

The Most Effective Leadership Styles in Arab Universities, As Perceived by Academics, with Application to Universities in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, and Morocco

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Abstract

This study examined the prevalence of effective leadership styles in Arab universities from the perspective of academic staff. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, it employed a 45-item questionnaire covering transformational, spiritual, servant, transactional, and passive leadership. Findings showed that leadership styles were generally present at a high level, with an overall mean of 3.46 (69%). Transformational leadership ranked highest (4.10, 82%), followed by spiritual (4.06, 81%), servant (3.98, 80%), and transactional (3.66, 74%). Passive leadership ranked lowest (1.51, 30%). Among the studied countries, Saudi Arabia exhibited the highest leadership effectiveness, followed by Morocco, Iraq, Egypt, and Sudan. No statistically significant differences were found between male and female faculty members regarding leadership style rankings.

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Passive Leadership, Arab Universities.*

Introduction

Universities play a crucial role in national development by supplying human capital across various disciplines. This necessitates the presence of academic leaders who can enhance and develop university environments, seize opportunities, tackle challenges, and keep pace with rapid advancements.

Academic leaders not only manage administrative responsibilities but also fulfill their roles as academics. They possess the skills, expertise, and leadership styles necessary to optimize administrative performance and achieve the university's vision and objectives (Al-Hamed & Al-Omari, 2018).

As the researcher sees it, academic leaders play a pivotal role in distinguishing universities, which in turn impacts the quality of education, its outcomes, and the overall progress and development of society. They also contribute to the enhancement of academic programs and curricula, the improvement of the (professional and work) environment within universities, and the advancement of administrative and human aspects.

Since a university's success is closely tied to the competence of its leaders and the leadership style they adopt in administration, this study aims to explore the extent to which the most effective leadership styles are present in Arab university environments from the perspective of faculty members (as an independent variable). Additionally, it seeks to rank these leadership styles in the studied countries (as a dependent variable).

Second: Study Problem

Academic leadership plays a vital role in Arab universities striving for institutional excellence, academic distinction, and the ability to address challenges, foster innovation, and adapt to change. Achieving these goals requires moving away from traditional leadership styles.

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This study explores the extent to which the most effective leadership styles are present in Arab universities and examines their ranking based on their prevalence among university leaders. It also investigates the ranking of these leadership styles in each of the studied countries Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq. Additionally, the study seeks to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the ranking of leadership styles due to gender (male vs. female faculty members).

Third: Study Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

To what extent are the most effective leadership styles present in Arab universities?

What are these leadership styles ranked based on their prevalence among university leaders?

What is the ranking of the most effective leadership styles in each of the studied countries?

Are there statistically significant differences in the ranking of leadership styles due to gender (male vs. female faculty members)?

Fourth: Significance of the Study

Scientific Significance

Leadership in universities is a critical administrative topic that attracts significant attention from researchers and professionals.

There is a lack of studies addressing this topic across Arab universities collectively.

Practical Significance

Providing recommendations for Arab universities to enhance institutional performance quality and achieve academic excellence.

Fifth: Objectives of the Study

The Study Aims to

Explore the extent to which the most effective leadership styles are present in Arab universities.

Rank these leadership styles based on their prevalence among university leaders in Arab universities.

Propose solutions and recommendations based on the study's findings.

Sixth: Scope of the Study

Spatial Scope

The study was limited to academic leaders in several Arab universities in five countries: Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq.

Temporal Scope

The field study was conducted in the year 2024.

Seventh: Methodology of the Study

The researcher will follow the descriptive-analytical approach and the case study method in this study. Data will be collected from:

Primary data: Through a questionnaire.

Secondary data: From books, published research in scientific journals, and websites.

Eighth: Study Population and Sample

The study population consists of faculty members in universities across Arab countries. Universities were selected from five countries: Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq. A total of approximately 1,208 academics responded to the survey.

Ninth: Terminology of the Study

Transformational Leadership: It is the process of elevating employees to achieve success and development, focusing on the growth of organizations and the development of groups.

Spiritual Leadership: It is the process of creating a work environment that enhances a sense of purpose, community, and personal fulfillment, integrating ethical values, morality, and a higher sense of purpose in the leadership process.

Servant Leadership: It is the influence on employees' behavior by motivating them to work with a desire to achieve goals, meaning the well-being of the organization and service to the employees.

Transactional Leadership: It is a process that focuses on creating mutual interests between leaders and employees, thus making the relationship reciprocal (reward or punishment).

Passive Leadership: It is the style in which the leader provides minimal instructions and guidance to employees, meaning non-intervention by the leader, allowing employees to make decisions and solve problems independently.

*Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework of the Study**First: Previous Studies*

Hegazy's Study (2021): titled Servant Leadership and its Impact on Excellence in University Performance at Ain Shams University, aimed to measure the impact of servant leadership dimensions on excellence in university performance. The study concluded that there is a significant positive impact of servant leadership dimensions on excellence in performance.

Alwan & Hashem's Study (2019): titled Academic Leadership and its Effect on Achieving Institutional Performance Quality, aimed to diagnose the relationship and impact of academic leadership on achieving institutional performance quality in educational institutions in Iraq. The study concluded that there is a need to enhance the role of Iraqi educational institutions in selecting university leaders with clear visions who are capable of practicing leadership actions that would lead to achieving institutional performance quality. It also emphasized the importance of focusing on training and developing academic leaders in educational institutions.

Al-Khalidi's Study (2014): aimed to explore the role of transformational leadership in improving the quality of the educational and pedagogical process in Jordanian universities. The study recommended that the administrations of both public and private Jordanian universities focus on administrative developments and establish a department dedicated to leadership development.

Hanaa & Aboudieh's Study (2011): titled Transformational Leadership among Academic Leaders in Jordanian Universities, aimed to assess the extent to which academic leaders practice transformational leadership and its relationship with empowering faculty members. The study found a high level of transformational leadership among academic leaders in Jordanian universities.

Second: How the Current Study Differs from Previous Studies

Upon reviewing the previous studies, such as Hegazy's Study (2021), titled Servant Leadership and its Impact on Excellence in University Performance at Ain Shams University, and Alwan & Hashem's Study (2019), which focused on diagnosing the relationship and impact of academic leadership on achieving institutional performance quality in tourism education institutions, it becomes evident that these studies concentrated on a single leadership style and a specific university. Additionally, Al-Khalidi's Study (2014) aimed to explore the role of transformational leadership in improving the quality of the educational process in Jordanian universities from the perspective of faculty members. Hanaa & Aboudieh's Study (2011), titled Transformational Leadership among Academic Leaders in Jordanian Universities, also concentrated on one leadership style within a specific context.

In contrast, our current study examines five leadership styles and their prevalence in Arab universities. It also ranks these leadership styles based on the extent to which their dimensions are present among the leadership of Arab universities, thus covering a broader scope and offering a more comprehensive analysis compared to the previous studies.

Third: Leadership

Management is considered an established science, encompassing well-known scientific theories and practical principles taught in specialized colleges. As such, management relies on a scientific approach to practice its functions.

However, there are those who argue that management is not a science, asserting that administrators are born, not made meaning that management is a talent and a personal ability that one is born with, rather than acquired. Many individuals have succeeded without having the opportunity to attend specialized colleges.

From this, we conclude that management is both a science and an art. It is a science in its theories and concepts, and an art in the skills and personal abilities of individuals to perform tasks effectively.

Definition of Leadership

Leadership is the ability to guide and direct others in order to achieve a specific goal. It is the process of motivating and encouraging individuals to accomplish particular objectives.

The researcher believes that leadership is the ability to influence the behavior of others toward achieving desired goals, relying on the leader's impact and the acceptance of their subordinates.

Fourth: The Difference Between Leadership and Authority

Leadership differs from authority in the following aspects:

Source: Leadership originates from the group, arising within it, while authority is imposed on the group according to existing organizational structures.

Goal Selection: In authority, the leader chooses the goal without input from the group, whereas in leadership, the group collaborates with the leader in selecting the goal.

Acceptance: Leadership is accepted by the group, as it originates from them, while authority is imposed, and compliance with orders is often motivated by the fear of punishment.

Fifth: Sources of a Leader's Power

The Source of Using Pressure Tactics: Overuse of pressure tactics can lead to negative outcomes and backlash.

The Source of the Leader's Personal Influence: This depends on the leader's traits, such as personality strength, skill level, experience, diplomacy, and other characteristics.

The Source of the Leader's Legal and Formal Authority: The authority granted to the leader by virtue of their position, which increases their influence on subordinates as their authority grows.

The Source of Financial Recognition: The leader's ability to provide financial rewards, such as salary increases, bonuses, and allowances, enhances their influence on subordinates.

The Source of the Leader's Expertise and Skill: The leader's expertise and skills make them a reference point in the workplace, earning them respect and appreciation from subordinates.

Sixth: Types of Leaders

Blake and Mouton proposed a model that reflects this concept, identifying five types of leadership:

Moderate Leader: One who balances the morale of employees with decision-making.

Human-Oriented Leader: A leader who focuses on the well-being and needs of employees.

Production-Oriented Leader: A leader who does not prioritize human considerations and focuses solely on production.

Participative Leader: A leader who involves everyone and fosters trust and respect with their team.

Passive or Laissez-Faire Leader: A leader who does not care about either production or the employees.

Seventh: Leadership Styles

The researcher believes that there are many leadership styles, some of which are outlined as follows:

Autocratic Leadership: Provides guidance to team members and reduces decision-making time.

Democratic Leadership: Involves the leader's subordinates in decision-making.

Delegative Leadership: Focuses on initiative and allows employees more freedom in decision-making.

Transactional Leadership: Focuses on rewarding individuals based on their performance, emphasizing task completion and organizational goal achievement.

Transformational Leadership: Motivates employees by providing a vision for the future, enhances employees' skills and abilities, and positively impacts management efficiency.

Positive Leadership: Positive leadership focuses on motivation, empowerment, and creating a supportive

work environment, enhancing trust, collaboration, and job performance.

According to John Maxwell, a well-known author in the field of leadership, a leader should possess four qualities:

Build relationships with those around them at work.

Have a thinking approach that differs from others.

Always have solutions to problems.

Have ways and alternatives to reach the goal.

Passive Leadership: Relies on severity, threats, and excessive firmness.

Servant Leadership: Prioritizes the well-being and growth of employees, emphasizing the fulfillment of their needs first.

Spiritual Leadership: A leadership approach that integrates values, ethics, and a sense of a higher purpose into the leadership process.

Eighth: The Most Effective Leadership Styles in the University Environment

In a study published on the “Academic Leadership Group” website in 2023, exploring the relationship between leadership styles in higher education and academic staff job satisfaction, three leadership styles were identified as having a positive impact in the university environment:

Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership is the style that inspires and motivates followers to reach their full potential by encouraging creativity, innovation, and providing incentives that increase motivation. It focuses on how the leader strives to elevate the performance of their subordinates for achievement and self-development, as well as developing and improving both groups and organizations as a whole. According to (Druish, 1982), it involves the abilities within the leader that allow them to guide and influence their subordinates to achieve goals. (Mustafa, 1994) defined it as the leader’s influence on the behavior of subordinates to achieve both the leader’s goals and the subordinates’ goals.

Servant Leadership Style

The concept of servant leadership emerged in 1977 and emphasizes prioritizing care, service, ethical behavior, and collaboration through communication with others. Its motto is “The Servant Leader” (Garrud, 2018). Servant leadership focuses on the well-being and growth of employees, ensuring their needs are met first. Its key dimensions include emotional inclusion, altruism, organizational responsibility, wisdom and excellence, personal values, and designing advanced plans.

Spiritual Leadership Style

Spiritual leadership is defined as behaviors, values, and attitudes that motivate organizational members to experience a sense of spiritual well-being, leading to organizational membership. (Fairholm, 1996) was the first to combine leadership and spirituality, believing that spiritual leaders possess values and principles that include spiritual values and ethical principles. Spiritual leadership is an approach that integrates values, ethics, and a sense of higher purpose into the leadership process. It involves guiding followers in a manner consistent with shared values and a broader spiritual or ethical context. The spiritual leader aims to create a work environment that promotes a sense of purpose, community, and personal fulfillment.

The Main Tasks of Spiritual Leadership (Fairholm, 1996)

Establishing Vision: This refers to the development of a charter or a set of principles that must be adhered to.

Servitude: Serving others and placing their needs first.

Mission Competence: Achieved through teaching, trust, and inspiration.

Less Effective Leadership Styles in Academic Environments

While some of these styles may succeed for short periods or in specific situations, they should generally be avoided in academic settings:

Transactional Leadership Style

Transactional leadership is based on a reciprocal relationship between leaders and their subordinates. Transactional leaders focus on mutual interests between them and their followers. This style is less effective in situations requiring long-term vision, creativity, or innovation, making it less suitable for academic environments.

Key dimensions of transactional leadership include:

Conditional rewards

Management by exception (positive)

Management by exception (negative)

Characteristics of transactional leadership (Al-Ajmi, 2010) include:

Exchange between the leader and their subordinates.

Clear communication of expectations and showing empathy towards subordinates.

Motivating subordinates through rewards and punishments.

Intervention when necessary.

Passive (Toxic) Leadership Style

Passive or toxic leadership is marked by a lack of intervention by the leader. Toxic leadership involves excessive severity, threats, and rigidity, often disregarding the feelings and humanity of subordinates. This type of leadership views the leader as a master over the team, fostering an environment of distrust and a lack of consultation.

As Thomas Jefferson stated, “Whenever a man sets his heart on power, corruption begins to affect his behavior.”

Toxic Leadership (Schmidt, 2014) involves a set of destructive behaviors that drive leaders to pursue personal goals at the expense of others, damaging the interests of individuals, teams, and organizations.

Key dimensions of toxic leadership (Schmidt, 2014):

Self-promotion: Seeking personal interests at the expense of others.

Abusive supervision: Demonstrating hostility towards subordinates.

Unpredictability: Leaders act in an unpredictable or erratic manner.

Narcissism: A leader's excessive self-importance and disregard for others.

Autocratic leadership: A rigid, authoritarian leadership style that stifles input from others.

Ninth: Arab Universities

The number of higher education institutions in Arab countries is approximately 1,350, both public and private, representing about 4.4% of the total universities worldwide. The number of students enrolled in these institutions is about 15 million, taught by approximately 500,000 faculty members, 76% of whom hold doctoral degrees, and 24% hold master's degrees.

The total number of universities across the Arab world is approximately 625, distributed across the Arab countries as follows:

Table 1. Shows The Number of Universities in Arab Countries

No.	Country	Number of universities
1	Comoros	1
2	Djibouti	1
3	Mauritania	5
4	Oman	9
5	Qatar	10
6	Libya	12
7	Bahrain	14
8	Palestine	16
9	Kuwait	17
10	Yemen	18
11	Somalia	18
12	Lebanon	26
13	Tunisia	22
14	Syria	33
15	Jordan	34
16	United Arab Emirates	36
17	Saudi Arabia	42
18	Morocco	45
19	Iraq	56
20	Sudan	57
21	Algeria	63
22	Egypt	92
Total		625 Universities

*Source: Higher Education Websites in Arab Countries.

Table 1, Shows that Egypt, one of the countries in this study, ranks first with 92 universities, while Sudan ranks third with 57 universities. Iraq holds the fourth position with 56 universities, Morocco is in the fifth position with 45 universities, and Saudi Arabia ranks sixth with 42 universities.

*Chapter 3: Field Framework of the Study**First: Study Population*

The field study population consists of faculty members working in Arab universities (Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq). A total of 652 faculty members from both genders responded to the study.

Below is a detailed description of the responding study population by gender.

Table 2. Shows The Responding Study Participants by Gender

No.	Gender	Number	Response Rate
1	Male	985	82%
2	Female	223	18%
Total		1208	100%

*Prepared by the researcher from the collected data.

Table 2, Shows that the number of male respondents from faculty members in the universities of the five countries under study is 985 (82% of the study population), while the number of female respondents is 223 (18% of the total 1208 respondents from the study population).

Table 3. Shows The Responding Study Participants by Country

Country	Number of Respondents	%
Saudi Arabia	398	33%
Sudan	267	22%
Egypt	234	19%
Iraq	163	14%
Morocco	146	12%
Total	1208	100%

*Prepared by the researcher from the collected data.

Table 3, Shows that the highest number of respondents came from Saudi Arabia, with 398 faculty members (33% of the total respondents). Following this, 267 respondents (22%) came from Sudan, 234 respondents (19%) from Egypt, 163 respondents (14%) from Iraq, and 146 respondents (12%) from Morocco.

Second: Study Tool

The study tool consisted of the following:

Analysis of the collected data content.

Primary data for the study sample of 1208 faculty members, categorized by gender and country of response.

A questionnaire with 45 questions, distributed across five leadership styles. The following table shows the distribution of items across the five leadership styles in the questionnaire:

Table 4. Shows the Distribution of Items Across the Leadership Styles in the Questionnaire.

Leadership Styles	Number of Items
Transformational Leadership	16
Spiritual Leadership	5
Servant Leadership	11
Transactional Leadership	6
Passive Leadership	7
Total Number of Items	45

*Prepared by the researcher.

The questionnaire was carefully designed to ensure clarity and that the items did not allow for multiple interpretations.

Third: Validity of the Study Tool

Apparent Validity

The initial version of the questionnaire was presented to experts in the relevant field to provide their opinions and ensure the appropriateness of the phrasing and language clarity. Necessary modifications were made according to the experts' suggestions.

Internal Validity

Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated using a pilot sample (outside the main study sample) consisting of 20 faculty members. The following results were obtained:

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Items of the Transformational Leadership Style Axis

(N=20)

No.	Statement	Correlation Coefficient
1	The academic leader is keen to solve problems in work in innovative ways	0.859
2	The academic leader has strong personality	0.743
3	The academic leader adopts the principle of dialogue to solve problems	0.619
4	The academic leader listens to his/her subordinates	0.870
5	The academic leader encourages his/her subordinates to participate in decision-making	0.740
6	The academic leader is keen to convey information to his/her subordinates	0.659

7	The academic leader has great confidence in the abilities of his/ her subordinates	0.714
8	The academic leader adheres to ethical standards and values	0.549
9	The academic leader ensures the participation of his/her subordinates in change and renewal processes	0.658
10	The academic leader is keen to build trust with his/her subordinates	0.721
11	The academic leader works to enhance positive cooperation among subordinates	0.658
12	The academic leader encourages supporting team spirit	0.553
13	The academic leader has a clear vision for the future	0.569
14	The academic leader encourages competition and offering the best	0.710
15	The academic leader encourages subordinates to innovate and renew	0.658
16	The academic leader is keen on maintaining the hierarchical structure in work	0.739

*The correlation coefficients are statistically significant at ($\alpha = 0.01$)

Table 5, Shows that the correlation values for the statements under the transformational leadership style axis are all positive, ranging from 0.549 to 0.859. This indicates a strong internal consistency of the statements, showing a significant correlation at a statistical significance level of ($\alpha = 0.01$).

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Items of the Spiritual Leadership Style Axis

(N=20)

No.	Statement	Correlation Coefficient
1	The leader works on creating an organizational culture based on love and altruism	0.523
2	The leader appreciates his/her subordinates	0.742
3	The leader works on motivating and inspiring subordinates	0.570
4	The leader makes subordinates feel that the work they do has meaning, purpose, and makes a difference	0.851
5	The leader makes subordinates feel superior always	0.681

*The correlation coefficients are statistically significant at ($\alpha = 0.01$)

Table 6, Shows that the correlation values for the statements under the spiritual leadership style axis are all positive, ranging from 0.523 to 0.851. This indicates a strong internal consistency of the statements, showing a significant correlation at a statistical significance level of ($\alpha = 0.01$).

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Items of the Servant Leadership Style Axis

(N=20)

No.	Statement	Correlation Coefficient
1	The leader prioritizes the needs of subordinates	0.459
2	The leader empathizes with subordinates	0.631
3	The leader strives to create a collaborative environment with subordinates	0.959
4	The leader works to boost subordinates' morale	0.654
5	The leader fosters a culture that enhances growth and creativity at work	0.859
6	The leader supports subordinates in achieving their goals	0.760
7	The leader prioritizes the organization's interests over personal ones	0.563
8	The leader intellectually and emotionally understands subordinates by recognizing their traits and beliefs	0.703
9	The leader demonstrates a high level of responsibility towards the university	0.641
10	The leader strives to distinguish the university from others	0.712
11	The leader has advanced plans that enhance organizational excellence	0.827

*The correlation coefficients are statistically significant at ($\alpha = 0.01$)

Table 7, Shows that the correlation values for the statements under the servant leadership style axis are all positive, ranging from 0.459 to 0.959. This indicates a strong internal consistency of the statements, demonstrating a significant correlation at a statistical significance level of ($\alpha = 0.01$).

Table 8. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Items of the Transactional Leadership Style Axis

(N=20)

No.	Statement	Correlation Coefficient
1	The level of achievement in the university is the criterion for awarding rewards	0.847
2	Rewards in exchange for efforts encourage employees to put in more effort	0.561
3	Rewards are expected upon achieving the required goal	0.459
4	Responsibilities related to university work are discussed to achieve the required goals	0.741
5	Academics in the university are given the freedom to complete their work	0.489
6	Necessary support and assistance are provided to accomplish tasks in line with developments	0.548

*The correlation coefficients are statistically significant at ($\alpha = 0.01$)

Table 8, Shows that the correlation values for the statements under the transactional leadership style axis are all positive, ranging from 0.459 to 0.847. This indicates a strong internal consistency of the statements, demonstrating a significant correlation at a statistical significance level of ($\alpha = 0.01$).

Table 9. Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Items of the passive Leadership Style Axis

(N=20)

No.	Statement	Correlation Coefficient
1	The leader looks down on their subordinates	0.848
2	The leader never consults their subordinates	0.739
3	The leader makes their subordinates feel inferior	0.858
4	The leader forces subordinates to act with insincerity and hypocrisy	0.592
5	The leader imposes authority to limit subordinates' freedom	0.841
6	The leader relies on fear-based incentives and threats	0.764
7	The leader does not trust their subordinates	0.549

*The correlation coefficients are statistically significant at ($\alpha = 0.01$)

Table 9, Shows that the correlation values for the statements under the passive leadership style axis are all positive, ranging from 0.549 to 0.858. This indicates a strong internal consistency of the statements, demonstrating a significant correlation at a statistical significance level of ($\alpha = 0.01$).

Fourth: Reliability of the tool (Questionnaire)

The reliability of the questionnaire was verified using:

Calculation of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

The reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient on a pilot sample consisting of 20 faculty members from outside the main research sample. The Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from a minimum of (0.571) to a maximum of (0.943), as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Shows the Reliability Coefficient Values for the Five Leadership Styles in the Questionnaire

Leadership Style	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Transformational Leadership	16	Minimum: 0.652, Maximum: 0.929
Spiritual Leadership	5	Minimum: 0.740, Maximum: 0.851
Servant Leadership	11	Minimum: 0.571, Maximum: 0.801
Transactional Leadership	6	Minimum: 0.663, Maximum: 0.922
Passive Leadership	7	Minimum: 0.659, Maximum: 0.943

*The reliability coefficients are statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.01$.

*Prepared by the researcher based on the statistical analysis of the data.

Table 10, it Shows that the reliability coefficients for the dimensions of transformational leadership ranged between (0.652) and (0.929), while for spiritual leadership, they ranged between (0.740) and (0.851). The coefficients for servant leadership ranged between (0.571) and (0.801), whereas for transactional leadership, they ranged between (0.663) and (0.922). Finally, for passive leadership, the coefficients ranged between (0.659) and (0.943).

All values are relatively high, indicating that the questionnaire has a high reliability coefficient, making it a dependable tool for research analysis.

Construct Validity Index (Confidence)

The construct validity index was calculated by taking the square root of the reliability coefficient. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Shows the Construct Validity Index for the Five Leadership Styles in the Questionnaire

Leadership Style	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Transformational Leadership	16	Minimum: 0.459, Maximum: 0.824
Spiritual Leadership	5	Minimum: 0.426, Maximum: 0.809
Servant Leadership	11	Minimum: 0.502, Maximum: 0.749
Transactional Leadership	6	Minimum: 0.432, Maximum: 0.859
Passive Leadership	7	Minimum: 0.452, Maximum: 0.812

*Prepared by the researcher based on the statistical analysis of the data.

Table 11, Shows that the construct validity index for the dimensions of transformational leadership ranged between (0.459) and (0.824), while for spiritual leadership, it ranged between (0.426) and (0.809). The index for servant leadership ranged between (0.502) and (0.749), whereas for transactional leadership, it ranged between (0.432) and (0.859). Finally, for passive leadership, the index ranged between (0.452) and (0.812).

All values are relatively high, indicating that the questionnaire has a high degree of validity and reliability, making it a trustworthy tool for research and ensuring the accuracy of its results.

Fifth: Study Instrument Scale (Questionnaire)

The researcher employed the five-point Likert scale, as illustrated below:

Table 12. Criteria for Interpreting the Mean Response

Mean Score	Scale Degree	Response	Level
4.21 - 5.00	5	Strongly Agree	Very High
3.41 - 4.20	4	Agree	High

2.61 - 3.40	3	Neutral	Moderate
1.81 - 2.60	2	Disagree	Low
1.00 - 1.80	1	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

*The range of responses is calculated as $(5 - 1 = 4)$, and the category length is determined as $5 \div 4 = (0.8)$.

Sixth: Implementation

The questionnaire was administered electronically using Google Forms to the study sample, which included 1,208 faculty members working in Arab universities in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq.

Seventh: Statistical Procedures Used

For statistical analysis, the study utilized SPSS software to process the survey data collected from 562 faculty members from the research sample. The following statistical tests were employed:

To Answer the First, Second, and Third Research Questions

To what extent are the most effective leadership styles available in Arab universities?

What is the ranking of these leadership styles based on their availability among university leaders?

What is the ranking of the most effective leadership styles in each of the studied countries?

The following statistical methods were used:

Arithmetic Mean (Mean)

Standard Deviation

Coefficient of Variation

Ranking Analysis

Each of the five leadership styles (Transformational, Spiritual, Servant, Transactional, and Passive) was analyzed using these measures.

To Answer the Fourth Research Question

Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) based on the gender of faculty members (male/female) in ranking leadership styles in Arab universities?

The T-test was applied to examine the statistical significance of mean differences in leadership style availability across the studied universities.

Eighth: Study Results and Discussion with Interpretation for Each Result

Results Related to the First Question: To what extent are the most effective leadership styles present in Arab universities?

Table 13. Illustrates the Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages for the Degree of Availability of Transformational Leadership Dimensions in Arab Universities.

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	%	Coefficient of Variation	Availability Level	Rank
1	The academic leader is keen to solve problems in work in innovative ways	3.59	1.19	70%	33%	High	15
2	The academic leader has strong personality	4.61	0.69	92%	15%	Very High	2
3	The academic leader adopts the principle of dialogue to solve problems	3.81	1.02	76%	26%	High	12
4	The academic leader listens to his/her subordinates	3.91	1.08	78%	28%	High	10
5	The academic leader encourages his/her subordinates to participate in decision-making	4.25	0.85	85%	20%	Very High	6
6	The academic leader is keen to convey information to his/her subordinates	4.42	0.93	88%	21%	Very High	5
7	The academic leader has great confidence in the abilities of his/ her subordinates	3.88	1.15	78%	30%	High	13
8	The academic leader adheres to ethical standards and values	4.60	0.68	92%	15%	Very High	3
9	The academic leader ensures the participation of his/her subordinates in change and renewal processes	3.52	1.11	70%	32%	High	16
10	The academic leader is keen to build trust with his/her subordinates	4.20	0.85	84%	20%	Very High	7
11	The academic leader works to enhance positive cooperation among subordinates	4.53	0.72	90%	16%	Very High	4
12	The academic leader encourages supporting team spirit	4.62	0.67	92%	15%	Very High	1
13	The academic leader has a clear vision for the future	3.92	1.08	77%	28%	High	9
14	The academic leader encourages competition	4.01	0.99	80%	24%	High	8

	and offering the best						
15	The academic leader encourages subordinates to innovate and renew	3.80	1.11	76%	29%	High	14
16	The academic leader is keen on maintaining the hierarchical structure in work	3.90	1.08	77%	28%	High	11
overall score		4.10	0.95	82%	23%	High	

*Prepared by the researcher based on statistical data analysis.

Table 13, Shows that the mean score for the availability of transformational leadership dimension is 4.10, with a percentage of 82%, indicating a high level of availability.

The highest-ranked statement is “The academic leader has a strong personality”, with a mean score of 4.61 and a percentage of 92%, classified as high availability.

The lowest-ranked statement is “The academic leader ensures the participation of his/her subordinates in change and renewal processes”, with a mean score of 3.52 and a percentage of 70%, classified as moderate availability.

Table 14. Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages of the Availability of Spiritual Leadership Dimensions in Arab Universities

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	%	Coefficient of Variation	Availability Level	Rank
1	The leader works on creating an organizational culture based on love and altruism	3.91	1.07	77%	27%	High	3
2	The leader appreciates his/her subordinates	4.61	0.67	92%	15%	Very High	1
3	The leader works on motivating and inspiring subordinates	3.81	1.11	76%	29%	High	5
4	The leader makes subordinates feel that the work they do has meaning, purpose, and makes a difference	3.90	1.16	77%	30%	High	4
5	The leader makes subordinates feel superior always	4.06	0.89	80%	22%	High	2
overall score		4.06	0.98	81%	25%	High	

*Prepared by the researcher based on statistical data analysis results.

Table 14, Shows that the mean score for the Spiritual Leadership dimension is 4.06, with a percentage of 81%, indicating a high level of availability.

The highest-ranked statement is “The leader appreciates his/her subordinates”, with a mean score of 4.61 and a percentage of 92%, classified as very high availability.

The lowest-ranked statement is “The leader work on motivating and inspiring subordinates”, with a mean score of 3.81 and a percentage of 76%, but still categorized as high availability.

Table 15. Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages of the Availability of Servant Leadership Dimensions in Arab Universities

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	%	Coefficient of Variation	Availability Level	Rank
1	The leader prioritizes the needs of subordinates	3.13	1.29	65%	41%	Moderate	10
2	The leader empathizes with subordinates	3.27	1.32	65%	40%	Moderate	9
3	The leader strives to create a collaborative environment with subordinates	4.21	1.09	84%	25%	Very High	5
4	The leader works to boost subordinates' morale	4.32	1.03	86%	24%	Very High	3
5	The leader fosters a culture that enhances growth and creativity at work	4.03	1.00	81%	25%	High	6
6	The leader supports subordinates in achieving their goals	4.22	1.21	84%	28%	Very High	4
7	The leader prioritizes the organization's interests over personal ones	4.52	0.74	90%	16%	Very High	1
8	The leader intellectually and emotionally understands subordinates by recognizing their traits and beliefs	3.58	1.36	72%	38%	High	8

9	The leader demonstrates a high level of responsibility towards the university	4.38	0.62	88%	14%	Very High	2
10	The leader strives to distinguish the university from others	4.11	1.04	82%	25%	High	6
11	The leader has advanced plans that enhance organizational excellence	4.02	1.14	80%	28%	High	7
overall score		3.98	1.07	80%	27%	High	

*Prepared by the researcher based on statistical data analysis results.

Table 15, Shows that the mean score for the Servant Leadership dimension is 3.98, with a percentage of 80%, indicating a high level of availability.

The highest-ranked statement is “The leader prioritizes the organization’s interests over personal ones”, with a mean score of 4.52 and a percentage of 90%, classified as very high availability.

The lowest-ranked statement is “The leader prioritizes the needs of subordinates”, with a mean score of 3.13 and a percentage of 65%, classified as moderate availability.

Table 16. Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages of the Availability of Transactional Leadership Dimensions in Arab Universities

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	%	Coefficient of Variation	Availability Level	Rank
1	The level of achievement in the university is the criterion for awarding rewards	3.58	1.36	72%	38%	High	4
2	Rewards in exchange for efforts encourage employees to put in more effort	3.15	1.49	63%	47%	Moderate	5
3	Rewards are expected upon achieving the required goal	3.01	1.51	62%	50%	Moderate	6
4	Responsibilities related to university work are discussed to achieve the required goals	4.12	1.02	82%	28%	High	2
5	Academics in the university are given the freedom to complete their work	4.20	0.98	84%	22%	High	1

6	Necessary support and assistance are provided to accomplish tasks in line with developments	3.90	1.17	78%	30%	High	3
Overall score		3.66	1.25	74%	36%	High	

*Prepared by the researcher based on statistical data analysis results.

Table 16, Shows that the mean score for the Transactional Leadership dimension is 3.66, with a percentage of 74%, indicating a high level of availability.

The highest-ranked statement is “Academics in the university are given the freedom to complete their work”, with a mean score of 4.20 and a percentage of 84%, classified as high availability.

The lowest-ranked statement is “Rewards are expected upon achieving the required goal”, with a mean score of 3.01 and a percentage of 62%, classified as moderate availability.

Table 17. Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages of the Availability of Passive Leadership Dimensions in Arab Universities

No.	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	%	Coefficient of Variation	Availability Level	Rank
1	The leader looks down on their subordinates	1.56	1.92	31%	123%	Very Low	3
2	The leader never consults their subordinates	2.26	1.67	45%	74%	Low	1
3	The leader makes their subordinates feel inferior	1.12	1.85	22%	165%	Very Low	6
4	The leader forces subordinates to act with insincerity and hypocrisy	1.25	1.98	25%	158%	Very Low	5
5	The leader imposes authority to limit subordinates' freedom	2.00	1.72	40%	86%	Low	2
6	The leader relies on fear-based incentives and threats	1.28	1.99	26%	155%	Very Low	4
7	The leader does not trust their subordinates	1.11	1.93	22%	174%	Very Low	7
Overall score		1.51	1.87	30%	134%	Very Low	

*Prepared by the researcher based on statistical data analysis results.

Table 17, Shows that the mean score for the Passive Leadership dimension is 1.51, with a percentage of 30%, indicating a very low level of availability.

The highest-ranked statement is “The leader never consults their subordinates,” with a mean score of 2.26 and a percentage of 45%, classified as low availability.

The lowest-ranked statement is “The leader does not trust their subordinates,” with a mean score of 1.11 and a percentage of 22%, classified as very low availability.

Summary of the Analysis for the first Research Question

To what extent are the most effective leadership styles present in Arab universities?

Through the analysis of Tables (13, 14, 15, 16, and 17), it becomes evident that the most effective leadership styles are highly prevalent in Arab universities across the five studied countries (Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq) to a significant extent, as follows:

The arithmetic mean for the availability of the transformational leadership style was 4.10, with a percentage of 82%, indicating a high level of availability.

The arithmetic mean for the availability of the spiritual leadership style was 4.06, with a percentage of 81%, indicating a high level of availability.

The arithmetic mean for the availability of the servant leadership style was 3.98, with a percentage of 80%, indicating a high level of availability.

The arithmetic mean for the availability of the transactional leadership style was 3.66, with a percentage of 74%, indicating a high level of availability.

Meanwhile, the arithmetic mean for the availability of the passive leadership style was 1.51, with a percentage of 30%, indicating a very low level of availability.

Summary of the Analysis of the second Research Question

What is the ranking of leadership styles based on the extent of their availability among university leaders? is presented in Table 18 below.

Table 18. Ranking of Leadership Styles by Importance in Arab Universities

Leadership Style	Arithmetic Mean	percentage	Availability Level	Rank
Transformational Leadership	4.10	82%	High	1
Spiritual Leadership	4.06	81%	High	2
Servant Leadership	3.98	80%	High	3
Transactional Leadership	3.66	74%	High	4
Passive Leadership	1.51	30%	Very Low	5
Overall Mean	3.46	69%	High	

*Prepared by the researcher based on statistical data analysis results.

Table 18, Shows that:

The overall mean of the five leadership styles (Transformational, Spiritual, Servant, Transactional, and Passive) was 3.46, with a 69% prevalence rate, indicating a high availability level.

Among the studied countries (Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq), Transformational Leadership ranked first, with an arithmetic mean of 4.10 and a prevalence rate of 82%.

Spiritual Leadership ranked second (mean = 4.06, prevalence = 81%).

Servant Leadership ranked third (mean = 3.98, prevalence = 80%).

Transactional Leadership ranked fourth (mean = 3.66, prevalence = 74%).

Passive Leadership ranked last, with the lowest prevalence (mean = 1.51, prevalence = 30%), indicating a very low availability level.

Summary of the Analysis of the Third Research Question

What is the ranking of the most effective leadership styles in each of the studied countries?

Table 19. Shows the Ranking of the Most Effective Leadership Styles in Each of the Studied Countries (Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, Iraq)

Leadership Style	Country	Arithmetic Mean	%	Availability Degree
Transformational Leadership	Saudi Arabia	4.85	97%	Very High
	Sudan	3.54	71%	High
	Egypt	3.72	74%	High
	Iraq	3.93	79%	High
	Morocco	4.46	89%	Very High
Spiritual Leadership	Saudi Arabia	4.72	94%	Very High
	Sudan	3.40	68%	Moderate
	Egypt	3.68	74%	High
	Iraq	3.82	76%	High
	Morocco	4.68	94%	Very High
Servant Leadership	Saudi Arabia	4.88	98%	Very High
	Sudan	3.31	66%	Moderate
	Egypt	3.62	72%	High
	Iraq	3.66	73%	High
	Morocco	4.53	91%	Very High
Transactional Leadership	Saudi Arabia	3.02	60%	Moderate
	Sudan	4.33	87%	Very High
	Egypt	4.21	84%	Very High
	Iraq	3.54	71%	High
	Morocco	3.20	64%	Moderate
Passive Leadership	Saudi Arabia	1.00	20%	Very Low
	Sudan	1.81	36%	Low
	Egypt	1.86	37%	Low
	Iraq	1.59	32%	Very Low
	Morocco	1.29	26%	Very Low

*Prepared by the researcher based on statistical data analysis results.

Table 19, Shows that the most effective leadership styles were most prevalent in Saudi Arabia, ranking highest in Transformational (97%), Spiritual (94%), and Servant Leadership (98%).

Morocco followed in second place with high scores across all styles, particularly Transformational (89%) and Spiritual Leadership (94%).

Iraq ranked third, showing moderate to high availability, with Transformational Leadership at 79% and Transactional Leadership at 71%.

Egypt came fourth, excelling in Transactional Leadership (84%) but scoring lower in other styles.

Sudan ranked last, despite a strong presence of Transactional Leadership (87%), with relatively lower percentages in other styles.

Summary of the Analysis of the fourth Question of the Study

Are there statistically significant differences in the ranking of leadership styles due to gender (male vs. female faculty members)?

The researcher employed the t-test to examine the significance of differences between mean scores. The results are presented in Table 20.

Table 20. T-Test Results for the Significance of Differences in the Availability of Transformational Leadership Dimensions Among Academic Leaders in Saudi Universities Based on Leadership Type (Male/Female)

Leadership Style	Gender	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	Degree of Freedom	P-value
Transformational Leadership	Male	985	4.11	0.92	0.75	1206	0.632
	Female	223	4.09	0.98			
Spiritual Leadership	Male	985	4.07	0.97	0.69	1206	0.421
	Female	223	4.05	0.99			
Servant Leadership	Male	985	4.00	1.05	0.83	1206	0.623
	Female	223	3.96	1.09			
Transactional Leadership	Male	985	3.71	1.22	0.71	1206	0.529
	Female	223	3.61	1.28			
Passive Leadership	Male	985	1.58	1.85	0.84	1206	0.448
	Female	223	1.44	1.89			

*Significance Level: ($\alpha = 0.05$)

Table 20, Shows that the results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences at the ($\alpha = 0.05$) significance level attributable to gender (male vs. female faculty members) in ranking the most effective leadership styles in the universities under study.

Eighths: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Based on the study results, it is evident that the most effective leadership styles are highly prevalent in the Arab universities of the five countries under study (Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq). The levels of availability for each leadership style were as follows:

Transformational Leadership: Mean score of (4.10), with a percentage of (82%), indicating a high level of availability.

Spiritual Leadership: Mean score of (4.06), with a percentage of (81%), indicating a high level of availability.

Servant Leadership: Mean score of (3.98), with a percentage of (80%), indicating a high level of availability.

Transactional Leadership: Mean score of (3.66), with a percentage of (74%), indicating a high level of availability.

Passive Leadership: Mean score of (1.51), with a percentage of (30%), indicating a very low level of availability.

Regarding the ranking of these leadership styles based on their prevalence among university leaders in Arab universities collectively, the study results revealed the following:

Transformational leadership ranked first.

Spiritual leadership ranked second.

Servant leadership ranked third.

Transactional leadership ranked fourth.

Passive leadership ranked last.

As for the ranking of the most effective leadership styles in each of the five countries under study (Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, and Iraq), the findings showed that:

The most effective leadership styles were most prevalent in Saudi Arabia, followed by Morocco in second place.

Iraq ranked third.

Egypt ranked fourth.

Sudan ranked last.

The researcher attributes these findings to the political and economic stability in Saudi Arabia and Morocco, which has positively impacted the stability of university environments. Saudi universities, in particular, are among the best in the Arab world and hold high positions in global university rankings. On the other hand, the availability of effective leadership styles significantly decreased in countries experiencing political and economic instability, such as Sudan (where political fluctuations and partisan appointments are prevalent) and Egypt.

Additionally, the study results indicated that there are no statistically significant differences at the ($\alpha = 0.05$) significance level attributable to gender (male vs. female faculty members) in ranking the most effective leadership styles in Arab universities under study.

Recommendations

Appointing academic leaders based on competence and their ability to enhance university performance, without any partisan, political, or other external considerations.

Developing and training academic leaders, with a focus on modern leadership concepts such as spiritual and servant leadership, particularly in economically less developed countries.

Ninth: Areas for Future Research

Based on the study findings, the researcher suggests that future studies explore the impact of leadership styles on Arab universities in comparison with global universities.

Tenth: Data Availability

All data used to support the findings of this study have been included within the study.

Eleventh: Conflict of Interest

The researcher declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Twelfth: Funding Sources

The researcher declares that this study received no funding.

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