

# Teachers' Demographic Characteristics and the Principals Leadership Styles in Bedouin Schools in Israel

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## Abstract

*The present study examines the influence of teachers' demographic characteristics (including school type, teacher age, seniority in education, and school size) on the school principal leadership styles in Bedouin schools in Israel. The evidence was collected from 303 teachers in Bedouin schools in Israel. One-way ANOVA tests of differences in principals' leadership styles according to teachers' demographic characteristics were used. Results indicated that teachers' demographic characteristics significantly affect principals' leadership styles in Bedouin schools in Israel.*

**Keywords:** *Bedouin, demographic characteristics, leadership styles*

**JEL classification:** I21, M10, M12

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, we can point to the surge of interest in the research of leadership in schools, which impacts the development of leadership and the success of schools. Alongside this, the study of demographic characteristics and their influence on leadership style has received little attention, especially in the study of leadership in schools among the Bedouin population in Israel. The school principal must use the most appropriate style for his teachers' behavior (Hoque & Raya, 2023). Because school principals manage and deal with teachers with age differences, their work experience needs to be unified. This affects the relationship between teachers and the school principal thus influencing the school academic performance. Vlachadi and Ferla (2013) found that the demographic characteristics that affect teachers' engagement are their age and work experience. While a significant difference was found between the ages of teachers in laissez-faire leadership, male teachers over the age of 51 perceived school principals as more laissez-faire than female teachers aged 31–40 (Kheir-Faddul & Danaiaata, 2019). Therefore, this study aimed to identify the teachers' demographic characteristics and influence the principals' leadership style in Bedouin schools in Israel.

## 2. Leadership Style

The researcher decided to use the full range leadership model of Bass and Avolio (1991) due to its usefulness in exploring the leadership style practiced by

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managers of organization from various fields of activity, including schools. This model considers that there are three types of leadership style, ranging from passive and less effective (the laissez-faire style) through transactional style (management by exception, contingent reward, and clear goals) having a higher effectiveness and the transformational leadership style (based on motivating, stimulating and influencing employees) having the highest effectiveness of all three types.

According to Bass (1998), transformational leadership can influence subordinates in the organization. Transformational leadership can encourage followers by increasing their integrity and awareness of the need for organizational change and development (Yukl, 2012). According to Bakker et al. (2022), transformational leadership is associated with work engagement and affects performance by inspiring employees to guide themselves and better perform their job. Transformational leaders are articulating the vision of the organization for their subordinates and are increasing the motivation of subordinates in the organization which makes them optimistic (Poturak et al., 2020).

Transactional leadership style consists of three main components. The contingent reward is the interaction between the leader and subordinates in the context of effort and reward relationships—management by exception, either passively or actively. Passively, the leader only intervenes when the standard does not meet the objective. Actively, the leader is involved in the whole process and focuses on corrective actions (Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership is also defined as conditional reward leadership because the leader sets goals to be achieved by subordinates through rewards and punishment (Robbins, 2014). The process consists of negotiating the content of the goal by the manager and each of his/ her subordinate, followed by the subordinate doing the tasks and if the set goal is achieved then the manager grants the reward to the employee. Basically, it is a transaction which is happening between the manager and the subordinate. Hence, the name of transactional leadership style.

The laissez-faire leadership style is defined as non-leadership, because the manager ignores the followers' responsibilities and needs, and does not focus on solving the conflicts of the employees at work (Gul, 2018; Yukl, 2010). At the same time, it affects the well-being and outcomes of employees (Lundmark et al., 2022). Therefore, this leadership style is destructive and undermines organizational trust (Tosunoglu & Ekmekci, 2016).

### **3. Research methodology**

The study's goal was to investigate the influence of teachers' demographic characteristics (school type, age of teachers, seniority in education, and size of school) on leadership styles in Bedouin schools in Israel.

The researcher formulated the following hypotheses:

H1. There are significant differences in leadership styles scores according to school type.

H2. There are significant differences in leadership styles scores according to teacher age.

H3. There are significant differences in leadership styles scores according to seniority in education.

H4. There are significant differences in leadership styles scores according to size of school.

The questionnaires were fully completed by 303 teachers from 36 Bedouin schools (Primary school, Junior High school, and High schools) from the Negev area situated in the south of Israel.

The research used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-X5), which was developed and tested by Avolio & Bass (2004). The researcher employed the short form of the questionnaire that includes 28 items (Al-Asad, 2017), for its suitability to the population in Israel, to adapt it to the study community. The questionnaire was applied in high schools in the south of Israel by (Al-Asad, 2017) and was proven reliable for the study of the school principals of Bedouin schools.

#### 4. Discussion of findings

The research examines whether teacher demographics affect leadership styles in Bedouin schools in Israel. The research indicated essential outcomes of the teachers' demographic characteristics that affect leadership styles in Bedouin schools in Israel.

The number of respondents was 303 teachers from 36 schools in Bedouin south of Israel. The structure of the sample is presented in table 1, below.

**Table 1. Teacher's distribution by demographic variables**

Variable	Categories	Count	%
Gender	Male	151	49.8%
	Female	152	50.2%
School	Elementary school	60	19.8%
	Junior school	143	47.2%
	High school	100	33.0%
Academic degree	Bachelor	137	45.2%
	Masters	151	49.8%
	PhD	15	5.0%
The place of domicile	South of the Israel	178	58.7%
	North of Israel	125	41.3%
Age	Less than 30	72	23.8%
	31-40	67	22.1%
	41-50	100	33.0%
	More than 50	64	21.1%
Seniority in education	Less than 10 years	114	37.6%
	10-20	84	27.7%
	20-30	105	34.7%

Variable	Categories	Count	%
Position you hold at school	Educator	97	32.1%
	Teacher coordinator	67	22.2%
	Student educator	138	45.7%
Size of school as number of students	Less than 200	14	4.6%
	200-300	32	10.6%
	300-500	120	39.6%
	500-700	74	24.4%
	700-1000	63	20.8%

The gender structure of the sample is the following: 50.2% were female, and 49.8% were male.

Most of the teachers respondents (47.2%) worked in junior schools, while 33% worked in high schools.

Regarding the educational level achieved, 45.2% of respondents have a bachelor degree, 49.8% of master's degree educational level, and 5% of them had PhD degree.

58,7% of the respondents were from south of Israel, while the rest of them (41.3%) were from north of Israel.

Regarding the age of teacher, 23.8% of respondents were less than 30 years old, and 22.1% aged (31-40) years old, 33% of them were (41-50) years old, and the rest 21.1% of them were older than 50 years.

Regarding the years of work experience, about 38% of the respondents had less than 10 years of experience, 34.7% of them had more than 20 years of experience in education.

Regarding the position held in school. the majority of teachers were student educator (45.7%), 32.1% were educator and about 22% of them were teacher coordinator.

Regarding the size of the school as number of students, 39.6% of the respondents worked in (300-500) student's schools. 24.4% worked in (500-700) student's schools, 20.8% worked in (700-1000) student's schools and the rest of them 15.2% worked in schools of size less than 300 students.

**Table 2. Differences in leadership styles according to school type**

Scale		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Transformational leadership style	Elementary school	58	2.05	.543	0.148
	Junior school	143	2.23	.694	
	High school	100	2.12	.659	
Transactional leadership style	Elementary school	58	2.20	.573	0.335
	Junior school	143	2.35	.861	
	High school	100	2.22	.842	
Laissez faire leadership style	Elementary school	58	2.15	.708	0.004
	Junior school	143	2.44	.775	
	High school	100	2.11	.916	

Table 2 shows the results of one-way ANOVA tests of differences in leadership styles according to school type. A significant difference exists in laissez-faire leadership style according to school type ( $p = 0.004$ ) for junior teachers was significantly higher than for each of elementary schools and high schools teachers, so we accept hypothesis H1 for laissez faire leadership, but we reject it for the other two styles of leadership.

**Table 3. Differences in leadership styles according to school type**

Scale		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Transformational leadership style	Elementary school	58	2.05	.543	0.148
	Junior school	143	2.23	.694	
	High school	100	2.12	.659	
Transactional leadership style	Elementary school	58	2.20	.573	0.335
	Junior school	143	2.35	.861	
	High school	100	2.22	.842	
Laissez-faire leadership style	Elementary school	58	2.15	.708	0.004
	Junior school	143	2.44	.775	
	High school	100	2.11	.916	

Table 3 above shows the results of one-way ANOVA tests of differences in leadership styles according to school type. A significant difference exists in laissez faire leadership according to school type. The laissez-faire leadership level of junior teachers was significantly higher than for each of elementary schools and high schools teachers ( $p = 0.007$ ), so we accept the hypothesis H1 for laissez faire leadership, but we reject it for the other two styles of leadership, transformational and transactional.

**Table 4. Differences in leadership styles according to teacher age**

Scale		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Transformational leadership style	less than 30	72	1.20	.598	0.000
	31-40	65	2.27	.605	
	41-50	100	2.03	.637	
	more than 50	64	2.43	.708	
Transactional leadership style	less than 30	72	2.30	.763	0.256
	31-40	65	2.12	.774	
	41-50	100	2.38	.828	
	more than 50	64	2.25	.850	
Laissez faire leadership style	less than 30	72	2.10	.694	0.007
	31-40	65	2.24	.837	
	41-50	100	2.23	.842	
	more than 50	64	2.57	.864	

Table 4. above, indicates that the results of one-way ANOVA tests of differences in leadership styles according to teacher age. A significant difference exists in transformational leadership style and in the laissez faire leadership style according to teacher age. The transformational leadership style of school principals perceived by teachers aged more than 50 years old was significantly higher than for teachers less than 30 years old and for teachers aged between 41-50 years old. The laissez-faire leadership style of school principals perceived by teachers older than 50 years old was significantly higher than for teachers aged less than 30 years old. Thus, hypothesis H2 is accepted for transformational and laissez-faire leadership style and rejected for the transactional leadership style.

Table 5, below, shows the LSD multiple comparisons test, regard transformational leadership; mean score for teachers aged more than 50 years were significantly higher than teachers aged less than 30 years, but no differences can be found between other age intervals, teachers aged 31-41 were significantly of higher transformational leadership than each of teachers aged less than 30 years and teachers aged 41-50 years, on the other hand teachers of age 41-50 significantly had lower transformational leadership level than older teachers as show in table 3. Laissez fair leadership mean score for those who aged more than 50 old years was significantly higher than for all younger teachers, hence we accept hypothesis H2 for each of transformational and laissez fair leaderships.

**Table 5. Multiple comparisons (LSD) tests, differences in leadership according to teacher age**

Dependent Variable	(I) Age	(J) Age	p-value
Transformational leadership	31-40	less than 30	.012
		41-50	.018
	41-50	more than 50	.000
		less than 30	.000
Laissez faire leadership	less than 30	more than 50	.001
	31-40	more than 50	.021
	41-50	more than 50	.008

The two following tables shows the results of testing differences in principles' leadership styles according to seniority in education. As clear from Table 5, the differences were significant in transformational leadership and laissez-faire leadership.

**Table 5. Differences in leadership styles according to seniority in education**

Scale		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Transformational leadership style	less than 10 years	114	2.10	.633	0.002
	10-20	82	2.02	.620	

Scale		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Transactional leadership style	20-30	105	2.33	.681	0.236
	less than 10 years	114	2.32	.779	
	10-20	82	2.15	.750	
	20-30	105	2.32	.876	
Laissez fair leadership style	less than 10 years	114	2.26	.748	0.025
	10-20	82	2.10	.879	
	20-30	105	2.43	.842	

Table 6 shows the results of multiple comparison test for these two scales. Regarding transformational leadership level, teachers of 20-30 years' experience in education have a significantly higher level than those of lower years of experience in education. Significant differences can be found also in laissez-faire leadership between teachers having 10-20 years seniority in education and teacher with 20-30 years seniority in education towards those of teacher with 20-30 years seniority in education, so we accept hypothesis H3 for the transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles.

**Table 6. Multiple comparisons test (LSD), differences in principals' leadership according to seniority in education**

Dependent Variable	(I) Seniority in Education	(J) Seniority in Education	p-value
Transformational leadership	less than 10 years	20-30	.009
	10-20	20-30	.001
Laissez-faire leadership	10-20	20-30	.007

Data from table 7 indicates that significant differences exist in transactional leadership due to size of school, due to existing significant differences between schools of size 200-300 and schools of size 500-700 and schools of size 700-1000, where the transactional leadership level was the highest for schools of size 200-300 as data from Table 8 shows, so we accept hypothesis H4 for the case of transactional leadership style of school principals.

**Table 7. Differences in leadership styles according to size of school as number of students**

Scale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value	
Transformational leadership style	Less than 200	14	2.07	.484	0.061
	200-300	32	1.93	.523	
	300-500	120	2.10	.766	
	500-700	74	2.26	.602	
	700-1000	61	2.29	.551	

Scale		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p-value
Transactional leadership style	Less than 200	14	2.03	.843	0.001
	200-300	32	2.84	.581	
	300-500	120	2.23	.773	
	500-700	74	2.27	.878	
	700-1000	61	2.14	.781	
Laissez-faire leadership style	Less than 200	14	1.73	.688	0.082
	200-300	32	2.42	.572	
	300-500	120	2.28	.884	
	500-700	74	2.36	.786	
	700-1000	61	2.21	.860	

The researcher tested if there are significant differences in transformational leadership style between teachers from school with 200-300 students and schools with 500-700 students and school with 700-1000 students. Data presented in table 8 indicates that there are no significant differences, so hypothesis H4 is rejected also for the case of transformational leadership style.

**Table 8. Multiple comparisons, differences in leadership styles according to size of school**

Dependent Variable	(I) Size of school as number of students	(J) Size of school as number of students	Sig.
Transformational leadership	200-300	500-700	.021
		700-1000	.012

## 5. Conclusions

This study aimed to identify the teachers' demographic characteristics influencing leadership style in Bedouin schools in Israel. Significant differences were found for some teacher's demographic characteristics like school type, age, seniority in education, and size of the school for various types of school principal's leadership style. Based on the above findings, the researcher recommends that junior school principals adopt an effective transformational leadership style because a laissez-faire leadership style is ineffective for junior school type principals. While school principals must focus strongly on the young teachers who are the cornerstone of schools to lead and retain them.

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