

# Leadership Styles of Academic Leaders in Ethiopian Public Universities

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the self-perception of academic Leaders (deans and department heads) about their own leadership styles and the perception of academic staffs about the leadership style of academic leaders (Deans and Department Heads) in Ethiopian Public universities. The study employed descriptive survey method and used quantitative approach. Deans, Department heads and academic staffs were source of data. Using simple random sampling technique, 123 deans and department heads and 197 academic staffs were participated in the study. Accordingly, LEAD-Self and LEAD-others instruments and Demographic Variables Survey questionnaires were employed to collect data. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics and finally scrutinized using relevant literature. The result of this study showed that academic leaders ( deans and department heads perceived leadership style 'selling' as their own predominant and 'participating' as their secondary leadership style. The same result has found that the perception of academic staff to their academic leaders wasselling' as predominant and 'participating' as secondary leadership style. Hence, the researcher recommended that academic leaders in universities (deans and department heads; need to vary their leadership style in order to fit into the situations. Particularly, in universities and colleges, where majority of the teaching staff is assumed to be mature and will to accomplish the given tasks, delegating leadership style seems to be appropriate. Furthermore, it is also advisable that the universities to arrange valuable trainings for academic leaders (deans and department heads) to make them capable of varying their leadership styles to fit into situations.*

**Key Words: Leadership Style, Academic Leaders, Academic Staffs**

## **Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

Higher education institutions are tertiary institutions whose authorized mandates allow them to award degrees. In Ethiopian context, higher education is concerned with education provided by universities, university colleges or colleges that offers one or more degree awarding programs. It has been considered as vital prerequisite for economic and social development. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, where knowledge based economy is longing more intellectual property, higher education plays a dominant role. In this regard, Hill, Hoffman and Rex (2005), higher education provides considerable value to individuals, economies where educated individuals reside and society in general. Economies that have experienced substantial investment in either private or public institutions of higher learning have realized considerable growth and prosperity.

Higher education institutions bear a profound, moral responsibility to increase the awareness, knowledge, skills, and values needed to create a just and sustainable future. Higher education plays a critical but often overlooked role in making this vision a reality (Hawken 1997). It prepares most of the professionals who develop, lead, manage, teach, work in, and influence society's institutions, including the most basic foundation of K-12 education. (Hawken) 1997 explained that training future teachers, higher education strongly influences the learning framework of K-12 education, which is largely geared toward subsequent higher education.

Higher education has unique academic freedom and the critical mass and diversity of skills to develop new ideas, to comment on society and its challenges, and to engage in bold experimentation in sustainable living. The significance of higher education for the development of any nation, developed and developing, was clearly spelt out in the large body of literature. Assefa (2013) universities are sources of key research and development innovation that concurrently can be beneficial to society and conducive economic growth. Moreover, Teshome (2005), signifies that higher education is fundamental for the production of vital human resources, such as teachers, healthcare professionals, lawyers, engineers, managers, businessmen and researchers which are critical for socio-economic development of a nation. Furthermore, he described higher education as a center for knowledge and skills creation, adaptation and dissemination. They also play a significant role in providing relevant and quality community and public services (Assefa 2013).

The learning and benefit to society of higher education forming partnerships with local and regional communities to make them socially vibrant, economically secure, and environmentally sustainable will be a crucial part of successful higher education (Hawken 1997). The 20<sup>th</sup> century's scientific and technological achievements were essentially due to the growth of higher education and the enormous contribution and endeavor of personnel trained within it. Without sufficient number of higher education and research institutions providing a critical mass of skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development (UNESCO, 1998).

In this era, as the world becomes increasingly unified, more interdependent and increasingly a globalized village, higher education is critical for the achievement of economic progress, political stability and peace, as well as constructing democratic culture and cohesive societies (Teshome 2003). With regard to the benefits of higher education for a country's economy, many viewers attribute India's escalation into the world economic stage as stemming from its decades-long successful efforts to provide high quality, technically oriented tertiary education to a significant number of its citizens (Bloom, Canning and Chan, 2006) cited in (Assefa 2013). Higher education has become more instrumental in its aims and purpose. After looking into the issue, Farnham (1999) stated that for policy makers and employers, providing employable and flexible graduates and being a source of scientific and technological innovation benefits of the corporate sector.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia is presently engaged in a highly ambitious effort to calibrate its higher education system more direct support of its national strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction by enhancing a Higher Education Proclamations (No. 352/2003; No. 650/2009) and establishing wide range reforms to the higher education system. Increasing the number of universities and colleges, increasing the intake capacity of the existing universities (more than double), diversification of academic programs and Business Process Reengineering of organizational and management approaches were among the reform agendas of the country. Thus, organizational environment in HEIs of Ethiopia is changing from time to time.

The involvement of a complex range of stake holders in university affairs has influenced the governance structure of these institutions, embedding more transparent approaches to leadership, management and communication with stakeholders to meet the expectations. The challenges facing higher education institutions are bigger and more complex. This requires competent of leaders who can bring about the challenges needed for sustained performance (Bisbee & Miller, 2006).

The leadership and management practices of the higher education institutions which go in line with their missions and complexity are of a paramount importance to the successful implementation of the reform agendas, expansion initiatives an educational quality assurance practices. Leadership at all levels (government, institutions of higher education, etc.) is required to demonstrate its vision, ability, adaptability, and change management skills. The government, as well as all stakeholders, has come to the understanding that leadership and management are the key to success of the reform (Teshome, 2003)

Universities should be endowed with institutional autonomy for enabling them make independent decision on critical issues such as curriculum and program development, students' admission, teaching/learning processes. However, in

practical situation there were external interferences affecting the autonomous implementation of their program according to their strategic plan and their mission statement (Solomon, 2010; Baye, 2008). Moreover, teachers generally have little voice in policy and/or decision making processes through they are one of the key stakeholders in higher education and among principal actors in administration. The erosion of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as exemplified by top-down approach on policy and even curricular issues, has contributed to the marginalization of teaching personnel (Wanna, 2009). Public universities have suffered too much from unnecessary government intervention (Assefa, 2013). As also reflected in the current higher education discourses and practices in Ethiopia, it can safely be asserted that Ministry of Education has been needlessly challenging the idea and practice of autonomy and academic freedom that should have been instrumental for the overall identity of its own universities (Solomon, 2010 & Baye, 2008).

In countries like Ethiopia, where higher education institutions are expected to address the multifaceted societal problems, it is increasingly important to study the leadership styles of the institutions, in general, and academic leadership in particular, as these factors are major determinants of success in achieving goals.

The researcher experience showed that studies conducted in academic leadership are originated from other disciplines and sectors specifically business and industries leadership styles. What initiated the researcher more is, the leadership styles and style adaptability of deans and department heads are not yet investigated in Ethiopian universities.

The other motivating factor to the researcher to come up with this title is, in most instances researchers study leadership styles delimited to treat theory i.e focused on the personality of the leader ignoring the current situation that the leader is immersed specifically the maturity level and willingness of the followers. So, in this research the researcher had seen the situational leadership model so that investigation was made what kind of leadership styles academic leaders were orchestrate when they encountered with different situations.

Moreover, this study focused on the investigation of the particular leadership theory and leadership styles mentioned by Tridimensional Leader Effectiveness Model of Hersey and Blanchard, (1982) comprises of a Relationship Behavior Axis, a Task Behavior Axis, and the Effectiveness Dimension Axis. Accordingly, these axes or grids form four quadrants of leadership styles: telling, selling, participating and delegating.

**Telling style (S1)** which is characterized by high task and low relationship behavior and is best suited for followers of low maturity. The leader who employs this style habitually makes his/her own decisions and announces them to his/her subordinates expecting them to carry them out without question.

**Selling style (S2)** which is characterized by high task and high relationship behavior and is best suited for followers of low to moderate maturity. The leader using this approach also makes his/her own decisions but, rather than simply announcing them to his subordinates, he/she tries to persuade his/her subordinates to accept them. The leader accepts the possibility that the follower may resist the decision; therefore, the leader persuades the followers to accept his/her decision.

**Participating Style (S3)** This is characterized by high relationship and low task behavior and is best suited for followers of moderate to high maturity. The leader using this style does not make the decision until the problem is presented to members of his group and their advice and suggestions are received. The decision is still the leaders but it is not taken until the staffs are consulted.

**Delegating Style (S4)** this is characterized by low relationship and low task behavior and is best suited for followers of high maturity. This approach to leadership involves delegating to the subordinates the right to make decisions. The leader's function is to define the problem and indicate limits within which the decision must be made. The selection of an appropriate leadership style is determined by the maturity of the followers, which ranges from immature to mature.

Thus, the researcher believes that this is a new insight in leadership studies conducted so far than the repeatedly studied

leadership styles focused on democratic, autocratic and laissez faire specifically in Ethiopian higher education context.

Therefore, the present study is designed to assess the leadership of academic leaders (Deans and Department Heads) and its impact on academic staffs in Ethiopian Universities as perceived by them and the whole academic staffs too.

### 3. Research Questions

In order to carry out the objectives of the study, attempts were made to seek reliable answers for the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of academic leaders (deans and department heads) about their own leadership styles?
2. What is the perception of academic staffs on the leadership styles of academic leaders (deans and Department heads?)
3. Is there perception difference between academic staffs and academic leaders on the leadership style of academic leaders (deans and Department heads?)

### 4. Objectives of the Study

#### 4.1. General Objectives

The general objective of this study was to assess the leadership styles of academic leaders (deans and department heads) in Ethiopian public Universities.

#### 4.2. Specific Objectives

To this end, the study was aimed at:

1. Identifying the perceived leadership styles of academic leaders (deans and department heads)
2. Examine academic staffs perception about the leadership styles of deans and department heads.
3. Check whether there was perception difference between academic staffs and academic leaders on the leadership style of academic leaders (deans and Department heads)

### 5. Research Methodology

#### 5.1. Research Design

The purpose of this study was to assess leadership styles of academic leaders (deans and department heads) as perceived by them and as perceived by academic staffs in Ethiopia Public Universities. To arrive at the stated objective, situational leadership model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1974), which consists of four styles of leadership, namely, telling, selling, participating and delegating was reviewed. Accordingly descriptive survey design was employed. As the result quantitative approach used to enrich the study.

#### 5.2. Sample and Sampling procedure

The present study assessed the leadership style of academic leaders in Ethiopian public universities. There are about 31 public universities in Ethiopia. These universities are categorized as first, second and third generation based on the time of establishment. The universities are distributed in to 9 regions and two city administrations of the country. Among these, half of the universities are located in two regions, Oromia (9) and Amhara (7). Public universities located in Amhara region were purposefully selected for the study. This is because Amhara regional state is the second populated in terms of numbers of universities next to Oromia regional state on one hand and physical proximity of the researcher to the study area and hence it was cost effective in terms of time and finance on the other hand. Most importantly there was no a single study on leadership style exclusively on academic leaders in universities of Amhara Regional State. However, there was an effort made to study by Gemechis and Ayalew (2012) in Oromia Regional State at Jimma University at department level. In Amhara region there are seven universities categorized in to three categories. First generation (Gondar and Bahir Dar Universities), Second generation ( Wolo, DebreMarkos, and DebreBerhan Universities), and third generation (Debre Tabor and Woldeya Universities) . The researcher selected one university

from each first generation and third generation universities and two universities from second generation universities by stratified random sampling method. Thus, academic leaders (Deans and Department Heads and academic staff who were working as full time lecturer in four universities had been taken as a sample. 123 deans and department heads and, 197 instructors, which was totally 320 were participated in the study.

### 5.3. Instrumentation

Data was collected using two instruments: Hersey and Blanchard (1974) the Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD)-Self and other Instrument, and the Personal Information Data Sheet. LEAD-Self rating instrument, introduced in 1974 by Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996), it was the primary data collection instrument. The LEAD-Self Instrument accumulates and analyzes self-perceptions of a leader's effectiveness.

The LEAD-Self Instrument has been employed in this study to evaluate behaviors displayed by academic leaders (deans and department heads) as they perceive themselves and the LEAD-others were employed to know leadership style of academic leaders through academic staffs. Both yielded four style score from 12 management situational questions.

### 5.4. Data Analysis

The data collected from the research instrument was coded, fed, scored, in to SPSS version 20. And then the analysis was made to the relevant statistical methods. The perceived leadership styles of academic leaders computed and analyzed by Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean. It was enriched and represented by graphs and figures. More over descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean were used to analyze the perceived leadership style of academic leaders

## 6. What is Situational Leadership?

Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) work was based on Ohio studies on leadership. It is a two-dimensional model with four leadership styles. The emphasis in Situational Leadership Model is that there is no one effective style in all situations. These scholars suggest that effective leadership is only possible if the leader determines the maturity/readiness level of subordinates before selecting appropriate leadership style. Thus, the model is used to determine which of the four leadership styles (telling, selling, participating and delegating) fits the situation (subordinates' maturity level to perform and complete a specific task) to enhance performance (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2001). Hersey and Blanchard (1993) state that situational leadership attempts to provide the leader with a possible match between an effective leadership style and the maturity/readiness level of his/her subordinates. According to them many variables affect leadership styles. However they single out maturity/readiness level of subordinates as a major situational factor, which moderates between leadership styles and effectiveness.

Hersey and Blanchard (1993) define maturity/readiness as the extent to which an individual or group exhibits willingness and ability to accomplish a task. In essence, an individual is not perceived as ready or not ready in a general sense, but an individual is seen as ready or not ready with regard to performing and completing a specific task.

Therefore, Hersey and Blanchard (1993) highlight ability and willingness as the major components of readiness. According to them, ability refers to the knowledge, experience and skill which a person or a group brings to a specific task or activity and willingness as the amount of confidence and motivation that a person or group has to complete a particular task.

Interconnected factors determine the maturity level of individual or groups in the organization. These are job maturity and psychological maturity. Job maturity is basically the ability of an individual to do his/her work competently. Psychological maturity refers to individual's self-motivation and willingness to accept responsibilities and the possession of necessary skill to carry out the responsibilities (Owens, 1991).

Hersey and Blanchard (1993) discuss four leadership styles that are built on two dimensional concepts, that is, task and relationship behavior, with emphasis on the maturity level of followers. These leadership styles are: telling, selling, participating and delegating. This theory employs readiness as a factor to analyze the nature of the situation, which can invariably be indicated on a readiness continuum indicating followers' readiness to perform a specific task. There are

four types of situations in terms of readiness level. These situations range from R4-R1, indicating high level of readiness and low readiness level respectively (Hersey & Blanchard 1993).

### **I. Telling style**

According to Hersey and Blanchard (1993), leadership style is characterized by high task and low relationship behavior. This style is effective when leading low maturity (unable and unwilling or insecure) subordinates, who lack both job skill and motivation. The manager who uses this style has well-defined strategies to accomplish set goals. He/she gives detailed instructions as to what the task is and when, where and how to perform it. The manager directs supports and closely supervises subordinates' performance. Decisions are made without subordinates' input thus communication is one sided that is, top down. This style is not effective when the manager is seen by his/her subordinates as an individual who imposes methods on others, and who is only concern with the output, and therefore unpleasant. Hersey and Blanchard (1993) refer to this style as ruling, directing or structuring.

### **II. Selling style**

This style comprises both high task and high relationship. It is said to be appropriate when leading low to moderate (unable, but willing or confident) job maturity but psychologically mature subordinates. The manager who employs this style gives the subordinates specific instructions and supervises their work. In addition to that, he/she supports the teachers by explaining what and why the task should be performed as instructed. The subordinates' doubts are cleared, by answering their questions. The manager makes decisions and sometimes consults the subordinates. Thus two-way communication is encouraged. However, the manager has the final say. The style is ineffective if the subordinates do not believe that the manager is genuine in his/her interpersonal relationship and perceive him/her to be initiating more structures/jobs than is needed. Hersey and Blanchard (1993) refer to this style as persuading, explaining or clarifying.

### **III. Participating style**

Participative leadership style is characterized by low task and high relationship behavior. It is effective when leading followers with high moderate (able but unwilling or insecure) maturity. Here, subordinates have high job maturity but low psychological maturity.

Hersey and Blanchard (1993) however, explain that followers' unwillingness to do the job may be as a result of lack of confidence if it is their first time of handling such task, if they lack of motivation as a result of performing routine tasks for a long time or as a result of a clash between the management and the followers. This style is best with highly creative subordinates who have necessary skills and self-confidence. The manager has implicit trust in the subordinates and is basically focused on facilitating their goal accomplishment. The manager spends a short time to give general instructions and most of the time is used to encourage, support and build subordinates' self-confidence.

Subordinates are given a free hand to do the task their own way while the head teacher acts as a facilitator in problem solving and decision-making processes. Communication is two-way because subordinates have ample opportunity to suggest ideas and their suggestions are highly valued (Lussier&Achua 2001). It is ineffective when the subordinates perceive the manager as a leader who is interested in peace and harmony so much so that he/she would not emphasize accomplishment of a task at the expense of his good relationships with subordinates (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). This style is described by Hersey and Blanchard as collaborating and facilitating.

### **IV. Delegating style**

Hersey and Blanchard (1993) state that this style is characterized by low task and low relationship behavior. It is used effectively when leading subordinates with both high job and psychological maturity (able and willing or confident). Followers in this category are well competent and highly motivated. The manager tells the followers what to do, answers their questions and provides little or no direction. The followers are allowed to make their own decisions subject to the manager's limitations. Innovations are encouraged by the manager who equally demonstrates trust and confidence by supporting this set of followers. However, Hersey and Blanchard (1993) preach that this style is not effective when followers feel that the manager is providing little structure and support when necessary.

This model proposes that the maturity level of subordinates can be increased and as it increases, the effective leadership style is employed. Effective leadership style is characterized by a drive for task and concern for people. Matching the manager's leadership style with the appropriate situation enhances effectiveness (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). This indicates that the increase in level of maturity/readiness with regards to accomplishing specific task will afford the manager the opportunity to change his/her leadership style to a more relationship-oriented style for increase productivity.

Conclusively, Hersey and Blanchard (1993) claim that the success of this model is determined by the ability of the manager to diagnose the readiness level of his/her followers. If the manager is highly skilled as to know when to be task-oriented or relationship-oriented and uses them appropriately, performance will be enhanced.

Essentially, he/she should be able to change his/her leadership style with different followers and with the same followers on different occasions. This is because followers perform various tasks and followers may vary in readiness level depending on the type of task to be performed. Since increase in readiness level is possible, it is imperative for the managers to focus on increasing followers' readiness level to maintain steady improved performance, because as they acquire greater experience, ability and commitment to do their task, productivity will be enhanced through shared decision making (Hersey & Blanchard 1993).

Situational leadership, according to Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (1996) can be employed in different organizational setting. They claim that the headteacher for example who works with experienced staff members would be effective if he/she delegates responsibilities to the staff (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 1996). Given the staff's wealth or experiences, they may not welcome instructions/directions on what to be done.

On the other hand, if the head teacher works with unwilling staff that lack necessary experience, it would be appropriate for the head teacher to be directive in dealing with such category of staff. For instance, a new teacher with little or no experience or a newly transferred teacher needs to be informed on what, how and when things are to be done in accordance with what is acceptable in that school. Besides, a head teacher in a new school, with or without prior knowledge of the school may decide to provide a new direction for the school and so the first few weeks in his/her office may be used to introduce and implement changes after which he/she can vary styles to suit situations. In essence, four basic styles enumerated by Hersey and Blanchard are at a leader's disposal, but they are to be used appropriately depending on the situation.

## 7. Data presentation and interpretation

### 7.1. Description of the sample

In this study the focus was leadership style of academic leaders in Ethiopian public universities. The total universities in Ethiopia are 31 excluding 10 universities which were established at the beginning of 2018. Among 31 universities 7 universities are found in Amhara region. Hence this study is focused on federal universities which are found in Amhara Regional state.

### 7.2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

**Table 1. Universities and colleges**

		No. of participants	Percent %	Relative Frequency
<b>University</b>	University of Gondar	140	43.8%	43.8%
	DebreMarkos University	62	19.4%	63.13%
	Wollo University	54	16.9%	80.0%
	Debre Tabor University	64	20.0%	100%
	Total	320	100.0%	
<b>College</b>	School of Law	12	3.8%	3.8%
	College of health science and medicine	34	10.6%	14.8%
	College of Social Sciences and humanities	65	20.3%	34.7%
	school of education	28	8.8%	43.44%
	college of natural and computational science	44	13.8%	57.2%
	College of Agriculture	43	13.4%	70.6%
	School of Veterinary	9	2.8%	73.44%
	College of technology and Engineering	40	12.5%	85.94%
	College of Business and Economics	45	14.1%	100%
Total	320	100.0%		

As the table 1 above depicts the four universities were selected from three generations based on years of establishment. Accordingly university of Gondar is from the first generation, DebreMarkos and Wollo Universities are from second Generation and Debre Tabor University from third generation universities were inculcated as the ample of this particular research. The justification why two universities taken from second generation universities as repeatedly

mentioned in methodology section, among the seven universities found in Amhara Regional State, three of them are second generation and the rest four universities are first and third generation two universities for each generation.

When we see in terms of participation from each universities, 43.8% of the samples were taken from University of Gondar. This happened because University of Gondar is from first generation so that the number of staffs are much more in number than the rest of the universities included in this sample.

**Table 2. Teaching experience and Age**

		No. of participants	Percent %	Relative Frequency
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	1-5 years	136	42.5%	42.5%
	6-10 years	118	36.9%	79.4%
	11-16 years	37	11.6%	91%
	17-21 years	13	4.1%	95.1%
	22-26 years	9	2.8%	97.9%
	above 26 years	7	2.2%	100%
	Total	320	100.0%	
<b>age</b>	20-25 years	41	12.8%	12.8%
	26-30 years	106	33.1%	45.9 %
	31-35 years	106	33.1%	79%
	36-40 years	29	9.1%	88.1 %
	above 40 years	38	11.9%	100%
	Total	320	100.0%	%

Table 2 above showed us teaching experience and age of participants. As you looked above, those who are working as university instructors are in a very little experience i.e 79.4% of the participants' were ten years and below teaching experience. Whereas those who have rich in teaching experience were very few in number. The table above depicts that those who had 22 years and above teaching experience were only 5% of the participants. The cause for less experience of instructors might be most of the universities are newly established and shortage of experienced instructors in the country as well. What strengths of this findings is all Ethiopian universities has appointed expatriates instructors from India, Philippines, Nigeria and other citizens.

Regarding ages of the teachers who are working in sampled universities, the foundation was almost the same as mentioned to teaching experience of them. It was found that 79% of them are 35 years and below. So from here we can conclude that Ethiopian teachers who are working as university teachers are younger because this study didn't include expatriate instructors.

**Table 3: Qualification and Participants**

		No. of participants	Percent %	Relative Frequency
<b>Qualification</b>	Bachelor Degree	39	12.2%	12.2%
	Masters Degree	240	75.0%	87.2%
	Ph.D.	41	12.8%	100%
	Total	320	100.0%	
<b>Participants</b>	Teacher	197	61.6%	61.6%
	Department head	101	31.6%	93.2%
	Dean	22	6.9%	100%
	Total	320	100.0%	

The table above shows us the composition of instructors in terms of qualification. As the data says that 87.2% of the instructors were found Mastersdegree holders. The rest 12.2% and 12.8% were Bachelor and Ph.D. holders



respectively. From here we could notice that it is the long way to go to achieve the plan of the MoE that puts as strategy all universities in Ethiopia need to work to have academic staffs with the composition of zero Bachelor degree, 25% Mastersdegree and 75% Ph.D. holders.

When we see participants of the current research, deans, department heads and teachers were participated.

**Table 4: Administrative experience of deans and department heads**

		No. of participants	Percent %	Relative Frequency
<b>Administration experience</b>	0-3 years	90	72.6%	72.6%
	4-7 years	26	21.0%	93.6%
	8-10years	6	4.8%	98.4%
	11-14 years	2	1.6%	100%
	above 14 years	0	0.0%	
	Total	124	100.0%	

In those universities where the data were taken deans and department heads participated. As the table above those who lead as heads and deans of departments and colleges/ faculties 93.6% were found 7 years and below administrative experience. Only 4.8% were found 8-10 years of administrative experience. This is due to many reasons. To mention some because of newly established universities, most of the instructors are young in age, those who have better experience do not need to crown the position because they felt that the positions (deans and department heads) are not rewarding rather it is tighten individuals not to work as the part time in different private colleges or other organizations.

Actually the researcher had included sex as a demographic variable however, the number of females found out were very few in number. The low number of female Deans, Department Heads and instructors is not surprising for the reason that there is intolerable gender gap in all Ethiopian universities. Hence, it's found meaningless if analysis was made using gender as variable.

Treating this much the demographic variables of the research, we need to go through directly to the core of this research as follows.

The first objective of the present study was to examine the perception of academic leaders towards their own leadership. Accordingly frequency and percentage of the primary and secondary leadership styles of deans and department heads are computed.

**Table 5. Perception of academic leaders (deans and department heads) about their own leadership styles**

	Percentage of Respondents Perception per Quadrant				Total
	S1	S2	S3	S4	
<b>Frequency (N)</b>	12	80	31	0	123
<b>Percent</b>	9.8%	65.0%	25.2%	0.0%	100.0%

**Note: S1=Telling, S2=Selling, S3=Participating, S4=Delegating**

Table 5 shows that majority of the academic leaders (deans and department heads) in this study were perceived selling [80(65.0%)] as the predominant and participating [30(25.2%)] as secondary leadership styles of their own. That is, the academic leaders saw themselves as frequently using a predominant style of selling (S2) and they perceived themselves as occasionally using a supportive leadership style of participating (S3). The table also indicates that these deans and department heads perceived themselves very rarely using a telling style (S1) and totally not using the leadership style delegating (S4).

The second objective of the present study was to investigate the perception of teachers towards academic leaders /deans and department heads.to achieve this objective, frequency and percentage of teachers towards academic leaders.

**Table 6. The perception of academic staffs on the leadership styles of academic leaders (deans and Department heads**

Percentage of Respondents Perception per Quadrant	Total				
	S1	S2	S3	S4	
Frequency (N)	40	97	50	10	197
Percent	20.3%	49.2%	25.4%	5.1%	100.0%

Note: S1=Telling, S2=Selling, S3=Participating, S4=Delegating

Table 2 shows that majority of the academic staffs in this study were perceived academic leaders (Deans and Department Heads) employed selling [97(49.2%)] as the predominant and participating [50(25.4%)] as secondary leadership styles. That is, the academic staffs saw academic leaders (Deans and Department Heads) as frequently using a predominant style of selling (S2) and they perceived academic leaders (Deans and Department Heads) as occasionally using a supportive leadership style of participating (S3). The table also indicates that these deans and department heads as perceived by academic staffs sometimes using a telling style [40(20.3%)]. Besides, the table shows us that according to academic staffs perception academic leaders (Deans and Department Heads) very rarely employed leadership style S4 that is Delegating.

**Table 7. Leadership style perception across sex,teaching experience,administrative experience, university, qualification**

		Number of respondents per quadrant				
		S1	S2	S3	S4	Total
Sex	Female	5	16	7	1	29
	Male	47	161	74	9	292
Teaching experience	1-5 years	21	78	35	2	136
	6-10 years	21	61	30	6	118
	11-16 years	5	21	11	0	37
	17-21 years	2	9	1	1	13
	22-26 years	2	3	4	0	9
	above 26 years	1	5	0	1	7
Administrative experience	0-3 years	7	59	24	0	90
	4-7 years	3	18	5	0	26
	8-10years	1	3	2	0	6
	11-14 years	0	2	0	0	2
	above 14 years	0	0	0	0	0
Qualification	Bachelor Degree	8	19	11	1	39
	Masters Degree	37	137	57	9	240
	Ph.D.	7	21	13	0	41

Note: S1=Telling, S2=Selling, S3=Participating, S4=Delegating

The above table communicates that the perception of leadership style has no any difference across sex,teaching experience, administrative experience and qualification. Accordingly, in terms of sex, femalestend to perceive selling (16), participating (7), telling (5) and delegating (1). The same is true to males tendto perceive selling (161), participating (74), telling (47) and deleting (9). So we can conclude that both sexes perceived that their primary leadership style is selling and their secondary leadership style is participating. Therefore, from here we could conclude that perception of leadership style of academic leaders has no any change by demographic variablecalled sex.

In terms of teachingexperience, the same result has been found for each of the categories. As the table above show us academic leaders and academic staffs perception on leadership styles of academic leaders has found the same result. They tend to perceive selling participating as their primary leadership style and participating as secondary leadership style. In rarecases telling was considered as the third option of leaders as leadership style. The result was found the same in qualification of the participants as well as administrative experience of academic leaders. However in both categories delegating has not mentioned as option of leadership style even as the last option.

## 8. Result

The result of this study revealed that academic leaders (deans and department heads) perceived that their predominant leadership style was selling. This finding is in line with the finding of Gemechis and Ayalew (2012) and Al-omari et al (2008) who explored that the predominant leadership style of department heads, and deans and department heads in Jima and Jordan universities respectively were found selling. Selling leadership style is differentiated by above average amounts of both tasks and relationship behavior. The task behavior is appropriate because staffs are still considered unable but, because they are trying, it is important to be supportive of their motivation and commitment. The leader sets up and keeps two-way communication and provides adequate support and re-enforcement so that followers/staffs would psychologically accept the leader's decision (Hersey et al., 1996). When the follower can do the job, at least to some extent and perhaps is over-confident about their ability in this, then 'telling' them what to do may demotivate them or lead to resistance (Gemechis and Ayalew, 2012). The leader, thus, needs to 'sell' another way of working, explaining and clarifying decisions. The leader also needs to spend time in listening and advising and, where appropriate, helping the follower to gain necessary skills through coaching methods. The finding of this research also discovered that participating leadership style is the secondary leadership style of academic leaders (deans and department heads) as perceived by themselves as well as academic staffs. In this regard, we found that academic leaders (deans and department heads) sometimes implement participating leadership style in addition to selling. This finding is in line with Al-omari et al (2008) and Al-Omari (2007) who stated that the secondary leadership style of most academic leaders were participating. Participating leadership style is a style that implicates all members of a team in identifying essential goals and developing procedures or strategies for reaching those goals. In this regard, participating leadership can be perceived as a leadership style that depends profoundly on the leader functioning as a initiator rather than simply delivering orders or making assignments. This leadership style is considered by above average amounts of relationship behavior and below-average amounts of task behavior.

The decision making method being shared by both the leader and follower demonstrates this style. The leader maintains the role of confidence in the aptitude of his followers (Hersey et al. 1996). Participative leadership involves consulting with subordinates and the evaluation of their opinions and suggestions before the manager makes the decision (Mullins, 2005). Participative leadership is concomitant with consensus, consultation, delegation and involvement (Bass 1981). Results revealed that employees who perceive their leaders as adopting consultative or participative leadership behavior were more committed to their organizations, more satisfied with their jobs and higher in their performance (Yousef, 2000). Because of the consultative nature of participating leadership, it has the prospective to enhance the spreading of organizational and managerial values to staffs. Staffs who work for a participative leader tend to exhibit greater involvement, commitment, and loyalty than employees who work under a directive leader (Bass, 1981).

Thus, employees who are allowed to take part in the decision making process are likely to be more faithful to those decisions. Therefore, leaders must allow staffs to participate in the decision-making process. Participative leader's ability to boost the commitment, involvement and loyalty among employees should be attractive to a leader wishing to disseminate his or her commitment to provide service quality to employees.

## 9. Conclusion

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study: The predominant leadership style of academic leaders (deans and department heads) was selling. This means that the academic leaders spend time listening and advising and, where proper, helping the follower to advance necessary skills through coaching methods. The secondary leadership style of academic leaders was participating. This means that deans and department heads sometimes implement this leadership style in addition to the predominant one. Besides, academic leaders occasionally involve in subordinates/ instructors consulting and evaluate their opinions and suggestions before making the decisions. And of course, their perception of leadership style has been witnessed by the academic staffs who are led by them. That means the academic staffs has assured that their leaders (deans and department heads) employ selling leadership style predominantly and at the same time they perceived that participating leadership style is implemented as the secondary option.

Perception of deans and department heads about their own leadership style did not significantly vary across demographic variables such as work experience, level of education and administration experience. This means that these demographic variables gave the impression that they do not affect leadership styles of academic leaders.

## 10. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn the following recommendations were forwarded.

- Situational Leadership Theory states that there is no single leadership style that fits all the situation. Hence, deans and department heads as leaders need to differ their leadership style in order to fit the situations. Principally, in universities and colleges, where majority of the academic staff hold post graduate degree and where academic leaders consumed most of their time with routine activities such as administrative, interpersonal and resource development, delegating leadership style seems to be appropriate and academic leaders, therefore, should exercise such kind of leadership style as needed thus, they would have enough time to their routines.
- Changing leadership styles to fit circumstances was not an easy task. It needs critically looking into the nature of the work and employees behavior. In order to equip academic leaders with such an analysis skill,
- The universities or MoE should arrange continuous and appropriate training for academic leaders in various areas of leadership concepts as to develop the skill and knowledge so that they could apply their knowledge of leadership that fits the contexts/ situations while leading.
- The study was done in Amhara Regional State in a certain context of time. So, the findings showed leadership style of academic leaders in universities which are found in the region in that particular time. Since leadership style varies across time and situations, other researchers should to conduct similar research in wider context i.e. country level and for longer period of time. May be the predominant leadership style could be different from this research's findings.

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