

The effect of leadership styles on improving communication method among academic administrators

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the effect of leadership styles on improving communication methods in Saudi universities from the perspective of faculty members. Four-hundred questionnaires were distributed to faculty members in the Saudi universities, 313 questionnaires were valid for analysis. The results showed that the most common leadership style among academic administrators in Saudi universities is the democratic style, followed by the laissez-faire leadership style, while the autocratic leadership style came in the third and last rank. Also, the results showed that one of the most common methods of communication is non-verbal communication related to symbols, movements, and expressions. In addition, the results revealed a significant effect was found positive of democratic leadership style on a communication method and a negative significant effect was found of autocratic leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style on communication method.

Keywords: Leadership style, Communication method, Faculty Members, Academic Administrators

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1. Introduction

The behaviour of leaders is one important reason that subordinates feeling dedicated, efficient, energized, motivated, and productive in their job (Mikkelson, York & Arritola, 2015). Leadership is a leader's ability to affect others through effective methods with the aim of achieving a set of objectives or goals (Okoji, 2015). Sampayo and Maranga (2015) observed that there are different ways of describing leadership according to the various styles of leadership viewpoints considered. Almatrooshi, Singhand and Farouk (2016) observed that the ability of a leader to inspire others leads to productive leadership.

Leaders have diverse opinions and depend on various approaches to achieve the desired goals (Almatrooshi et al., 2016). The style of leadership is affected by the personal experiences and personal background of the leader, convictions, principles, and personal learning (Sampayo & Maranga, 2015). Their attitude to the workers can be between the very classical to the very creative, or between very autocratic to very democratic (Pllana, 2013). Theories of behavioural leadership are leadership principles focused on how leaders act. Task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours are leader behavioural styles practiced in most Western countries (Begum & Mujtaba, 2016).

Gonos and Gallo (2013) and Jackson, Alberti, and Snipes (2014) and Chua, Basit and Hassan (2018) categorized leadership styles as follows:

- **Autocratic leadership style:** In this style of leadership styles, the leader depends on his official authority granted to him by the institution, he uses power to force his subordinates to complete the work, he issues orders and instructions that include precise details, the leader tends in this style to hermetic supervision and direct over subordinates because he does not trust them.
- **Democratic leadership style:** Under this style of leadership, the subordinates choose their leader and good relations are built between the leader and his subordinates so that the workers discuss problems and they participate with the leader in specify goals and making decisions. In this style, the leader derives his authority from his subordinates and encourage and builds exchanged confidence with them, also the leader delegates his powers in this style to his subordinates and encourages them to assume responsibility.
- **Laissez-faire leadership style:** This pattern is completely opposite to the autocratic leadership, due to the absence of real leadership, where that every subordinate in this style is free to perform his work. Among the defects of this style is the flow of chaos, lack of discipline and organise in the work, also this style considered is the lowest styles in terms of work results and does not inspire the subordinates to respect of personality leader

Communication has been used by leaders based on their leadership capacity (Yuningsih & Mulyana, 2017). Communication is an important skill in leadership (Abdurrahman, 2017; Darmawanty, Lumbanraja & Lubis, 2018). Communication systems in all organisations such as universities are very necessary to the permanence and success of the organisations (Nakpodia, 2010). Effective communication is one's ability to impart information, transfer a rule or instruction, submit, transmit or exchange an idea to ensure the achievement of organizational goals and the achievement of individual interests through shared understanding (Oluwatoyin & Haire, 2017). In addition, effective communication is frequently cited as one of the most significant characteristics of a successful supervisor or manager (Mikkelson et al., 2015). The positive relationship between leaders and workers leads to success of organisations (Åhlin et al., 2017).

Communication is a predictor of a leader's leadership style and has an impact on organisational success (Luthra & Dahiya, 2015). Carter and Greer (2013) found that some sales workers revealed that among the issues of ineffective leadership is the use of incorrect leadership styles and ineffective communications by

their supervisors. In many organisations, poor communication is a problem, where leaders need good use of communication networks in their strategies in order to practice successful communication (Bourne, 2015).

Snyder and Eng Lee-Partridge (2013) and Sanina, Balashov, Rubtcova and Satinsky (2017) suggested several channels of communication used in the workplaces which include: voice over IP, discussion forums, intranets, video/web conferencing, telephone, shared virtual workspaces, instant messaging, wikis, blogs, e-mail and face-to-face. Other communication forms involve memoranda, meetings, tangible written communication, and social media (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Sanina et al., 2017). E-mail, telephone, and face-to-face are trusted types of general knowledge and confidential information sharing (Snyder & Eng Lee-Partridge, 2013). Montinari, Nicolò, and Oexl (2016) revealed that communication using text messages from leaders to the employees has been effective. Maranga and Sampayo (2015) emphasized that face-to-face communication is useful, and it has the largest effect on most workers. No one communication form was preferable, and the merger between several forms will work best (Nelson, Schroeder & Welpman, 2014).

The successful communication of leaders with workers requires being clearly, consistently, and regularly. The communication of employees' needs to their leaders is important for the response to those needs (Day, Holladay, Johnson & Barron, 2014).

Organisational communication is important for the sharing of knowledge with persons internal and external an organisation (Luthra & Dahiya, 2015). Ciobota (2016) stated that external and internal communications are one of the missions of leaders and workers in any organisation.

The organisational communication pattern is a series of rituals of action and communication that hold through every person of the organisation, whether that person is in the upper levels of leadership or at the lower levels of employees (Yuningsih & Mulyana, 2017). Luthra and Dahiya (2015) and Yuningsih and Mulyana (2017) mentioned that patterns of organisational communication have five patterns, as follow:

- **Downward Communication:** It is the process that information is transferred from the higher levels to lower levels in all fields of work; in other words, from the top of the administrative to the lowest administrative and executing levels in the organisation. Face-to-face meetings, phone calls, written notes and directions are among the most used methods of downward communication. Also, there are other means of communication that use in this pattern such as flyers, wall posters, letters to employees' homes, papers printed in payroll envelopes and clerks, and training films, annual reports.
- **Upward Communication:** Upward communication flows from the lower levels to the higher levels in the hierarchy of authority as the primary function of upward communication is to obtain information about activities, decisions, and performance of individuals at the lower levels.
- **Horizontal Communication:** It refers to the communication between the workers in the same sequence at the administrative level of the organisation and aims to exchange information and coordination between efforts and works in which they carry out, and is mostly practiced in the form of meetings of the various committees and councils within organisation. This type of communication is necessary and important in coordinating work, exchanging opinions and points of view, proposing ideas and discussing them among individuals, and some believe that this type of communication is the source of many problems.
- **Two-way Communication:** This pattern is also called double communication, as it starts from one side and moves to the second side with the command, information, or instructions that he wants, and the second in turn receives this information and instructions and responds, or

makes an inquiry, and this is how dialogue and discussion take place between the two parties, and this type of communication is considered one of the characteristics of leadership that is based on consultation and giving the right to speak and participate, that is, leadership that is interested in exchanging information with members of the organisation. This pattern of communication is described as full communication because it gives the sender and the recipient sufficient opportunity to talk, discuss and express their opinion in light of the information sent by the sender and received by the future.

- **Interactive Communication:** The organisation is an open system depends on the society in which it lives to obtain its inputs, and to which it provides its outputs and works to advance the society, and society in turn depends on its organisations to develop itself, so the interaction occurs through external communication between the organisation and society, and the interactive communication pattern takes into account the importance of external communication.

Many authors have emphasized that communication is important to leadership (Terek et al., 2015; Luthra & Dahiya, 2015; Mikkelson et al., 2015; Jin, Meng & Berger, 2017; Yuningsih & Mulyana, 2017; Darmawanty et al., 2018), and some these studies examined the influence of leadership styles on communication patterns. The university environment is a special social environment. From this perspective, leadership style can be considered among the important factors that directly and indirectly affect communication within universities (Kiplangat, 2017). The leader must have adequate knowledge of effective communication systems and patterns, and the leader must also be able to create the activities and conditions that provide an opportunity to implement them (Tereka et al., 2015). The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of leadership styles on communication patterns in Saudi universities from the perspectives of faculty members. In addition to identifying leadership styles and communication styles among administrators in Saudi universities. The fact that similar studies were not conducted in Saudi Arabia also plays a further significant role in this study. Such findings are supposed to have practical importance, and they may create the potential to interact more satisfactorily between faculty members and leaders, as well as to improve universities' efficiency.

2. Research Methodology

In the current study, a quantitative descriptive design was adopted in order to establish a systematic, factual, and careful summary of the facts and characteristics of a population or a specific region. Quantitative descriptive research is a research aimed at defining and describing the characteristics of the aforementioned object or state of research, then it presents the findings in the form of analysis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

2.1. Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all faculty members in the public Saudi universities in the Eastern Region (King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, King Faisal University and Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University). The total number of faculty members at these universities was (7605) member according to the annual statistical report of the Saudi Ministry of Education (2017/2018). The researcher sampled 400 faculty members based on the suggestion of Morgan table for determining sample size. To the selection of faculty members at the universities previously listed, the simple random sampling technique was used. 327 questionnaires out of 400 were returned, 14 questionnaires were excluded due to the non-completion of the answers by the respondents, thus making the number of questionnaires valid for analysis 313 questionnaires.

2.2. Instrument of study

In this study, questionnaires were administered to faculty members to get their perspectives on each item in the questionnaire by five-point Likert ranging from “1” (very low) to “5” (very high). The questionnaire was categorized into 3 parts. Part (1) gathers background information of the respondents, such as 'Gender, Educational qualification, The University, Experience'. Part (2) contained 39 questions prepared to measure three dimensions of leadership styles that are: autocratic leadership style which includes questions (1-13); democratic leadership style which includes questions (14-26); laissez-faire leadership style which includes questions (27-39). The questions for this part were adopted based on studies by Gonos and Gallo (2013) and Jackson et al. (2014). Part (3) consisted of 28 questions prepared to measure communication patterns. The questions for this part were adopted based on studies by Luthra and Dahiya (2015) and Yuningsih and Mulyana (2017).

2.3. Validity of Instrument

To verify the validity of the instrument, the researcher was presented the instrument to (7) experts from the faculty members of Saudi universities who hold a doctorate in education and administrative sciences to ensure linguistic formulation, scientific accuracy, and clarity. In light of the comments of these experts, the number of questions of leadership styles became (30 questions); in regards to communication patterns, the number of questions became (20 questions).

2.3. Reliability of Instrument

The reliability of the instrument implies that the same results are obtained each time by applying the same instrument to the same sample under the same conditions. Cronbach alpha was used to test the respondents' internal accuracy and their responses. The value that has (60%) or more, showed the reliability in responses of respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2016), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Cronbach Alpha Test

Variables/Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha Value
Autocratic Leadership Style	0.893
Democratic Leadership Style	0.866
Laissez-Faire Leadership Style	0.865
Leadership Style as Whole	0.733
Communications Patterns	0.887

Table (1) showed that the values of the internal consistency coefficient for the dimensions of the study were high and ranged between (0.733-0.893). This means that the value of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient for all parts of the questionnaire is higher than (0.60). This indicates that the study instrument has internal consistency between items.

2.4. Data Analysis

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher used Arithmetic means and multiple linear regression coefficient analysis by SPSS program.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Respondents Profile

The descriptive analysis was employed to describe the respondents' profile in terms of 'Sex, Educational qualification, The University, Experience'. The majority of respondents were female representing 70.0%, while 30.0% were male, respectively, as shown in Table 2. With respect to the educational qualification of respondents, 92.7% of respondents have a Ph.D. degree, while 7.3% of respondents have a master's degree. With regard to the university, table 2 shows that the overwhelming majority working in Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University with a rate of 62.3 %. Next came respondents who working at King Faisal University with a rate of 29.1%. Finally, the respondents who working at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals representing 8.6% out of a total of respondents. With respect to the work experience, the results showed that the majority of the respondents have 5 to 10 years of experience representing 64.9%, followed by the respondents who have less than 5 years of experience representing 19.2%. Finally, the respondents have more than 10 years' experience representing 16.0%.

Table 2. The Respondent Profile (N=313)

Variables	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	94	30.0
	Female	219	70.0
Educational Qualification	Bachelor	0	0.00
	Master	23	7.3
	Ph.D.	290	92.7
The University	Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal	195	62.3
	University King Faisal University	91	29.1
	King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals	27	8.6
Experience	Less than 5 years	60	19.1
	5-10 years	203	64.9
	More than 10 years	50	16.0

3.2. Result Related to the First Sub-Objective

In order to achieve the first objective of the study, the researcher used arithmetic means and standard deviation for each item and for each style of leadership behaviour. In order to interpret the results, arithmetic averages were adopted based on the Table mentioned below.

Table 3. Interpretation of arithmetic means of Respondents' Answer for Each Item and each style

Mean	Information
1,00-1,79	Strongly Disagree (SD)
1,80-2,59	Disagree (DA)
2,60-3,39	Moderate Agree (MA)
3,40-4,19	Agree (A)
4,20-5,00	Strongly agree (SA)

Source: (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

Table 4. Arithmetic means and standard deviation for each item and for each style of leadership behaviour

N	Item	Mean	St.dev	Information
Autocratic Leadership Style				
1	The academic administrator retains all powers and authorities to himself.	2.04	1.06	DA
2	The academic administrator always speaks as a representative of group at external meetings.	1.94	1.17	DA
3	The academic administrator acts without consulting the employees.	2.72	1.41	MA
4	The academic administrator takes into account the circumstances of the faculty members when allocating responsibilities.	2.06	1.22	DA
5	The academic administrators consider consultation and give an opinion a waste of time.	1.85	1.07	DA
6	The academic administrator solves problems, studies, and decides on them himself.	1.86	1.04	DA
7	The academic administrator seeks to implement his instructions strictly.	1.82	1.00	DA
8	The academic administrator encourages official channels of communication with faculty members.	1.96	1.05	DA
9	The academic administrator assures adherence to work deadlines.	2.17	1.27	DA
10	The academic administrator depends on the command and forbidding method in dealing with faculty members.	2.45	1.16	DA
Total		2.09	0.82	DA
Democratic Leadership Style				
11	The academic administrator shows flexibility in his dealings.	3.61	1.21	A

12	The academic administrator deals with all faculty members justly.	3.43	1.30	A
13	The academic administrator makes the faculty members comfortable when they talking with him.	2.89	1.42	MA
14	The academic administrator helps faculty members develop their capabilities.	3.16	1.41	MA
15	The academic administrative provides an area for the faculty members for reflection and initiative.	3.32	1.46	MA
16	Academic administrators consider different viewpoints when solving problems.	2.90	1.55	MA
17	The academic administrator discusses his new ideas with faculty members.	3.41	1.46	A
18	The academic administrator clarifies for a faculty member what can expect upon achieving the goals.	4.00	1.09	A
19	The academic administrator provides the faculty with a lot of feedback.	3.80	1.27	A
20	The academic administrator does collaborative works that make the work endurable.	3.50	1.40	A
Total		3.40	0.92	A
<u>laissez-faire leadership style</u>				
21	Academic administrative allows faculty members absolutely free in the work	2.03	1.20	DA
22	The academic administrator only gets involved when the problems get serious.	2.01	1.06	DA
23	Academic administrative permits faculty members to postpone accomplishment of works.	1.95	1.02	DA
24	The academic administrator is strict in making decisions	2.22	1.28	DA
25	The academic administrator plans his business.	2.49	1.20	DA
26	The academic administrator is concerned with the details of the work.	2.48	1.33	DA
27	The academic administrator delegates a lot of power to his staff.	2.46	1.24	DA
28	The academic administrator is concerned with achieving the desired goals	2.19	1.19	DA
29	The academic administrator is committed to the university working hours	2.39	1.28	DA
30	The academic administrator offers some personal services to the faculty members.	3.21	1.40	MA
Total		2.35	0.83	DA

Table 4 showed that the mean value of the autocratic leadership style was 2.09 with a standard deviation of 0.82. This means that the style of autocratic leadership from the point of view of faculty members in Saudi universities in the Eastern region is not applying by the academic administration in those universities. Item 3, which states, “the academic administrator acts without consulting the employees”; and item 10, which states, “The academic administrator depends on the command and forbidding method in dealing with faculty members” have the highest means value among the items of the autocratic leadership style with (2.72) and (2.45) respectively. While item 7, which states, “The academic administrator seeks to implement his instructions strictly”; item 5, which states “The academic administrators consider consultation and give an opinion a waste of time” and item 6, which states “The academic administrator solves problems, studies, and decides on them himself” have lowest value of the means among the items with 1.82, 1.85 and 1.86 respectively.

Also, Table 4 showed that the mean value of the democratic leadership style was 3.40 with a standard deviation of 1.40. This means that the style of democratic leadership from the point of view of faculty members in Saudi universities in the Eastern region is applying by the academic administration in those universities. Item 18, which states, “the academic administrator clarifies for a faculty member what can expect upon achieving the goals.” and item 19, which states, “The academic administrator provides the faculty with a lot of feedback” have the highest means value among the items of the democratic leadership style with 4.00 and 3.80 respectively. While item 13, which states, “The academic administrator makes the faculty members comfortable when they talking with him”; item 16, which states “Academic administrators consider different viewpoints when solving problems” and item 14, which states “The academic administrator helps faculty members develop their capabilities” have lowest value of the means among the items with 2.89, 2.90 and 3.16 respectively.

In addition, Table 4 shows that the mean value of the laissez-faire leadership style was 2.35 with a standard deviation of 0.83. This means that the style of laissez-faire leadership from the point of view of faculty members in Saudi universities in the Eastern region is not applying by the academic administration in those universities. Item 25, which states, “The academic administrator plans his business”; and item 26, which states, “The academic administrator is concerned with the details of the work” have the highest means value among the items of the laissez-faire leadership style with 2.49 and 2.48 respectively. While item 23, which states, “Academic administrative permits faculty members to postpone accomplishment of works”; item 22, which states “The academic administrator only gets involved when the problems get serious” and item 21, which states “Academic administrative allows faculty members absolutely free in the work” have lowest value of the means among the items with 1.95, 2.01 and 2.03 respectively.

Evident from the above that the most common leadership style among academic administrators in Saudi universities in the eastern region is the democratic style, followed by the laissez-faire leadership style, while the autocratic leadership style came in the third and last rank. The researcher believes that the reason for this result may be due to the convergence of experiences and scientific qualifications in universities, and that the degree of awareness and culture that have faculty members makes them aware of the importance of the democratic style which is concerned with persuasion, citing facts, and respecting the feelings, and dignity of employees, and this is consistent with the administration's trends modern educational administration that focuses on attention to the needs of workers and takes into account human relations at work. These results are consistent with the study of Sampayo and Maranga (2015), the study of Jackson et al. (2014), and the Pillana study (2013), where the results of these studies showed that the democratic style is the most common style. While these results differed with the study of Gonos and Gallo (2013), where the results of this study showed that the autocratic leadership style is the prevailing style.

3.3. Result Related to the Second Sub-Objective

In order to achieve the first objective of the study, the researcher used arithmetic means and standard deviation for each item and for communication method as a whole.

Table 5. Arithmetic means and standard deviation for each item and for communication method as a whole

N	Item	Mean	St.dev	Information
1	The information sent in the reports of the faculty members is formulated in a sequential and organized manner.	2.34	1.25	DA
2	The academic administrator authorizes his representative to review reports and summarize them for him.	3.17	1.43	MA
3	The academic administrator believes that the notes style by paper can replace the complaints box.	3.04	1.34	MA
4	Faculty members can meet with the academic administrator at any time.	2.96	1.37	MA
5	The academic administrator uses the notes to deliver circulars and instructions to the employees in their college, department, or centre.	3.16	1.39	MA
6	The academic administrator places the notice board next to his office to be more readable.	3.45	1.32	A
7	The academic administrator prefers to use the personal interview method to communicate information and obtain data.	3.12	1.39	MA
8	The academic administrator prefers the personal interview to the correspondence because it is characterized by candour and enables to exchange of opinions.	3.11	1.39	MA
9	The academic administrator organizes scientific and cultural seminars for faculty members from time to time	2.68	1.35	MA
10	The academic administrator uses the phone to deliver important information or instructions to faculty members.	2.99	1.37	MA
11	The academic administrator prefers to contact all faculty members himself.	3.17	1.40	MA
12	The academic administrator prefers that communication be free in all directions.	3.43	1.18	A
13	The academic administrator believes that it is necessary to contact the administrators of the Ministry of Education in certain cases.	3.40	1.28	A
14	The academic administrator believes that one-way communication is faster than two-way communication.	3.45	1.22	A

15	The academic administrator is concerned with the sharpness of tone and speed of his voice while communicating with faculty members.	3.94	1.07	A
16	The academic administrator communicates some information to administrators and faculty members through diagrams.	3.98	1.02	A
17	The academic administrator believes hand movements and head gestures as a means of communication with faculty members.	3.86	1.21	A
18	The academic administrator believed that emotional language (such as facial features, looks, smile ...) plays a major role in communication with faculty members.	3.83	1.21	A
19	Academic administrators prefer to use caricatures in some situations to criticize certain behaviours.	3.65	1.18	A
20	The academic administrator believes that observing the speaker's face increases the process of communicating with him.	3.57	1.32	A
Total		3.26	0.78	MA

Table 5 showed that the mean value of the communications method was 3.26 with a standard deviation of 0.78. This means that the communications method from the point of view of faculty members in Saudi universities in the Eastern region is applying moderately by the academic administration in those universities. Item 16, which states, "The academic administrator communicates some information to administrators and faculty members through diagrams"; and item 15, which states, "The academic administrator is concerned with the sharpness of tone and speed of his voice while communicating with faculty members" have the highest means value among the items of the autocratic leadership style with (3.98) and (3.94) respectively. While item 1, which states, "The information sent in the reports of the faculty members is formulated in a sequential and organized manner"; item 9, which states "The academic administrator organizes scientific and cultural seminars for faculty members from time to time" and item 4, which states "Faculty members can meet with the academic administrator at any time" have lowest value of the means among the items with 2.34, 2.68 and 2.96 respectively.

The researcher believes that one of the most common methods of communication is non-verbal communication related to symbols, movements, and expressions because it comes as a permanent accompaniment to verbal communication, complementing it or acting on its behalf and that communication-based on signs, symbols, and movements is controlled by the autonomic nervous system, which is meaning that there is no absolute control over it by the central nervous system, and therefore non-verbal communication is automatic, reflexive communication that does not require preparation and pre-processing, it is same reflexive behaviours and related to the human nature in any field or profession. As for the rest of the types of communication, whether written or verbal, these methods are mainly related to the central nervous system, which is a voluntary nervous system based on understanding, perception, and thinking, and it needs preparation, so is not an automatic process, therefore non-verbal communication is spread more than verbal communication.

3.4. Result Related to the Main Objective

In order to achieve the main objective of the study, the researcher used multiple linear regression coefficient analysis to identify the type and strength of the effect of leadership styles on the communications method. Table 6, deals with a summary of the results of regression and multiple correlation analysis of this effect, as follows:

Table 6: The type and strength of the influence of the driving styles on the communication method

Variables	Beta	t- value	P- value
Autocratic Leadership Style	-0.226	5.74	0.000
Democratic Leadership Style	0.245	5.89	0.000
laissez-faire leadership style	-0.495	11.14	0.000
R		0.837	
R ²		0.701	
F		240.942	
df		309	
P- value		0.000	

Based on the results contained in the above table, we conclude the following:

- The validity of the model used to clarify the influential relationship between the dimensions of leadership styles in Saudi universities in eastern region and the communication method, where the calculated F value reached (240.942) with a significant level (0.000), which means that this model, with its independent variables, is suitable for predicting the values of the dependent variable, at a level of statistical significance (0.000).
- There is a statistically significant relationship between leadership styles and communication method as a whole. As the values of the correlation coefficients are all strong and represent about 83.7% according to the multiple correlation coefficients (R) in the model.
- The dimensions of leadership styles contribute to explaining about 70.1% (according to the determination coefficient (R²) in the model of total variance) of the change in the method of communication in the Saudi universities (subject to the study).
- The dimensions of leadership styles are high effects in changes in communication method in Saudi universities (subject to study). They are arranged according to their relative importance and their entry into the model according to the Beta coefficient. Where contributes each of laissez-faire leadership style and autocratic leadership style negatively and strongly on communication method with the parameter of beta (-0.495) and (-0.226), respectively. While democratic leadership style contributes positively and strongly to communication method with the parameter of beta (0.245), with the significance level (0.000).

This result is consistent with the study by Terek et al. (2015); Luthra and Dahiya, (2015); Mikkelson et al. (2015); Jin, Meng and Berger (2017); Yuningsih and Mulyana (2017) and Darmawanty et al. (2018).

4. Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to explore if leadership styles has an effect on communication in Saudi universities in the eastern region. The results showed a significant effect was found positive of democratic leadership style on a communication method and a negative significant effect was found of autocratic leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style on communication method. On the other hand, each style of leadership style considered in this study has significant effect on the communication methods, and all jointly explains a very high proportion of variations in communication method. The study concludes that the democratic leadership style is more appropriate in improving communication method in Saudi universities than the autocratic leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style. Consequently, the study recommends that universities should adopt democratic leadership style to develop, grow, and mature.

5. Recommendations

In light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends that the leadership behaviour of administrators be strengthened to be reflected in their departments and to achieve the goals they aspire to. Saudi universities should work hard to build practical programs that develop leadership behavior among administrators and benefit from the programs in place in universities. Improving communication skills with workers, listening to them, caring for their feelings, and dealing with them with appreciation and respect. By providing the university workers with the opportunity to express opinions and put forward ideas, and facilitate workers' access to decision-makers and explain their views. Conducting many studies and research on leadership behaviour among administrators in Saudi universities and its relationship to other variables such as different thinking skills.

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