlated with (LS<sub>5</sub>) Participative style of male principals.

**(C)-The findings related to hypotheses no 2 (There will be no significant relationship between dimensions of organizational role stress and leadership styles of female principals.) concerning correlation are listed from 10 to 13**

10. Dimensions of organizational role stress i.e. (ORS<sub>1</sub>) inter- role distance 0.18, (ORS<sub>2</sub>) role stagnation 0.18, (ORS<sub>4</sub>) Role erosion 0.18, (ORS<sub>5</sub>) role overload 0.19 were significantly correlated with (LS<sub>1</sub>) Authoritarian style of female principals.
11. Inter- role distance (ORS<sub>1</sub>) 0.18 was significantly correlated with (LS<sub>2</sub>) Bureaucratic style of female principals.
12. Inter- role distance (ORS<sub>1</sub>) 0.23 was significantly correlated with (LS<sub>3</sub>) Nurturant style of female principals.
13. Inter- role distance (ORS<sub>1</sub>) 0.22, (ORS<sub>4</sub>) Role erosion 0.17, (ORS<sub>5</sub>) role overload 0.19 and (ORS<sub>6</sub>) role isolation 0.19 were significantly correlated with (LS<sub>4</sub>) Task oriented style of female principals.

**(D)-The findings related to hypotheses no 3 to 7 (There will be no significant difference in leadership style preferred by principals with high and low organizational role stress.)**



concerning significance of difference between means are listed from 14 to 18.

14. No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (LS1) Authoritarian as leadership style was found in principals with high and low organizational role stress.

15. No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (LS2) Bureaucratic as leadership style was found in principals with high and low organizational role stress.

16. No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (LS3) Nurturant as leadership style was found in principals with high and low organizational role stress.

17. No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (LS4) Task oriented as leadership style was found in principals with high and low organizational role stress.

18. No significant difference in the tendency to adopt (LS5) Participative as leadership style was found in principals with high and low organizational role stress.

### **Educational implications**

The question remains, how do we prepare and mentor future administrators for success in leading transformational change in our school system? In order for collaboration, response and mobilization to occur, self-reflection on the part of the leader is the starting point for successful relationships within the school community. Leadership is helpful in policy making and curriculum framing. It also helps the principal to solve day to day problems of the schools. The principals can guide their teachers in a proper way and can provide facilities to his followers. In changing times, they expect from school teachers, to bring high academic results and to display exemplary character traits. Healthy work environment is also expected from teachers. It is the one of the foremost duty of school principals is to provide congenial and attractive work conditions both for the students and for their teachers. A principal should remember that the effectiveness of school programs lies in establishing proper immediate objectives whose realization will assure the fulfillment of ultimate aim of education, resulting building of a nation.

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