

RELATION OF JOB INCOMES AND LEADERSHIP PERCEPTION : A STUDY OF INDIAN FASHION & LIFESTYLE JOURNALISTS

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Abstract:

Editors, as leaders, have a significant impact on the functioning of reporters and eventually the output of the organization. The applicability of time tested leadership style questionnaires to various industries has been experimented. This study aims to find out the perception about Editors vis-à-vis monthly income of fashion and lifestyle journalists across Punjab. The study deals with opinion of accredited male and female media professionals in Punjab state and aims at evaluating whether media professionals prefer an Editor who has inclination towards only work relationship or one who personally gets involved in problems and issues related to employees. Do media professionals feel their Editor is fair when it comes to allocation of work? In brief, are Editors in Punjab print media industry good leaders as perceived by their subordinates from differently income groups- this research question is being evaluated. Media Professionals assume the role of subordinates and Editors-the supervisors in this case. The analysis includes comparison of male and female reporters' opinion about their Editor and on basis of their monthly salary. The study evaluates the research questions at length statistically and analytically. It was found that journalist preferred their leader to be fairer in matters of work allocation, equal distribution of work among other factors. When it comes to job incomes, the disparity in job incomes had no significant effect on the perception about the leader or editor.

Key words : Media Industry, Leadership Styles, Editors, Indian Media, Fashion Journalism, Lifestyle

Introduction :

The phenomenal growth of the Media and Entertainment industry in India (**The Indian Media Business, 2010**) makes it thought prudent to study various aspects of the organizational set up, work life of media professionals and other aspects of organizational behavior in the media industries of the country.

Leadership is one of the best studied and most interesting areas under organizational behavioral sciences. In case of media organizations and editorial sections in particular, we assume editors to be the obvious leaders (which includes assistant editors, associate editors, senior editors among others). Leadership is the ability of an individual to lead through inspiration and motivation and eventually

resulting in fulfillment of organizational goals. This concern about leadership is central to an organization's functioning is Leadership and has also come to be recognized as a driving factor in productivity (**Armandi, Oppedisano, & Sherman, 2003**) and hence the overall performance as well.

Management researchers are of the view that concepts such as leadership styles must be implemented at the practical level in organizations for effective outcome of such research projects.

The present study evaluates the perception of fashion and lifestyle journalists in Punjab, comprising reporters, sub-editors, photo-journalists, designers and coordinators of teams

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in the respective media organizations. Evaluation of perception of subordinates through Leadership style questionnaires have been tested in various industries like banking, insurance, textile and other sectors in India, but this research and analysis needs to be extended to media industry as well keeping in view the specific needs of this industry. Monthly income of media professionals has been taken into consideration in this study and perception about Editors was statistically analyzed for professionals with different incomes. The implications of the study are connected directly to betterment of policies and managerial systems in media organizations as well as to the reforms in this sector. This is much needed in current times when several aspects of media have come under scanner (**Press Council of India, report, 2010**). Better media policies would be an obvious outcome of concrete research in this area, backed by statistical support and evidence.

1.2 Status of Media Industry in India

Projected growth

(i) A report on the status of the Media and Entertainment industry in India (13th edition by Pricewaterhouse Coopers, PwC, p.80 in June 2012) reported that India is second in the Asia-Pacific region for projected growth rate. For the span 2012-2016 this projected growth is 14.3 percent in terms of Compound Annual Growth Rate. By 2016, the growth is expected to reach \$42,226 million.

(ii) The **FICCI-KPMG** report of 2013 indicates a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 15.2 percent by 2017. The industry is expected to reach INR 1661 billion worth by this year, suggests the report. Despite gloomy picture of media houses world over, in India however the scenario is different and growth is expected for various segments of media (**The Indian Media Business, 2010**). The growth and projected prosperity in this sector makes it thought prudent to study the leadership in the Media Industry.

(ii) Print Industry in India:

The origins of press go back to Gutenberg's Printing press and his continuous roll of paper,

where he published Bible (**Kumar, 2010**). A popular event in the history of print media was instruction of Penny press by Benjamin Day, who brought down the price of newspaper, New York Sun so drastically in 1833.

In India, it was James Augustus Hickey, who was called the father of Indian press and started a weekly newspaper called the Bengal Gazette in 1780 from Calcutta. The maiden attempt in the print sector, this was the first newspaper during the East India Company days. Print media played a significant role during the freedom movement days in India and several freedom fighters and patriots used to write in newspapers and newsletters to bring together the masses. Mahatma Gandhi's Harijan is a case in point. Newspapers including Times of India, Amrit Bazaar Patrika, The Standard, The Courier and The Pioneer came into existence around the same time. (**Kumar, 2013**).

(iv) RNI Statistics:

According to the Registrar of Newspapers in India (RNI), which is designated to register all print publications in India by the Union Government claims 86,754 registered publications till March 31, 2012 and the numbers are still growing. These include newspapers, news magazines, periodicals, journals among others.

Review of Literature

Trait Theories: It was in the 1920's and 1930's that the management researchers began exploring the qualities of a leader. The trait theories had a major flaw, as researchers later pointed out. This was the lack of attention on the actual relationship of this leader with his subordinate or people working under him and in his team. So this interaction aspect was lacking as well as the circumstances and conditions in the team or organization.

Argyris (1974) opined that downward communication at the top of a newspaper organization could give rise to inefficiency. Elements like problem solving, decision making and implementation in the organization supported effectiveness if they are in right

direction.

Polansky & Hughes in 1986, Nielsen & Pate in 1989 and Louis in 1997 are just a few names who studied leadership in context of media industry in past however newer challenges with transformation in atmosphere of news organizations and different kind of challenges in media that need further investigation (**KÜNG, 2006**).

Researchers suggest that new theories and approaches are required for leadership in various industries (**Pinnington, 2011**).

It was in 1940's and 1950's that several researchers paid serious attention to leadership studies. At Ohio State University (**Shartle, 1956**) the traits of leaders and perception of leadership was being researched upon around the same time. Questionnaires were developed to measure the effectiveness of a leader in the organization. This was the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) which categorized leader's behavior in two aspects- consideration and initiating structure (**Stogdill, 1977**).

Relationship orientation in context of the leader includes qualities like listening to group members, easy to understand, is friendly and approachable and is willing to make changes. The behavior of task orientation is related to qualities like assigning tasks to members, making attitude clear to the group, being critical of poor work, sees to it that group is working to capacity and coordinates activity.

Fiedler (1967) gave the contingency theory which established that the effectiveness of the leader depends on the Leadership Style and on the control and influence of a leader over a situation. He differentiated leadership styles into task and relationship orientation. Leaders who are task oriented have a belief in performing better in situations and getting tasks done. However, the relationship oriented leaders are those who lay great emphases on inter-personal relationship in a team.

Connecting good leadership with commitment towards organization, **Bass (1985)**

propounded that transformational leadership includes charisma, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. He suggested that when the leader is more charismatic, employees tend to be more satisfied and committed.

Heresy and Blanchard (1996) suggested the situational leadership theory. It stated that the leaders should adapt their style in accordance with the follower's development style or maturity. Leader must observe the extent to which the follower is willing to perform the desired tasks. Keeping in view the competence of the subordinates, the leader must adapt a style. When the level of maturity is low then high task is applicable. In this case the leader may apply low relationship style as well to get desired results. On the flipside if the level of maturity is high among the subordinate of the follow in that case a leader can follow the path of low task. In this context a high relationship works best for effectiveness.

An Indian model of enlightened leadership was propounded by **Sharma (1998)** that combined the Indian Guna Theory (Satva guna reflecting balance and equilibrium, Rajas guna reflecting action and expansion and Tamas guna symbolizing inertia or resistance to action) with the western management theories. The theory was suggested that enlightened leaders created transformational rewards.

Studies revealed that when the aim of the organization was to reach greater and higher levels of output then autocratic style of leadership was considered more effective (**Sharma, 2008**).

Objectives

The study aims to find out two broad objectives, these are as follows:

- 1) **Evaluating relationship of the perception about Editors (from the point of view of Journalists) with monthly income of fashion and lifestyle journalists across Punjab.**
- 2) To find out if subordinates (journalists) prefer Editors with more task orientation to be better or relation oriented.

Research Methodology

On the basis of differently income groups (monthly income of respondents), the study **aims to evaluate the perception of media professionals based in the state of Punjab about their Editors or leaders in the organization. The research focuses primarily on the print media industry and media professionals include-** Reporters, Sub-Editors, Designers, Photo-Journalists and Coordinators of teams. A sample of accredited print media professionals was chosen and requested to fill forms through e-questionnaire created on Google drive. Both emailing and personal interviews were done to ensure authenticity of the questionnaires filled. These accredited professionals were recognized by the department of Public Relations, Punjab Government till December 31, 2012.

In this related to media professionals of Punjab the Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire developed by **Halpin (1957)** was used, to find out more about leadership styles in the media industry in India.

Behaviors related to **relationship orientation** (consideration) include

- Listening to group members
- Easy to understand
- Is friendly and approachable
- Is willing to make changes

Behaviors related to **task orientation** (Initiating structure) include

- Assigns tasks to members
- Makes attitude clear to the group
- Is critical of poor work
- Sees to it that group is working to capacity
- Coordinates activity

Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 was used to analyze the data. Results have been indicated through tables and graphs.

88 media professionals filled up the form

from newspapers and newsmagazines in Punjab and were all found valid for study.

Data Analysis and Presentation:

Descriptive statistics like the Mean, Medium, Standard Deviation and F-test were used as the main tests of analysis. To check the mean difference between respondents of different income groups calculation was done using F-test.

The composition of male and female respondents was- 11.4% females and 88.6% male respondents participated in this study.

The following figure gives a representation of media professionals on the basis of monthly income. Interesting results are revealed from this distribution chart. A majority of professionals fall in the group of income less than Rs 20,000 and very few (n=7) have monthly income between Rs 40,000- Rs 1 lac.

Break up of Media Professionals in Punjab Based on Monthly Income

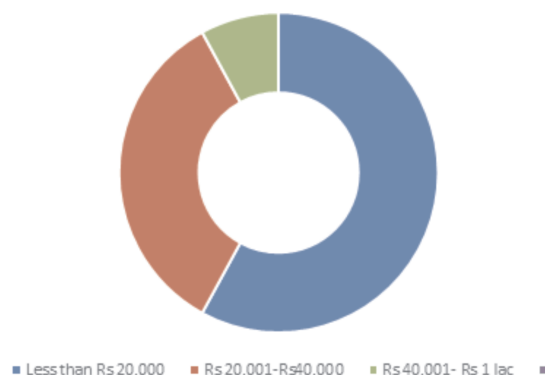


Figure1: Distribution of respondents based on their monthly income/salaries

Table 1 indicates the descriptive statistics related to perception of leadership styles of media professionals in Punjab showing three broad income groups. One group comprises of professionals whose monthly salary was less than Rs 20,000, other between Rs 20,000- Rs 40,000 and last group with monthly salary of Rs 40,000- Rs 1 lac.

	Less than Rs20,000 (n=51)		Rs20000-40000 (n=30)		Rs40,001- 1,00,000 lac (n=7)		F value	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Task Orientation	45.96	5.11	48.47	6.15	44.14	4.10	2.84	0.06
Relationship Orientation	42.10	4.92	43.37	4.25	41.00	3.79	1.08	0.34
Leadership Orientation	88.06	8.45	91.83	9.04	85.14	6.57	2.67	0.07

Table1: Mean, SD and F value among income for Leadership Styles of Editors in Punjab based on monthly income

The p-value obtained in the above table is non-significant for overall leadership style and both its dimensions, task and relationship orientation. This indicates that the perception of leadership styles of editors does not vary with wages or monthly salaries of media professionals. However, a look at the following figure about mean scores of task and relationship orientation reveals inclination of professionals about their preference of nature of their leader.

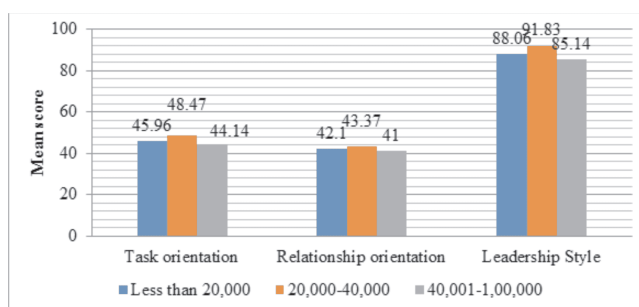


Figure 2: Task and Relationship Orientation aspects of leaders and the mean scores of respondents

The mean scores for task orientation were higher than relationship orientation indicating that professionals in this industry preferred their leader to be fairer in matters of work allocation, equal distribution of work among other factors.

Limitations of Study

This study is restricted to the perception of print media professionals of Punjab and

accredited media professionals only. A host of media organizations have hired stringers and contractual staff in interiors and cities of Punjab. The list of recognized professionals available with the public relations department was utilized for this purpose. Another limitation of the study is its coverage of print media segment only, whereas the extent of media industry has growth bigger due to emerging social and digital media coupled with films and entertainment sector.

Another fallout in studies concerning media persons is the shortage of time available with journalists and non-journalists involved in news production to fill up questionnaires. Lists of accredited media persons in Punjab, and its neighboring state of Haryana and Union territory of Chandigarh sometimes overlaps with Editors and bureau chiefs availing accreditation from more than one state.

Deductions and Conclusions

In the field of the Indian media industry, there is a scope of further research on work environment in organizations, wages of media professionals and on evaluation of leadership styles. Certain researchers including **Kung (2006)** have worked in the area of leadership in media Industry. From the present study, following are the conclusion drawn.

The present study reveals that most media professionals when categorized on the basis of monthly income indicate that more number of media professionals had lesser salaries. Most of the professionals had monthly wages less than Rs 20,000

(n=51) and too less professionals (n=7) had monthly income between Rs 40,000-Rs 1lac. Non-significant mean difference was obtained for media persons from different income groups indicating that their income does not affect their perception about their boss in the organization. Other reasons need to be explored which affect leadership style perception of journalists and non-journalists in the media industry.

Subordinates in the media industry (Fashion and lifestyle journalists in specific) prefer their leader/editor to be task orientated rather than relationship orientated. This indicates that professionals in this industry want their leader to be fair and clear in the matters of work allocation, equal distribution of work among other factors.

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