

## **The Relationship Between Socio-Demographic Properties and Leadership Perceptions of Employees**

Lütfi Sürücü<sup>1</sup>, Tahir Yeşilada<sup>2</sup>, Ahmet Maşlakçı<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>(Faculty of Economics & Administrative Sciences

European University of Lefke, Lefke TRNC Mersin 10 Turkey

Corresponding Author: Lütfi Sürücü

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**Abstract:** *The relationship between the demographic characteristics and the leadership styles perceptions of the employees is examined in this research. The questionnaires prepared in this context were distributed to the employees in the production sector by stratified random sampling method, and the obtained data were analysed with IBM SPSS 23 program. In this context, first, the findings obtained after the theoretical information about leadership and demographic characteristics are given, and the findings have formed the basis for discussion and conclusions section. The results of the study show that the members of the organization have a meaningful relationship with age, gender, marital status and experience perceptions of leadership and that there is no meaningful relationship between the level of education.*

**Keywords:** *Leadership, Demographic characteristics, Leadership approaches*

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### **I. Introduction**

Along with globalisation, new competitors have emerged for organizations, and the uncertainty of the competitive environment has increased. Organizations that wish to survive and succeed in this environment have had to determine new forms of management. Leadership is an important function of management that contributes to maximise productivity and achieve organizational goals (Dahie et al., 2017). When supported and guided by appropriate leadership (Ghafoor et al., 2011), organizational members will contribute to the increase of organizational performance by developing positive attitudes and behaviours (Ashkanasy et al., 2000; Avolio et al., 2004). In this sense, the success of an organization will depend largely on effective leadership style (Khan, 2017). Over the years, researchers have developed models, theories and hypotheses that try to explain effective leadership in organizations (Mohammed et al., 2012). In this sense, it has been argued that in leadership theories of which conceptual content is developed with various theories, it is necessary for leaders to possess certain characteristics (Stogdill, 1948). The traits approach, the most popular and oldest leadership approach in the 1940s (Kurtz and Boone, 2002), assumes that leadership traits are inherent at birth and cannot be developed to become a leader afterwards (Achua and Lussier, 2010). Even though the traits approach reveals many personal, physical and psychological traits specific to the leaders, the mid-1900s research focus more on the behaviour of the leaders (Bakan, 2008) since the traits approach could not find an answer to the question of "how a good leader could be trained." According to the behavioural approach, the leader's activity determines behaviours, not personal characteristics. The most important deficiency of the behavioural approach is that it overlooks the role played by situational factors in determining the leader's effectiveness (Mullins, 1999). From this point of view, a situational approach emerged which advocates that the most appropriate leadership behaviour can vary according to conditions and circumstances (Bakan, 2008). The situational approach which emerged in line with deficiencies of traits and behavioural approach and criticisms aimed at them, suggests that there is no uniform leadership style regardless of time and contextual conditions, since the behaviour of the leader changes according to conditions and circumstances (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000). All these approaches have emerged to understand and explain leadership (Sürücü and Yeşilada, 2017). Every new vision that emerged has been the starting point of another research that will come forth (Sürücü and Yeşilada, 2017). Nowadays, transactional, transformational, charismatic paternalistic, autocratic, ethical, democratic, etc. leadership theories have emerged which labelled as modern leadership theories. The overlap between the many leadership styles that are investigated is extremely problematic (Derue et al., 2011), and probably the main subject is the repetition of the concept (Morrow, 1983). Correspondingly, it is comprehended that the variable is only the extent and perception of the concept of leadership (Sürücü and Yeşilada, 2017). Leadership is a reciprocal relationship between leaders and their followers (Robbins et al., 2010) and therefore beliefs, characteristics and perceptions of followers are important in this process (Shamir, 2007). To determine the appropriate leadership style in organizations, one should start with the evaluation as for how members of the organization perceive their leaders (Aldoory and Toth, 2004). Despite the fact that there is extensive research examining demographic characteristics and leadership perceptions in the literature (Mohnot, 2017), no consensus has yet been reached in the findings obtained (Aldoory and Toth, 2004). This research aims to contribute quantitatively to this idea in literature.

Therefore, the research focuses on the relationship between demographic characteristics and leadership perceptions. In doing so, the most widely researched transactional, transformational, charismatic leadership styles (Anderson and Sun, 2017) and the paternalistic leadership style which is largely valid in Turkey (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2006) were examined. Also, given the fact that numerous studies on leadership have come from the United States (House and Aditya, 1997; Rego et al., 2012), the study also calls for investigation of culturally different samples (Gelfand et al., 2007; Walumbwaet al., 2008).

## **II. Theoretical Framework**

### **1.1. Leadership**

Leadership, being one of the oldest and current topics in the world (Dahie et al., 2017), is referred to as the process of influencing followers (Khan, 2017). Leadership in an organization largely determines the behaviour of employees (Malik and Dhar, 2017). Because leaders usually possess a higher status and power than their followers, they are the information sources of information for employees about which behaviour is important and appropriate for the organization (Walumbwaet al., 2010). Since leadership plays a key role in organizations' success (Kaiser et al., 2008; Kolléet al., 2013; Oc et al., 2013), it has been a subject of frequent research in the literature (Ghafoor et al., 2011; Al-Daibat, 2017). Leadership in organizations can take many forms (Jackson et al., 2013). Research has shown that certain types of leadership have more influence on the performance of employees compared to other types (Saleem et al., 2017). The literature on leadership provides many different leadership styles (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2017). Yet, the most widely and effectively used leadership styles are transactional, transformational and charismatic leadership (Anderson and Sun, 2017). Transformational leadership, which is one of the most influential examples of contemporary leadership theories (Judge and Bono, 2000), is defined as the process of guiding its followers on motivation and pursuing common goals to achieve organizational goals (McMurray et al., 2010). The transformational leader recognises subordinates' tendencies, their needs and desires through personalised attention and uses it to motivate followers (Sahin et al., 2014). He also plays an important role in the success of the organization by reducing the impact of negative aspects associated with employee satisfaction and performance (Ghafoor et al., 2011). Wang et al. (2011)'s meta-analysis emphasise the importance of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership style is widely used today in organizations because of its significant contribution to the success of the organization (Ghafoor et al., 2011). Transactional leadership, which is more widely used than transformational leadership (Dikko, 2017), is an important component for achieving organizational efficiency (Bass and Stogdill, 1990, Bass and Avolio, 2000). Unlike transformational leadership, transactional leadership is based on a change process (Günzel-Jensen et al., 2017). It assists in identifying what needs to be done to fulfil the goals desired by the followers (McMurray et al., 2010). Members of the organization are rewarded by promotions, salaries, etc. when they demonstrate appropriate behaviour and performance in line with the expectations of the leaders (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Northouse, 2016). However, when they do not fulfil their duties and perform unsatisfactorily, they are criticized or punished publicly (Walumbwaet al., 2010). In this context, transactional leadership can also be defined as motivating followers by influencing the performance of organizations' members through a rewards oriented approach (Casimir et al., 2006). Early models of charismatic leadership that emerged in the 1980s', attracted more attention among other leadership approaches (Sürücü and Yeşilada, 2017). Charismatic leadership is defined as followers sacrificing their own interests motivated towards common goals as defended by their leader who have a vision to achieve a desirable future (Anderson and Sun, 2017). His propensity for self-confidence, courage, motivation and persuasion leads his followers (Sürücü and Yeşilada, 2017). The followers of charismatic leaders are more optimistic about the future (Judge and Piccolo, 2004) and are also happy with their current situation (Fuller et al., 1996). This condition makes them more engaged in the organization and exhibit positive organizational citizenship behaviours (Sosik, 2005). Research has indicated that leadership perceptions differ according to cultures (Offermann and Hellmann, 1997; Wang et al., 2017). In this sense, paternalistic leadership in Eastern cultures like Turkey, China and India have come to the fore (Aycan and Kanungo, 2000; Aycan et al., 2000). In these countries cultural, paternalistic leadership is perceived as effective leadership style and a source of positive organizational outcomes (Aycan and Kanungo, 2000; Casper et al., 2011). Based on the paternalistic leadership symbolised by the concept of "father" in the family, he decides on the merits of other members of his family, ignoring his wishes and interests. These decisions include sacrifice, love and protectionism (Gelfand et al., 2007). These kinds of leaders try to gain trust by giving all kinds of help to their followers, thus ensuring absolute authority (Yehet et al., 2008).

### **2.2 The Relationship Between Leadership and Demographic Characteristics**

In research on leadership, it has been argued that leadership cannot be measured by natural abilities, skills or demographic characteristics (Aldoory and Toth, 2004). Some scientists have claimed that all these aspects are important factors in comprehending leadership (Aldoory and Toth, 2004). According to early theoretical theories (Stogdill, 1948; Bass and Stogdill, 1990), a leader's age is one of the most important

demographic factors associated with the leader's activity. While Van Vugt (2006) emphasises that the relationship between age and leadership is in a complex nature, Cagle (1988) sees age as one of the factors determining leadership style. Muethel et al. (2012), on the other hand, concluded that demographic characteristics of the followers are differentiating factors of leadership perception. From the 1970s onwards many studies have been undertaken in the literature investigating whether gender differences exist in leadership styles and effective leadership (Bartol and Butterfield, 1976, Chapman and Luthans, 1978). However, no consensus has been reached as a result. There are also findings in the literature both for and against gender and its effects on perceived leadership style (Butler and Geis, 1990; Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Ragins, 1991; Doherty, 1997; Yammarino et al., 1997; Casimir, 2001; Carless, 1998; Thompson, 2000; Engen et al., 2001). The relationship of age, maturity and experience with leadership has been pointed out in previous research (Zacher et al., 2011; Omari and Sharaah, 2012). Barbuto et al. (2007) highlighted gender and maturity (the combination of age and education) as determinants of leadership styles and emphasised that these demographics are an important factor in leadership perceptions. Based on these research and literature, the following hypothesis has been developed.

**H1:** *There is a significant relationship between socio- demographic characteristics and perceived leadership style.*

### **III. Methodology**

The relationship between leadership perceptions and demographic characteristics of workers has been investigated in the research.

#### **3.1 Data collection and sample**

Within the survey scope, 253 individuals working in a factory have been distributed a questionnaire and 175 questionnaires were collected. 156 of which were usable. The survey was completed through 156 questionnaires. According to these results, it is determined that the sample represents the study universe. The distribution of the sample according to the descriptive characteristics is given below. When the demographic structure of the research is examined, of the 106 (67.9%) were men, 50 (32.1%) were female, 46 (29.5%) were married, and 110 (70.5%) were single. Of the 42 (27%) had secondary education and college degree, 101 (64.1%) holds a bachelor's degree and 13 (8.3%) has a graduate level education. Of them, 119 (76.3%) were under the age of 30, 28 (18%) between the ages of 31-40 and 9 (5.8%) over the age of 41. When examining the working periods at work, it is observed that of the 36 (23.1%) persons work less than one year, 85 persons (54.5%) work between one and five years and 35 (22.4%) workers are working more than six years.

#### **3.2 Measures**

A questionnaire consisting of 28 questions using two different scales was used in the research.

**Demographic Structure:** It consists of 6 questions aimed to determine the demographic characteristics of the employees.

**Leadership Styles:** By examining the relevant literature within the scope of the research, *Transactional Leadership*; 4 question scale (Instrumental Leadership scale) developed by House and Dessler (1974), *Transformational Leadership*; Carless et al. (2000) developed a 7-question scale (Global Transformational Leadership Scale (GTL)), *Charismatic Leadership*; 6-question scale developed by De Hoogh (2004) and a 5-question scale developed by Voich (1995) was used to determine the Paternalistic Leadership. The Cronbach alpha values of the whole leadership styles are over 0.7. These scales were also used by Öztop (2008) in a study in Turkey.

#### **3.3 Findings**

In the reliability analysis, the alpha coefficients of each variable were calculated, considering the changes made to the scales because of factor analysis. Accordingly, for the leadership styles; Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of transactional leadership was measured as .786, transformational leadership as .893, charismatic leadership as .868, while paternalistic leadership was .746. When the Cronbach's Alpha values are examined, it can be argued that the research variables are reliably measured. Various proposals are presented to determine the leadership styles perceived by employees in the survey, and the arithmetic means of the responses for these proposals are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Data on Leadership Types**

	Number of Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Transactional Leadership	4	3,830	0,989
Transformational Leadership	8	3,323	1,286
Charismatic Leadership	6	3,295	1,267
Paternalistic Leadership	4	3,274	1,341

Note: The questionnaire was prepared on the 5-point Likert Scale. “Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Not sure (3), Agree (4), Strongly agree (5)” When the data in Table 1 are examined, it is observed that employees who took part in the survey positively responded to the proposals on transactional, transformational, charismatic and paternalistic leadership styles in general. Correlation analysis and one-way ANOVA were conducted to investigate the relationship between the demographic characteristics of the workers who took part in the research and the types of leadership perceived by them. The data obtained are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Correlation results**

	Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Charismatic Leadership	Paternalistic Leadership
Gender	-0,312**	-0,205**	-0,174*	-0,013
Marital Status	0,232**	0,217**	0,208**	0,101
Age	-0,341**	-0,303**	-0,328**	-0,136*
Education Level	-0,015	0,049	0,014	0,025
Duration of Working Time	-0,207**	-0,201**	-0,187**	0,014
Working Period With The Current Employer	0,002	-0,022	0,061	0,171*

Note: \*p<0.10 \*\*p<0.05 (N=156)

Table 2 shows the results of the correlation analysis. When Table 2 is examined; a significant relationship was found between *Transactional leadership* and gender, marital status, age and duration of working time (p <0.05), *Transformational leadership* and gender, marital status, age and duration of working time (p <0.05); *Charismatic leadership* and gender, marital status, age and duration of working time (p <0.05), *Paternalistic leadership* and duration of working time and the working period with the current employer (p <0.10). Apart from these findings; the four leadership styles included in the study of the educational context of the research and the working time with the current employees are not related to other leadership styles except the paternalistic leadership. The results of the one-way ANOVA analysis also support the findings of correlation analysis. By these findings, the hypothesis of the research is accepted.

**Table 3: Transactional Leadership- Demographic Characteristics Relations**

	N	Mean	F	Sig.
Gender				
Male	106	3,99	16,642	0,000
Female	50	3,48		p<0.001
	156	3,83		
Marital Status				
Married	46	3,55	8,729	0,004
Single	110	3,94		p<0.05
	156	3,83		
Age				
25 >	61	4,03	5,204	0,001
26-30	58	3,87		p<0.05
31-35	14	3,73		
36-40	14	3,39		
41 <	9	3,02		
Total	156	3,83		
Work Experience				
1 >	36	3,86	4,230	0,007
1-5 years	85	3,97		p<0.05
6-10 years	25	3,56		
10 < years	10	3,23		

Total	156	3,83		
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The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine whether there was a difference between the respondents' responses to proposals for the transactional style of leadership as their demographic characteristics changed and the resulting data is presented in Table 3. On Table 3, it is observed that employees with gender ( $p < 0.001$ ), marital status ( $p < 0.05$ ), age ( $p < 0.05$ ) and duration of working time ( $p < 0.05$ ) have a meaningful relationship with the perception of for transactional style of leadership. Also, it is found that male employees compared to female, and single employees compared to married employees reported more favourable opinions to each other. Employees under age 25 (4,03) compared to employees over age 41 (3,02) and those who worked for 1-5 years (3,968) than those with ten years' experience and over (3,225) were likely to give more negative answers regarding the proposals of transactional leadership. By these findings, it can be said that the perceptions of transactional leadership have decreased as the age and working time of employees increase.

**Table 4:** Transformational Leadership - Demographic Relations

	N	Mean	F	Sig.
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	106	3,460	6,767	,010
Female	50	3,032		p<0.10
Total	156	3,323		
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Married	46	2,997	7,581	0,007
Single	110	3,456		p<0.05
Total	156	3,322		
<b>Age</b>				
25 >	61	3,63	4,161	0,003
26-30	58	3,24		p<0.05
31-35	14	3,27		
36-40	14	2,86		
41 <	9	2,55		
Total	156	3,32		
<b>Work Experience</b>				
1 >	36	3,385	3,561	0,016
1-5 years	85	3,465		p<0.05
6-10 years	25	3,065		
10 < years	10	2,537		
Total	156	3,323		

When one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to see whether there was a significant difference between participants' responses to transactional leadership styles depending on the demographic characteristics of the participants (Table 8): significant differences were found in survey participants' responses to the suggestions regarding the transformational leadership style, depending on gender ( $p < 0.10$ ), marital status ( $p < 0.05$ ), age ( $p < 0.05$ ) and duration of working ( $p < 0.05$ ). It was also noted that male employees compared to female, single employees compared to married employees, more favourable opinion was noted. Employees under the age of 25 (3,63), employees over the age of 41 (3,55) and those who worked between 1-5 years

(3,465) than those with ten years' experience and over (2,537) were likely to give more negative answers regarding the transformational leadership proposals. By these findings, it can be said that the perceptions of transformational leadership decreased as the age and working time of employees in these findings increased.

**Table 5:** Charismatic Leadership - Demographic Relations

	N	Mean	F	Sig.
Gender				
Male	106	3,412	4,779	0,030
Female	50	3,047		p<0.05
Total	156	3,295		
Marital Status				
Married	46	2,978	6,991	0,009
Single	110	3,427		p<0.05
Total	156	3,295		
Age				
25 >	61	3,69	5,387	0,000
26-30	58	3,14		p<0.001
31-35	14	3,13		
36-40	14	2,86		
41 <	9	2,56		
Total	156	3,29		
Work Experience				
1 >	36	3,333	3,587	0,015
1-5 years	85	3,429		p<0.05
6-10 years	25	3,133		
10 < years	10	2,417		
Total	156	3,295		

When the perceptions of leadership styles and characteristics of employees were examined (Table 5), significant differences between participants to the responses of the proposals on the leadership style, (p <0.05), marital status (p <0.001) and age duration of working time (p <0.05). As in other leadership styles, male employees compared to female and for reported more favourable opinions regarding the suggestions for charismatic leadership, employees under age 25 (3.69), employees over 41 (2.56), and those who worked between 1-5 years (3,429) than those with 10 years' experience and more and over (2,417) were likely to give more negative answers regarding the transformational leadership proposals. By these findings, it can be said that the perceptions of charismatic leadership decreased as the age and working time of employees in these findings increased.

relationship between charismatic demographic employees were there were differences between participants to the charismatic depending on gender status (p <0.05), age duration of working other leadership employees compared single employees favourable opinions

**Table 6:** Paternalistic Leadership - Demographic Relations

	N	Mean	F	Sig.
Age				
25 <	61	4,03		
26-30	58	3,87	5,204	0,001
31-35	14	3,73		p<0.001
36-40	14	3,39		
41 >	9	3,02		
Total	156	3,83		
Work Experience				
1 >	59	3,059	2,414	0,093
1-5 years	83	3,383		p<0.10
6-10 years	14	3,536		
Total	156	3,274		

When the participants' responses regarding the paternalistic leadership style based on the demographic characteristics of participants were analysed by one way analysis of variance (Table 6); whether there was a significant difference between them, it was found out that there were significant differences between the responses of the participants to the proposals on the paternalistic leadership style depending on the age of the employees (p <0.001) and the duration of working time (p <0.10). While the perceptions of paternalistic leadership are diminishing with the ages of their employees in growth, the responses to the proposals of the paternalistic leadership style are more positive with the increase in the working period at work.

#### IV. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between social demographic variables and employees' transformational, transactional, charismatic and paternalistic styles of leadership, which are the most applied leadership styles today. The obtained data were analysed with the IBM SPSS 23 program. According to the results of the correlation analysis; gender, marital status, age and the working period are significantly related to

3 leadership styles (transactional, transformational and charismatic leadership), while age and working period with the current manager are significantly related to the paternalistic leadership. The level of education is one of the social demographic factors in the present study. There is no relation between the four leadership styles and education. There is no sufficient research regarding this subject in the current literature, to justify that leadership styles can be affected by the level of education (Mohammed et al., 2012). In this sense, it is not surprising that there is no meaningful relationship between the level of education and leadership styles that emerges because of this study. This conclusion means that the level of education does not affect the individual's perception of leadership style. Employees can decide on their views and opinions about the organization and its leaders without satisfying their education levels. This is related not to a high level of education but to having social confidence and self-confidence to express ideas. The present survey shows that gender is an important social demographic factor in leadership perception. These findings are in parallel with the studies of Park (1996), Larocca (2003) and Mohammed et al. (2012). The age and the duration of working period at work are anticipated as important social demographic factors in the present research. Research has emphasised that age, maturity and experience are related to leadership (Zacher et al., 2011; Omari and Sharaah, 2012). Van Vugt (2006) noted that the link between these social factors and leadership could be found in professions that require specialised knowledge and experience at a significant level. In this sense, the findings obtained within the scope of the present research is an expected result. One of the important results obtained from the study is the increase of the perception of the paternalism of their leader while the perception of transactional, transformational and charismatic decreases as leaders of the members of the organization as their working period increases. This situation confirms the opinion about the Eastern cultures such as Turkey (Aycan et al., 2000; Aycan and Kanungo, 2000) where paternalistic leadership is in the forefront.

## V. Research Limitations

The findings of this study should be examined considering the limitations. The most important limitation of the research is that the data is collected from a single source. Therefore, when the findings are evaluated, it is necessary to consider these deficiencies. Collecting data from many sources in future research to be conducted will increase the generalizability of the findings. Leadership perceptions vary according to cultural differences. Data collection and benchmarking in future research with different cultures and their comparison will clarify the impact of social demographic variables on leadership perceptions. Income in the study, job positions within the organization, etc. demographic characteristics were not included in the survey. It will be useful to include these features in future research to be conducted. It is also important to mention the static character of the research; this means that it is impossible to analyse the changes in leadership perceptions over time.

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