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Study of Competency and Leadership Style in Indian Public Sector: A Case Study

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Abstract: Competencies are combination of knowledge, skills and attributes (KSA) that are required for a particular job or work role. Leadership style is a leader's style of providing directions, implementing plans and motivating people. Competencies of employees of the organization were already available as the organization had already conducted the survey for the same. This study attempted to find a relation between a public sector organization's employee's competencies and leadership style at executive level. A structured questionnaire with 20 questions for 4 leadership styles (Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez Faire and Task/People Oriented) were distributed to executives working under different departments. Finally correlation coefficients between competencies and leadership style were obtained using CORREL function of Excel in order to determine the type of proportionality between competencies and leadership style. It was found that "Generate & implement ideas" competency is directly proportional to Autocratic leadership style, "Active listening" to Democratic and Laissez-Faire style and "Process/system focus" to Task/People oriented style.

Keywords: Competency, Leadership Style, KSA, CORREL.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, human resource professionals have shown lot of interest in the notion of competencies for improving human performance. Competencies are being frequently used for many organizational applications. They help in defining factors for success in jobs, assess current performance and future development for employees currently working in the organization, and various other related activities. Competency mapping helps in identifying key competencies for a particular position and then use it further for human resource processes such as recruitment, training and development, job evaluation, succession planning, performance management, etc. As a result processes like appraisals, training and development, talent induction yield much better results. The use of competencies for improving human performance is seen being applied in non-IT sector more than the IT sector.

Competency is a combination of knowledge, skills, and attributes (KSA) that are required for particular job or role within an organization. Competencies are thus the success factors that describe specific behaviours and demonstrate superior performance in work roles. Attributes can be traits, personal characteristics, motives, values or ways of thinking that impact an individual's behaviour. As long as the knowledge, skills and attributes that constitute the competence are a part of it, a person will possess that competence enabling him to perform effective action within a certain workplace environment. However, what is needed to do a job changes, competence might be lost but not necessarily his knowledge, skill and attribute.

A leadership style is a leader's way of providing direction to people, motivating them and implementing plans. There exist many different leadership styles that can be exhibited by leaders in the political, business or other fields. The paper uses only four styles to assess the leadership style of an employee i.e. Autocratic, Laissez-Faire, People oriented/Task Oriented and Democratic. Autocratic leaders are those who have complete power over their people. His staff and team members have little

opportunity to give suggestions, even if these would be in the team's or the organization's best interest. Laissez-faire leaders may give their teams' complete freedom to do their work and set their own deadlines. They extend their support to team through advice and required resources, if needed, but otherwise don't get involved. People-oriented leaders treat everyone in the team equally. They are friendly and approachable. They make themselves available whenever team members need help and pay attention to the welfare of everyone in the group. Task-oriented leaders focus on getting the job done. They can be autocratic.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Stedman and Rudd (2006) studied the perceived leadership style of 4-H County Faculty in United States. 4-H programs need volunteers who can help youth become strong and vital citizens in US. Their objective was to determine the demographic make-up, and the relation between demographics, leadership competence along with styles and volunteer administration helps to predict leadership style based on demographics and volunteer administration leadership competence. They found that systems leadership and organizational leadership contributed the most to transformational leadership style. Proficiency in organizational leadership contributed to transactional leadership style. The importance of organizational culture and commitment to the profession importance contributed to the prediction of laissez faire leadership style. Madlock (2008) findings associate link between supervisor communicator competence and leadership style with employee job and communication satisfaction. Questionnaires were distributed to 220 individuals who work full time in various companies in Midwest. He found that supervisor communicator competence accounted for 68% of the variance in subordinate communication satisfaction and nearly 18% of the variance in subordinate job satisfaction.

Limsila and Ogunlana (2008) studied personal competencies and leadership behaviours of project managers working in construction projects in Thailand. They studied personal competencies through the use of Project Manager Competency Development (PMCD) tool and leadership behaviour through Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). They found that all PMCD personal competencies have significant positive relationship with every factor in the transformational style. They arrived on the result that transformational leaders tend to produce high work quality & quantity, and problem solving creativity from subordinates. Shahmandi, Silong, Ismail, Samah and Omar (2013) studied Malaysian research universities to find out how academic leaders can be more effective. They do so by finding out the relationship between 6 leadership competencies (resource management, communication, organizational strategy, collaboration, higher education advocacy and professionalism) with four Effective Academic Leadership Styles (EALS) such as telling, selling, participating, delegating. They found out that most of the competencies have relationships to EALS, except for two dimensions, organizational strategy and communication. They suggest systematic leadership development programs to be developed in research universities.

In the current study, competency scores of the employees of the organization are already known. Competency scores are obtained by using SHL Quicksift tool. SHL Quicksift is a popular online tool for self assessment of competencies. It is based on the SHL Universal Competency Framework, making the questionnaire suitable for all market sectors and types of organizations. Competency scores are presented in a 10 pointer scale (1-10). High scores (6-10) indicate key strengths, low scores (0-4) indicate rather undeveloped competencies and medium scores (4-6) indicate competencies with scope for development. The SHL scores are then mapped to the organization's competency elements thus enabling the organization to view competency profile in the context of the organization's competency framework.

III. METHODOLOGY

The data for competency score was already available and provided for study by the organization. Questionnaire containing 20 questions, 4 each for particular leadership style were used to determine leadership style of an executive. Relationship between competency and leadership style was obtained and inferences were drawn.

A. Objectives: Every organization aims to implement effective recruitment, selection and assessment methods that can reduce hiring costs and absenteeism/turnover rates. It focuses on areas for employee development that are directly linked to desired

outcomes and organizational benefits. Once the competencies that are required for particular job are identified, employment development can be provided in the areas where competency level is expected more for the desired behaviour.

The current study aims to fulfil following objectives:

- ✚ Find competency data for employees of the organization at executive level.
- ✚ Find their leadership style.
- ✚ Obtain a relation between employee's competencies and leadership style.
- ✚ Use it as a predictor for future employees when either competency or leadership style is known.

Leadership style questionnaire were distributed to only executives of different departments in the organization at different positions. Competency data was secondary as the organization had already conducted survey for finding competency level of executives. Data collected for leadership style was primary as a structured questionnaire consisting of close ended questions was used for the purpose of the study. The statements of questionnaire were made to answer in 3 forms as "Agree", "Neutral" and "Disagree" with scores assigned to them as 1, 0 and -1. The questions were weighted according to their closeness of determining the leadership style and weighted average scores for leadership styles for executives were found out. Finally Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient between competencies and leadership style was obtained using "Correl" function of MS Excel. Leadership style questionnaire were obtained from 52 executives belonging to different departments of the PSU organization located in central region of India.

B. Tools use for analysis:

- ✚ SHL Quicksift is a popular online tool for self-assessment of competencies.
- ✚ M S Excel to find correlation coefficient between competencies and a particular leadership style.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDING

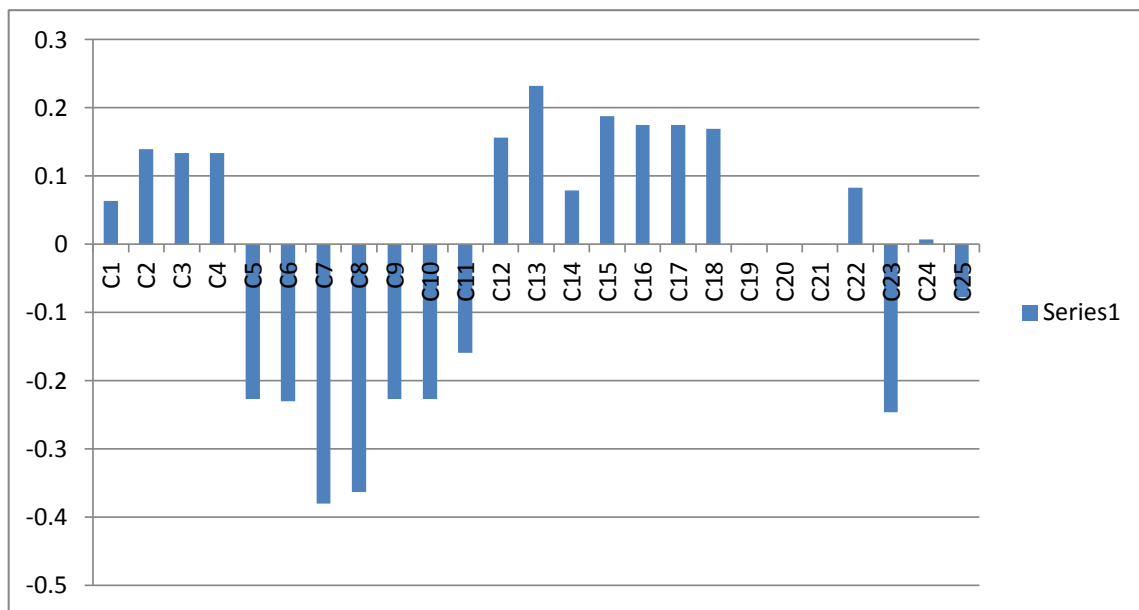
The following table was obtained finally for the correlation coefficients between competencies and styles of leadership.

Competency	Autocratic	Democratic	Laissez-Faire	Task oriented/ people oriented
Scanning opportunities	0.063006586	-0.070641957	-0.188208625	-0.012358255
Strategic thinking	0.138881215	-0.104851211	-0.210989158	0.017218145
Customer Responsiveness	0.133659624	-0.284833722	-0.106789866	-0.000686914
Delivering value to customers	0.133659624	-0.284833722	-0.106789866	-0.000686914
Relationship Management	-0.22748811	0.237127053	-0.1373095	0.121933044
Dynamic Planning	-0.230226751	0.072180358	0.108538446	0.076738439
Analytical Ability	-0.380559009	0.107266726	0.102770817	-0.191995103
Decision Focus	-0.363860234	0.059699161	0.090582005	-0.097968728
Building partnerships	-0.22748811	0.237127053	-0.1373095	0.121933044
Managing partnerships	-0.22748811	0.237127053	-0.1373095	0.121933044
Initiative and ownerships	-0.159330375	-0.103060497	0.013481111	-0.100869542
Zeal to excel	0.155885882	0.076682501	-0.059114405	0.040383173
Generate & implement ideas	0.23236153	-0.377765731	-0.141649903	-0.02968252

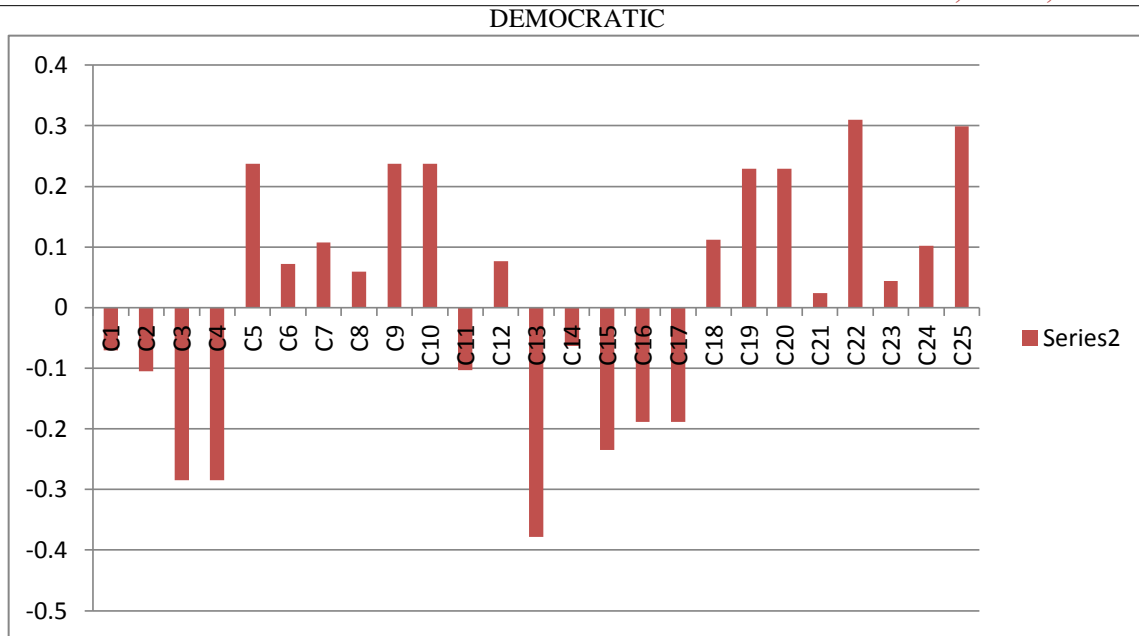
Process/system focus	0.079123957	-0.063492759	0.013236457	0.199255647
Process/system improvement	0.187856476	-0.23507567	-0.088159864	-0.041064101
Project & Plan implementation	0.174624656	-0.188191726	-0.045098924	0.163139775
Cost & quality consciousness	0.174624656	-0.188191726	-0.045098924	0.163139775
Learning focus	0.169329661	0.111785458	0.01848157	0.016433063
Feedback & Coaching	-0.000673636	0.228869496	0.172648418	-0.030492086
Motivation & Empowerment	-0.000673636	0.228869496	0.172648418	-0.030492086
Deliver with impact	0.000664802	0.024259304	0.076208035	0.109554516
Active listening	0.082628482	0.309595341	0.386999441	0.025234195
Influencing	-0.246496526	0.044056463	-0.023282161	-0.177679402
Openness to Change	0.006625349	0.102022193	-0.23681949	-0.126129883
Change Implementation	-0.078159205	0.29890922	0.095491084	-0.097960906

And charts were drawn between competencies and a leadership style.

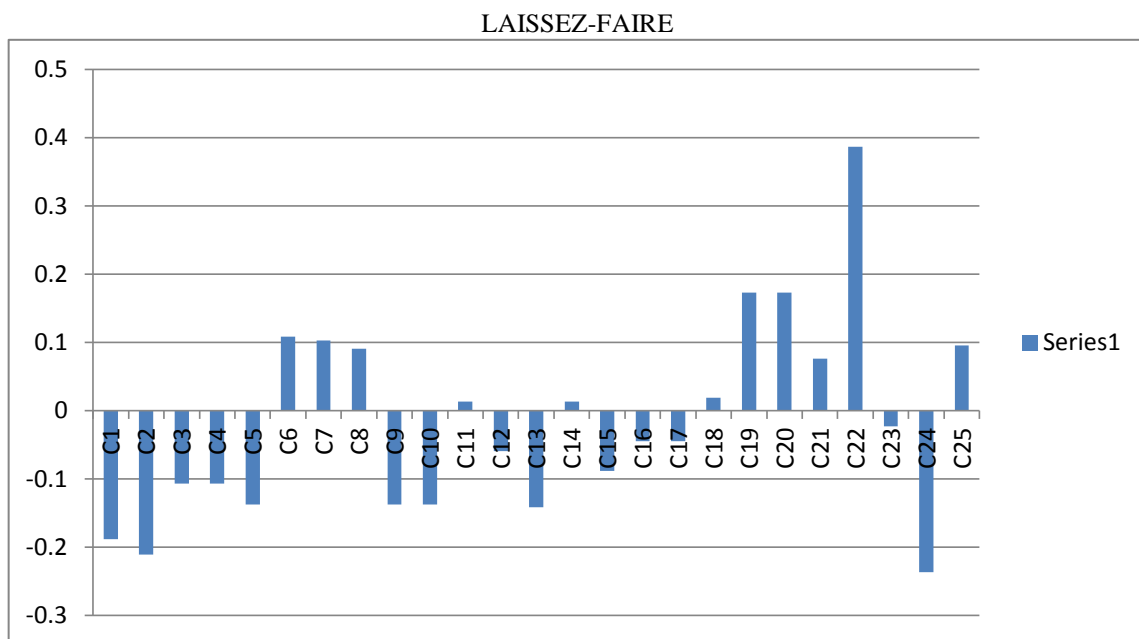
AUTOCRATIC



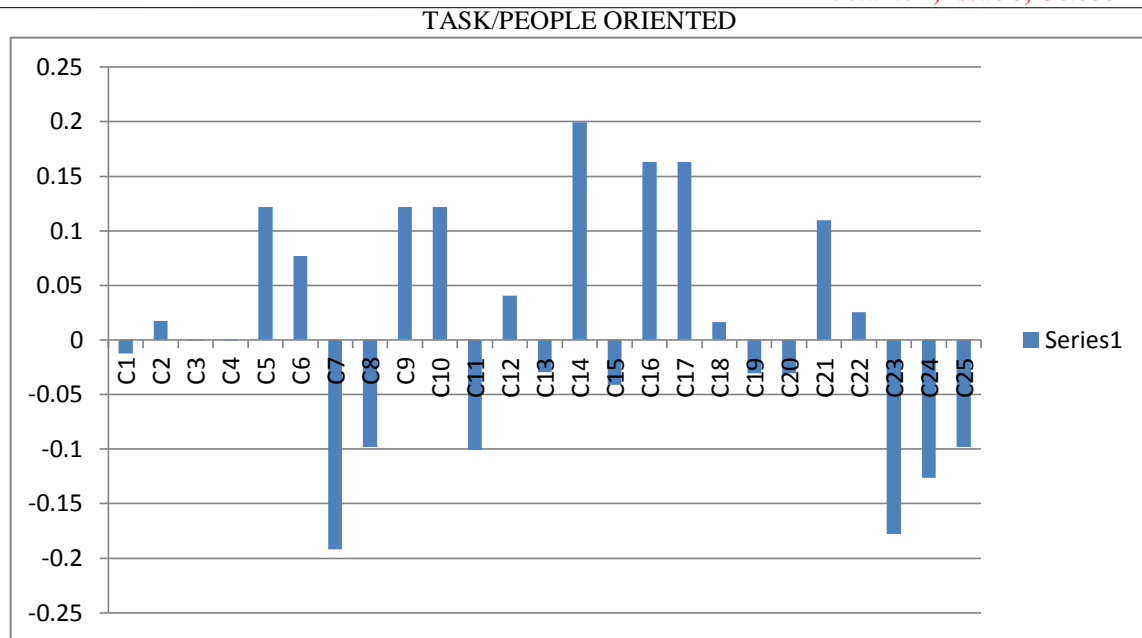
As seen from the above chart, C13 i.e. “Generate & implement ideas” competency is directly proportional and C7 i.e. “Analytical Ability” competency is inversely proportional to the Autocratic leadership style. That is to say, a person with more of C13 competency will be an autocratic leader. Similarly, a person having more of C7 competency is less likely to be an autocratic. Here in above interpretation, for the sake of simplicity, the highest positive and negative correlation coefficient is considered for interpretation. Other competency coefficients also play an important role and cannot be ignored completely. More is the correlation coefficient of any competency, the more influence that competence will have on the kind of leadership.



As seen from the above chart, C22 and C25 i.e. “Active listening” and “Change Implementation” competencies are directly proportional and C13 i.e. “Generate & implement ideas” competency is inversely proportional to the Democratic leadership style. That is to say, a person with more of C22 and C25 competencies will be a democratic leader. Similarly, a person having more of C13 competency is less likely to be a democratic.



As seen from the above chart, C22 i.e. “Active listening” competency is directly proportional and C24 i.e. “Openness to Change” competency is inversely proportional to the Delegate leadership style. That is to say, a person with more of C22 competency will be entrusting leader. Similarly, a person having more of C24 competency is less likely to be a entrust others.



As seen from the above chart, C14 i.e. “Process/system focus” competency is directly proportional and C7 and C23 i.e. “Analytical Ability” and “Influencing” competencies are inversely proportional to the Task oriented leadership style. That is to say, a person with more of C14 competency will be more of task oriented and less of people oriented leader. Similarly, a person having more of C7 and C23 competencies is less likely to be a task oriented and more of people oriented. It is assumed that a leader will have either the task oriented leadership style or people oriented leadership style. The competencies that are directly proportional in influencing task oriented leadership style will be least influential for people oriented leadership style and vice-versa.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

SHL Quicksift tool is used to map the scores of their questionnaire to competencies. No other method or tool is used to verify the results. Self-assessment method of data collection is used for leadership style. Sample size was relatively smaller; more longitudinal studies are required in this area. The study focuses only one organization and not any other sector. The study focuses to gather data only from executives. There exists many kinds of leadership styles but the study involves only 4 major styles. The competencies used in study are limited in number.

VI. CONCLUSION

Competency is a personal characteristic and the amount of every competency in an individual varies from person to person. The more dominant competencies determine the style of leadership a person has. The leadership style is the sum total of all the competencies multiplied by their individual correlation coefficients. Thus if the magnitude of correlation coefficient is positive, the competency is directly proportional to the leadership style and if the magnitude of correlation coefficient is negative, the competency is inversely proportional to the leadership style. The paper aims to find the relationship between competencies and leadership style. This can be achieved by identifying the competencies that an organization uses to assess their employees. It then aims to find out the extent to which these competencies dominate a particular leadership style. Finally it was found that “Generate & implement ideas” competency is directly proportional to Autocratic leadership style, “Active listening” to Democratic and Laissez-Faire style and “Process/system focus” to Task/People oriented style. A particular competency can be present in all the 4 styles of leadership, but the magnitude of correlation coefficient determines the influence a competency has on the leadership style. In addition to above, if competencies are known then style of leadership can be identified and if leadership style is known, dominant and less influential competency can be known. The study also helps to focus on competencies for employee development for a particular role. It can also help to determine the relation between superior-subordinate and thus to identify the communication gap between them for the proper working of an organization.

Annexure:

Leadership Style	5 Most Influential Competencies	Correlation Coefficients
Autocratic	Generate & implement ideas(C13)	0.23236153
	Process/system improvement(C15)	0.187856476
	Project & Plan implementation(C16)	0.174624656
	Cost & quality consciousness(C17)	0.174624656
	Learning focus(C18)	0.169329661
Democratic	Active listening(C22)	0.309595341
	Change Implementation(C25)	0.29890922
	Relationship Management(C5)	0.237127053
	Building partnerships(C9)	0.237127053
	Managing partnerships(C10)	0.237127053
Laissez-Faire/Delegative	Active listening(C22)	0.386999441
	Feedback & Coaching(C19)	0.172648418
	Motivation & Empowerment(C20)	0.172648418
	Dynamic Planning(C6)	0.108538446
	Analytical Ability(C7)	0.102770817
Task / People Oriented	Process/system focus(C14)	0.199255647
	Project & Plan implementation(C16)	0.163139775
	Cost & quality consciousness(C17)	0.163139775
	Relationship Management(C5)	0.121933044
	Building partnerships(C9)	0.121933044

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