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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP AT SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY: ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF'S PERSPECTIVES

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A B S T R A C T

This research paper scrutinizes the connection between demographic aspects and the perception of executive leadership at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), as perceived by academic and support staff. Emphasizing demographic factors such as gender, academic qualifications, and job type, the study explores staff perspectives and their influence on the perception of executive leadership. Data was collected from 253 participants using stratified random sampling and a questionnaire, with findings analyzed via t-Test and One-way ANOVA. The results revealed no significant correlation between gender or academic qualifications and goal-directed leadership. However, a statistically significant difference was found between job classification and goal-directed leadership. These findings offer valuable implications for tailoring leadership approaches at SSRU, suggesting that job type may play a more significant role in shaping leadership perceptions than previously assumed. Consequently, this could inform future leadership strategies, contributing to improved staff engagement and organizational success at SSRU.

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between demographic factors and executive leadership has gained significant attention in recent years, with numerous studies highlighting the impact of diversity on leadership effectiveness and organizational outcomes (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Hanges et al., 2004; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Organizations across various sectors, including higher education, have recognized the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion in leadership positions to foster innovation, improve decision-making, and enhance overall organizational performance (Pittinsky et al., 2007; Trower & Chait, 2002). Within the context of higher education institutions, leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the strategic direction, promoting a positive work environment, and achieving institutional goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kezar & Eckel, 2002).

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Therefore, understanding the relationship between demographic factors and executive leadership in universities is vital for effective leadership development and creating inclusive environments. Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, as a well-established institution of higher education, has its unique organizational culture and characteristics. Exploring the dynamics between demographic factors and executive leadership within this specific context will provide valuable insights into the experiences, perceptions, and expectations of academic and support staff regarding leadership practices.

Previous research has demonstrated that diverse leadership teams can enhance organizational performance by bringing a broader range of perspectives, improving problem-solving abilities, and promoting innovation (Gibson & Konopaske, 2010; Harrison & Klein, 2007). For instance, studies have shown that gender-diverse leadership teams in academia can lead to increased research productivity and better financial performance (Campbell & Minguez-Vera, 2008; Fox, 2010). Furthermore, research in the higher education sector has highlighted the importance of diversity and inclusion in leadership positions for promoting staff morale, job satisfaction, and career advancement opportunities (Cabrera et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2016). A lack of diversity in leadership roles may create barriers and biases that impede the professional growth and development of underrepresented groups within the university (Morley, 2013; Thomas & Ely, 1996).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between demographic factors and executive leadership at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, this research will employ a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative surveys will collect demographic information and capture the attitudes of academic and support staff towards leadership practices, while qualitative interviews will provide in-depth insights into staff experiences and perceptions.

By analyzing the data collected from both quantitative and qualitative methods, this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between demographic factors and executive leadership, specifically within the context of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The findings will also have practical implications for the university's leadership development programs, recruitment strategies, and policies aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the institution.

In conclusion, this research project aims to contribute to the academic understanding of the relationship between demographic factors and executive leadership while providing actionable recommendations for Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The study's mixed-methods approach and analysis of staff perspectives will provide valuable insights into leadership practices and shed light on potential barriers or biases that may exist within the university's leadership structure. Ultimately, the research seeks to enhance leadership effectiveness and create a more inclusive and equitable work environment at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The influence of demographic factors on the perception of leadership has been an area of considerable research. This section will review relevant literature on this topic and the demographic factors of interest for this study, including gender, academic qualifications, and job type.

2.1 Leadership

The concept of leadership has been at the forefront of research in various fields, including psychology, sociology, and business. Leadership is typically understood as a process of influence that enables the achievement of a common goal (Northouse, 2019). This section provides a comprehensive review of the main theories of leadership, focusing on their development over time and their implications for organizational settings like Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU).

2.2.1 Defining Leadership

Leadership, as a concept, has been studied across several disciplines, resulting in a plethora of definitions that approach the term from varying perspectives. Despite this diversity, most definitions converge on certain key elements such as influence, goal attainment, and interpersonal dynamics. Here, we explore some of the most commonly accepted definitions of leadership, along with a discussion of their implications. At its most basic, leadership is defined as the process of influencing others to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2019). This definition emphasizes the relational aspect of leadership and focuses on the leader's role in mobilizing group efforts towards shared objectives. The idea of leadership as a process is further expanded by Yukl (2013), who asserts that leadership involves influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done, as well as facilitating collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives. This definition recognizes leadership as a multifaceted process, incorporating elements of persuasion, consensus-building, and collaboration. Bass (1990) takes a slightly different approach, distinguishing between transactional and transformational leadership. He defines transactional leadership as an exchange process where followers are rewarded for their efforts and compliance, while transformational leadership is where leaders inspire followers to exceed expectations, pursue organizational goals over self-interests, and develop their full potential. An integrative definition provided by Rost (1991) defines leadership as "an influence relationship among

leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes." This definition stresses the reciprocal nature of the leadership process and emphasizes the importance of mutual intent and common goals.

In the context of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), leadership is best understood as a dynamic and interactive process where individuals, be they administrative executives or academic leaders, exert influence to guide and facilitate others in achieving the shared objectives of the institution. This definition captures the essence of leadership in an academic setting, where leaders need to inspire, facilitate, and collaborate with various stakeholders to drive the institution towards its mission and vision.

2.1.2 Trait Theories of Leadership

Trait theories of leadership posit that certain individuals possess inherent traits or characteristics that make them effective leaders. These theories emerged from the "Great Man" theory, which suggested that great leaders are born, not made, and naturally rise to power when needed. Early trait theories identified physical, mental, and personality traits that were commonly seen in leaders. Stogdill (1948) conducted one of the first comprehensive reviews of trait research and identified several traits that were consistently associated with leadership. These traits included intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. Later trait theories expanded upon this by recognizing that it was not enough to just have certain traits; effective leaders also need to display the right behaviors. For example, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) suggested that leaders need to have traits such as drive, the desire to lead, honesty, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business, but they also need to behave in ways that allow them to set a direction, design an organization, and develop people. Modern trait theories, while still recognizing the importance of inherent characteristics, emphasize the role of learned skills and behaviors in effective leadership. For example, Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman (2000) proposed a skills-based model of leadership, suggesting that effective leadership depends on the ability of leaders to solve complex problems, social judgment skills, and knowledge. Despite criticisms that trait theories do not consider the situational context of leadership, they continue to provide a foundation for understanding what qualities and characteristics contribute to effective leadership. They suggest that while not everyone may possess these traits, people can develop many of them through learning and experience.

2.1.3 Behavioural Theories of Leadership

Behavioural theories of leadership differ from trait theories by positing that effective leadership is not so much about inherent traits or characteristics, but rather, it's about what leaders do—their actions and behaviours. Behavioural theories emerged during the 1950s and 1960s, as researchers began to look at the specific actions of leaders in various situations. Two of the most notable behavioural theories are the Managerial Grid by Blake and Mouton (1964) and the Ohio State Leadership Studies (Stogdill, 1948). The Managerial Grid, also known as the Leadership Grid, identifies five different leadership styles based on leaders' concern for people and their concern for production. The five styles are: Impoverished (low concern for people and production), Country Club (high concern for people, low concern for production), Produce or Perish (high concern for production, low concern for people), Middle-of-the-Road (medium concern for both), and Team (high concern for both). The Ohio State Leadership Studies identified two critical dimensions of leadership behaviour: consideration and initiating structure. Consideration involves leaders being concerned about the welfare and needs of their followers, exhibiting trust and respect, and maintaining good interpersonal relationships. Initiating structure, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which a leader defines and organizes their role and the roles of followers, sets clear objectives, and establishes well-defined procedures and protocols. Behavioural theories have significantly contributed to our understanding of leadership by focusing on what leaders do, rather than who they are. However, they also have limitations, most notably, the idea that there is a one-size-fits-all approach to leadership behaviour. Effective leadership behaviour often depends on the specific situation and context, a point that is emphasized in subsequent contingency theories of leadership.

2.1.4 Transformational and Transactional Leadership

The concepts of transformational and transactional leadership were introduced by James V. Downton and further developed by James Burns in 1978 and Bernard Bass in 1985. These leadership styles represent different ways in which leaders interact with their followers.
(1)   Transactional Leadership: This leadership is based on the premise of exchange between the leader and the followers. Leaders provide rewards (tangible benefits, recognition, etc.) in exchange for their followers' effort and performance. This style of leadership is characterized by contingent rewards, management by exception (active and passive), and laissez-faire leadership. Contingent rewards involve leaders setting expectations and rewarding followers for meeting performance goals. Management by exception refers to leaders intervening only when standards are not met; active management by exception involves watching follower performance closely, while passive

involves waiting to intervene until problems become serious. Laissez-faire leadership, the least effective form, involves a general lack of leadership and responsibility (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

(2) Transformational Leadership: Transformational leadership, on the other hand, goes beyond transactional leadership to inspire and motivate followers to exceed their own self-interests for the good of the organization. This form of leadership is characterized by four dimensions: idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence involves leaders acting as role models whom followers respect and trust. Inspirational motivation refers to leaders who motivate and inspire followers by providing meaning and challenge to their work. Intellectual stimulation involves leaders who encourage followers to be creative and innovative and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader. Individualized consideration refers to leaders who provide a supportive climate and treat each follower as an individual, offering personal advice and coaching (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Both transformational and transactional leadership have their place in effective leadership. However, research has shown that transformational leadership often leads to higher levels of satisfaction, performance, and motivation among followers compared to transactional leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

2.1.5 Measuring Leadership

Measuring leadership can be a challenging endeavor, largely due to its multifaceted nature and the plethora of factors that influence its effectiveness. Despite this, several instruments have been developed to measure various aspects of leadership, ranging from leader behaviors and styles to the impacts of leadership on followers and organizations.

One of the most widely used instruments for measuring leadership is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The MLQ measures a range of leadership types, including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. It comprises 36 items and allows for the assessment of the frequency of certain leadership behaviors. The MLQ has been extensively validated and is often used in research and practical settings to evaluate leadership effectiveness.

Another common tool is the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The LPI is based on the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership model and measures behaviors associated with these practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The LPI is often used in training and development contexts to help leaders understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

The Leadership Circle Profile (LCP) is a 360-degree feedback instrument that measures leadership competencies and behaviors. It provides a comprehensive assessment of a leader's strengths and limitations, offering insights into how others perceive the leader's effectiveness.

Finally, more specific instruments like the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) and Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) have been developed to measure leadership constructs like authenticity and servant leadership. It's important to note that while these instruments provide useful measures, leadership is highly context-dependent. Thus, assessments should always be interpreted in light of the specific situational, cultural, and organizational contexts.

2.2 Gender and Leadership Perception

One of the central debates within the study of leadership revolves around gender and its impact on leadership perception. This section explores the nuanced relationship between gender and the perception of leadership, drawing upon prior literature to provide context for our investigation. Traditionally, gender stereotypes have played a significant role in shaping perceptions of leadership. Eagly and Karau (2002) assert that these stereotypes can influence the way a leader's actions are interpreted, often conforming to traditional gender roles. For example, leadership styles that reflect communal characteristics (such as being nurturing, supportive, or collaborative) are generally associated with women, while agentic traits (like being assertive, competitive, or independent) are often associated with men. In their study, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Van Engen (2003) suggest that women leaders tend to be perceived as more transformational and democratic, embodying leadership styles that emphasize team-building, participation, and consideration of others. Conversely, male leaders are often seen as more autocratic or directive, adopting a top-down approach to leadership. However, the gender-leadership dynamic is far from being clear-cut or absolute. Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, and Woehr (2014) challenge the notion of rigid gender-based leadership styles, arguing that gender differences in leadership are either minimal or contingent on the context. They suggest that the leadership effectiveness of men and women is comparable across various contexts, and that effective leadership is not confined by gender. These divergent viewpoints highlight the complexity of the gender-leadership relationship. They underscore the need to move beyond stereotypical gender roles and consider the broader social and organizational contexts within which leadership is enacted. Hence, the first hypothesis was proposed as follows:

H1: Gender has a relationship with perception of executives' leadership.

2.3 Academic Qualifications and Leadership Perception

Leadership perception within an organization is profoundly shaped by the educational background or academic qualifications of its members. This section further unpacks the relationship between academic qualifications and leadership perception, drawing from prior research to provide a nuanced understanding relevant to the context of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU). A considerable body of research suggests a correlation between individuals' academic qualifications and their perceptions of leadership. Berson, Oreg, and Dvir (2008) posit that those with higher education degrees may have a different set of expectations from their leaders as compared to their less academically qualified counterparts. They argue that highly educated employees value leaders who stimulate intellectual thought, foster innovation, and project a visionary leadership style. Conversely, individuals with lower academic qualifications might prioritize more concrete and task-oriented leadership behaviors, focusing more on immediate tasks and performance goals. They may respond better to leaders who are directive and provide clear instructions for task completion, emphasizing operational efficiency (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). However, the impact of academic qualifications on leadership perceptions is not unequivocal and can be influenced by other contextual factors. Epitropaki and Martin (2005) highlighted that the leader's expertise and the job context could moderate the relationship between academic qualifications and leadership perceptions. They suggest that highly educated employees might value intellectual stimulation and vision from their leaders when they perceive these leaders as having significant expertise in their fields. Furthermore, Schyns and Schilling (2013) noted that perceptions of leadership are also shaped by the broader organizational culture, suggesting that the relationship between academic qualifications and leadership perception could vary across different organizational cultures. In sum, understanding the relationship between academic qualifications and leadership perception can be crucial in navigating leadership strategies within diverse academic settings, such as SSRU. Recognizing and responding to the varying leadership expectations of staff with different academic backgrounds can enhance leadership effectiveness and staff satisfaction. Then, the second hypothesis was proposed as follows:

H2: Academic qualifications have a relationship with the perception of executives' leadership.

2.4 Job Type and Leadership Perception

The distinct roles within an organization, represented by job type, can profoundly impact how employees perceive their leaders. Understanding this relationship is critical, especially in diverse settings like Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), which employs staff with various job roles. This section delves deeper into the relationship between job type and leadership perception, drawing on recent research to present a nuanced analysis. Literature in the field indicates that leadership perceptions can significantly vary between employees performing different roles within the same institution. Particularly in higher education, this divide is often seen between academic and support staff, each category having different roles, responsibilities, and consequently, expectations of leadership.

Academic staff, whose roles revolve around teaching, research, and intellectual contribution, often respond favorably to transformational leadership styles. Such leadership encourages intellectual stimulation, inspires individual development, and guides collective efforts towards a shared vision. This group tends to prefer leaders who not only articulate compelling visions but also motivate them towards realizing these visions, fostering an environment conducive to intellectual growth and academic advancement.

Contrastingly, support staff, responsible for the administrative and operational tasks within the institution, may have differing expectations of leadership. Given their focus on routine tasks, technical services, and operational efficiency, this group often values transactional leadership. Leaders who provide clear direction, set explicit performance expectations, offer tangible rewards, and efficiently manage operations often appeal to the support staff (Gifford, Zammuto, & Goodman, 2018; Moriano, Molero, Topa, & Mangin, 2014).

However, this divide is not absolute. Several moderating factors can influence the relationship between job type and leadership perception. Cheng, Jiang, and Riley (2017) found that organizational culture, leadership style, and individual factors such as personality and job satisfaction could alter perceptions of leadership. For instance, in an organizational culture that encourages autonomy, support staff may also appreciate transformational leadership characteristics. Moreover, certain studies suggest that leadership effectiveness is not confined to a single leadership style. It often entails a blend of transformational and transactional styles, tailored to the specific needs of different job types (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). In the context of SSRU, recognizing the differential leadership expectations of academic and support staff could be instrumental in developing and implementing effective leadership strategies. By catering to these unique needs, leaders can potentially enhance job satisfaction, employee engagement, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness. Then, the third hypothesis was proposed as follows:

H3: Job type has a relationship with perception of executives' leadership.

3. METHODS

3.1. Participants

This study incorporated a sample of 253 academic and support staff members from Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, selected through stratified random sampling. The process of administering the questionnaire was overseen by five research assistants, who received thorough training to ensure appropriate execution. These assistants were tasked with explaining (1) the objective of the research, (2) the benefits of participation along with the guarantee of anonymity, (3) the participants' right to decline or withdraw at any point during the study, and (4) the projected timeline for completing the survey. Prior to taking the survey, every participant gave their informed consent. The data collection spanned two months, specifically May and June of 2023, during which 253 individuals completed the questionnaire. The demographic breakdown of the participants is provided in Table 1. This research proposal and the survey questions were approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Research Participants at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand (Certificate Number # COE. 2-113/2023).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics (n=253)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	82	32.41
Female	171	67.59
Academic qualification		
Bachelor's degree	105	41.50
Master's degree	113	44.66
Doctoral degree	35	13.84
Job type		
Executives	31	12.25
Academics	74	29.25
Supportive staff	148	58.50

3.2 Measure

Perceptions of leadership were assessed using a 20-item measure. Participants were asked to evaluate their views on the leadership abilities of executives on a scale from 1 to 5, where a score of 1 implied strong disagreement and a score of 5 signified strong agreement. Sample queries concerning leadership perceptions included: (1) Executives continually devise new tasks or methodologies and inspire all staff members to contribute to their successful execution; (2) Executives permit employees to partake in formulating the university's strategies; and (3) Executives encourage and facilitate participation in training sessions that contribute to successful work progress. This measurement tool demonstrated an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86.

3.3 Data Analysis

The acquired data were subjected to statistical analysis using two methods. The t-Test was utilized for testing Hypothesis 1 (H1), while One-way ANOVA was applied for the evaluation of Hypotheses 2 and 3 (H2 and H3).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Gender and Leadership Perception

The perception of leadership among male and female staff was assessed via an independent samples t-test. The results showed no statistically significant difference between the leadership perception levels of males (M = 4.83, SD = .41) and females (M = 4.81, SD = .42); t(251) = .313, p = .755. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no noteworthy difference in the perception of leadership between male and female staff members. In other words, this study suggests that an individual's gender does not significantly influence their perception of leadership.

4.2 Academic Qualification and Leadership Perception

The one-way ANOVA analysis revealed a non-significant influence of academic degrees on the perception levels of leadership, represented by F(2, 250) = .330 and p = .719. Thus, the study concludes that variations in academic qualifications do not result in significant differences in the levels of leadership perception. Put another way, this dataset suggests that an individual's academic degree does not markedly affect their perception of leadership.

4.3 Job Type and Leadership Perception

The one-way ANOVA analysis underscored a significant relationship between job type and leadership perception levels, denoted by F(2, 249) = 3.396 and p = .035. This led to the study's conclusion that the type of job a person holds is associated with distinct variations in how they perceive leadership. In summary, this dataset suggests a significant influence of an individual's job type on their views of leadership.

5. DISCUSSSION

This research investigated the relationship between various demographic factors and executive leadership perceptions at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, particularly from the perspectives of academic and support staff. The results revealed interesting aspects concerning gender, academic qualifications, and job type. There was no discernible relationship identified between gender and the perception of executive leadership. This outcome aligns with previous research studies (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Paustian-Underdahl et

al., 2014), which found gender to be a negligible factor in perceptions of leadership effectiveness. In today's evolving sociocultural landscape, it is encouraging to observe such trends that reflect a growing acceptance of diverse leadership across genders. The lack of relationship between academic qualifications and leadership perception is somewhat surprising. Prior studies have suggested that educational attainment can influence perceptions of leadership (Ng et al., 2005). However, this research contradicts that assumption. This could be because in an academic setting like a university, where high levels of education are the norm, the educational attainment of leaders may not significantly sway staff perceptions. This suggests that in such environments, other factors—like communication skills, empathy, and demonstrated competence—might be more pivotal in shaping perceptions. Most interestingly, there was a significant relationship between job type and leadership perception. This aligns with existing literature which suggests that the nature of one's work and professional experiences can shape their understanding and perception of leadership (Offermann & Coats, 2018).

In summary, the study expands the existing body of knowledge by exploring how demographic factors influence leadership perceptions in a university setting. The findings offer significant insights into institutional leadership, suggesting that while gender and academic qualifications might not significantly affect leadership perceptions, the nature of one's work does. This underscores the need for university executive leadership to adopt an inclusive approach that caters to the diverse experiences and expectations of all staff members, irrespective of their job type.

6. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research offer several crucial implications for both the practice of leadership in higher education institutions and future research.

6.1 Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that in an academic setting, leaders and decision-makers should consider the varied perceptions of leadership amongst different job types. They need to tailor their strategies and communication methods to address the unique expectations and needs of these different groups effectively. For instance, administrative staff may value clear directives and efficiency, while academic staff may prioritize autonomy and intellectual stimulation. Moreover, given that gender and academic qualifications did not significantly affect leadership perceptions, leaders in higher education should be careful not to overemphasize these factors. Rather, a focus on demonstrated competence, effective communication, and empathy could be more influential in shaping positive leadership perceptions.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the extant literature by focusing on the often-understudied demographic factors influencing leadership perceptions. The research suggests that demographic characteristics may interact with organizational context in complex ways, an area that warrants further exploration. Additionally, it opens up opportunities to investigate other demographic variables such as age, experience, or cultural background. This research also implies that the relationship between job type and leadership perception is worth studying further. The significant link found in this research could be further explored in different settings or through the lens of various leadership styles. For example, it would be interesting to investigate whether transformational leadership is perceived differently across job types in a university setting.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of a nuanced understanding of leadership in higher education settings, as perceptions of leadership can significantly impact job satisfaction, staff retention, and overall institutional success.

6.3 Policy Implications

For policymakers, the study highlights the need to create policies that promote diversity in leadership and acknowledge the different needs and expectations of various job types. Policies should encourage regular training and development for leaders to better understand and navigate the diverse needs and perceptions of their teams. Lastly, leadership evaluation mechanisms should be designed to account for this diversity in perceptions and provide constructive feedback for leaders to enhance their effectiveness.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study provides a foundation for further exploration of the relationship between demographic factors and perceptions of executive leadership in higher education settings. The following are some recommendations for future research:

Expand Demographic Variables: While this study examined gender, academic qualifications, and job type, future research could include other demographic factors such as age, tenure in the institution, cultural background, or departmental affiliation. These expanded variables may offer additional insights into the complex relationship between demographic characteristics and leadership perceptions.

Different Leadership Styles: This study did not differentiate between various leadership styles. Future

research could explore how perceptions of different leadership styles (e.g., transformational, transactional, servant leadership) might vary across demographic groups.

Longitudinal Studies: This study was cross-sectional, providing a snapshot of perceptions at one point in time. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into how perceptions of leadership evolve over time, and how changes in leadership approach or institutional climate might affect these perceptions.

Qualitative Approaches: This study employed a quantitative approach. Future research could also use qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain a deeper understanding of how staff in different roles perceive and experience leadership.

Cross-Cultural Studies: This study was conducted at a Thai university. Similar studies in different cultural or national contexts could offer insights into how cultural factors might mediate the relationship between demographic factors and leadership perceptions.

Impact on Organizational Outcomes: Future research could explore the impact of these perceptions on various organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction, staff retention, institutional loyalty, and productivity.

By addressing these recommendations, future research could provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of leadership perception in higher education, aiding institutional leaders in their quest to create effective and inclusive leadership practices.

8. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to examine the relationship between demographic factors, namely gender, academic qualifications, and job type, and the perception of executive leadership at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University from the perspective of academic and support staff. The findings indicated no significant correlation between gender and academic qualifications with leadership perceptions. However, there was a significant relationship between job type and leadership perception. These results offer essential insights into understanding leadership within an academic context, suggesting that individual job types and roles significantly influence the way leadership is perceived. Despite the common institutional setting, the diverse expectations and needs associated with different job types necessitate a nuanced approach to leadership. Executive leaders must consider the diverse experiences and expectations of their team members, tailoring their strategies and communication methods to effectively address these variations. Moreover, the findings emphasize that leadership in higher education is not solely determined by gender or academic qualifications. Instead, effective leadership appears to be more closely tied to other factors such as competence, communication, and empathy. This study makes a significant contribution to the literature by shedding light on how specific demographic factors impact leadership perception within a university setting. However, it also raises further questions and opens up new avenues for future research, underscoring the complexity and multifaceted nature of leadership perception. In conclusion, this study reiterates the importance of diversity and inclusivity in leadership and the need for leaders to appreciate and understand the unique experiences and perceptions of their diverse teams. Through such understanding, leaders can more effectively engage their staff, fostering a more inclusive and productive work environment.

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