

# Perceptions of Employees in the Effects of Decision-Making and Leadership Styles on Relationships and Perceived Effectiveness in King Saud University Development Context

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## Abstract

Leadership is crucial in all facets of humanity as it enhances personal, organisational, and national socio-economic growth and development. By portraying a great vision, a leader acknowledges their followers' efforts to maximise performance within the organisation. Leaders inspire their followers to achieve beyond their expectations by providing guidance to their followers, nurturing an environment of trust, and encouraging their followers to rise above their self-interests for the sake of the organisation. This study examines leadership, decision making, and, in particular, the effects of the perceptions of employees on decision-making and leadership styles on relationships and perceived effectiveness in the context of development at King Saud University. The study takes a quantitative approach to analysing the research findings and gives conclusions and recommendations for future study, based on the presented arguments.

**Keywords:** leadership, relationships, perceived effectiveness and decision making

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background Information

The importance of leadership in modern society cannot be underestimated. Strategic leaders are essential in contributing toward socio-economic, cultural, and political development of a country. Organisations with effective leaders stand a high chance of realising increased profitability and performance in the long run due to the ability of leaders to provide reliable guidance to the organisation (Faraci, Lock, & Wheeler, 2013). Over the decades, various scholars and research institutions have expressed interest in exploring the concept of leadership. This has led to the development of various leadership theories in an attempt to differentiate the various leadership approaches and how an individual, and an organisation at large, can achieve greater heights on the same. According to Hariri, Monypenny, and Prideaux (2013), some researchers suggest that leaders are born while others argue that great leaders are made; it is hard to establish whether great leaders are born or made, since a leader can hail from either of the two and reach great heights.

An analysis of the concept of leadership from various perspectives whittles down to a common baseline: great leaders should possess the capacity to positively influence the lives of the followers with the right charisma, empower their team members, and enhance their personal and career growth. In an institution, effective leadership improves employees' focus and strategic allegiance by ensuring that all work carried out by staff is geared towards a shared vision and mission (Faraci et al., 2013). In this sense, the leadership style adopted in an institution is crucial and determines the future success of the organisation as well as the overall performance of the workforce.

From a different perspective, strategic leadership has been depicted by different higher education executives. Higher learning institutions partake in capital fundraising forums in an effort to raise finances for new structures, the introduction of new programs, or the enhancement of service delivery, for example. This is well articulated by Uzonwanne (2014), who posits that the University of California stands out as one of the most successful universities across the globe in propagating capital fundraising campaign. In our modern, knowledge-centric, society the digital age brought about increased digitalisation in the education sector which is characterized by online learning, research databases, and online educational forums. The costs incurred for a university or college

to become world-class in its educational services delivery has significantly risen, leading to pervasive campaigns by universities for financial support in an effort to attain excellence in the long term. It has become vital, in this sense, for learning institutions to have development programs that are aimed at enriching the competitive edge of the institution as well as attracting philanthropic donors and supporters (Rowold & Rohmann, 2008).

Strategic leadership is crucial in undertaking university development activities. It is seemingly hard, nevertheless, to measure effectiveness in the development process since different individuals have different perceptions of what is effective and what effective leadership encompasses. Because of these different perceptions, considering only one dimension may be misleading. This concern is well articulated by Minett, Yaman, and Denizci (2009) who claim that different people have different considerations on, and perceptions of, what can be considered a success. Despite these varied attitudes toward aspects such as effectiveness in development and success, Petoskey and Ramakrishna (2002) posit that the employee's perceptions of an organisation's development effectiveness is significantly impacted by its organisational relationships, decision-making processes, and the leadership style it has adopted.

To pinpoint and explain these perceptions, this research focuses on King Saud University's development context with regard to leadership styles and the university decision-making process.

### *1.2 Significance of the Study*

Public and private institutions that wish to remain competitive must seek to understand the perceptions of the different stakeholders toward the organisation and make the appropriate improvement metrics to address any identified problems and capitalise on the established strengths (Hariri et al., 2014). This research is important to King Saud University's management as it aids in understanding the perceptions of its employees with regard to the effect of decision making, leadership, and organisational relationships on the effectiveness of development operations. The research findings and the conclusion drawn by the researcher are crucial in enhancing the University's performance as it highlights the areas where employees have a poor perception as well as areas that the institution seem to be doing well in. This research is also crucial to other Saudi Arabian universities, and higher learning institutions in general, as it can be used as a framework for a future study. It can also serve as a reference guide for the areas that are vital in the development of a university and the reactions that should be expected from employees. As introduced by Sriramesh, Grung, and Dozier (1996), employee's perceptions towards organisational activities reflect their perceptions of: their intuitional relationship with the intuition, their interactions with workmates and managers, decision making processes, organisational leaderships, and finally, the overall organisation's contribution towards their personal, and professional, growth and development.

For King Saud University management to achieve better public relations, the University must elicit the perceptions of the organisational personnel and other stakeholders, such as the employees, who are crucial in ensuring continued institutional development. By establishing matters related to job satisfaction, organisation culture, internal communication, employees' participation, leadership style, and the decision-making process, this research will give King Saud University a strategic orientation by pushing a shared value and vision that is vital to accomplishing its corporate objectives. In support of this, Ledingham (2003) suggests that for public relations practitioners to attain the set socioeconomic and political goals by the organisation, it is crucial to focus on the expectations needs and wants of the organisation members as well as the external world. From a public relations perspective, this research is crucial in helping the managers of higher learning institutions especially the King Saud University to improve the perceptions of their employees towards the organisation and also enhance the overall University performance

### *1.3 Aim of the Study*

The main aim of this study is to use a quantitative approach in establishing the perceptions of the King Saud University employees towards the effect of the decision making process and leadership on the organisational relationships and the perceived perceptions through the use of questionnaires. It will also provide recommendations on possible improvements so as to attain high organisational performance and effectiveness in the University's development.

### *1.4 Research Questions*

This study was based on the following research questions

- 1) Do King Saud University employees perceive the leadership style of King Saud University to be transformational or transactional?
- 2) Is there a link between leadership style, perceived effectiveness, decision-making style, and the relationship constructs of control mutuality, satisfaction, trust or commitment in King Saud University's development

context?

- 3) Do King Saud University employees perceive decision-making in King Saud University's development operations as participative?
- 4) Do King Saud University employees perceive the King Saud University development context as having effective leaders?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Effectiveness

Every organisation seeks to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in its operations in order to realise increased profitability from enhanced performance. Effectiveness in organisation operations can be examined from different aspects. As Hariri et al. (2013) suggest, while different people have different arguments and perceptions regarding what effectiveness in an organisation's activities and operations entails, they all settle down to a common baseline: the more effective the organisation activities, processes, and operations are, the higher the profitability, and the better the impression it creates for the stakeholders. Essentially, organisation effectiveness is impacted by a number of factors. For corporate objectives to be achieved, and for an organisation to build a positive image, it is crucial for the management to design metrics that are oriented towards streamlining the adopted business model to increase effectiveness in business operations (Uzonwanne, 2014).

In the case of decisions made which affect the leadership of an organisation, it is essential for the organisation's management to take into consideration the overall organisation's personnel attributes. In the context of King Saud University, the university's image to the workforce is vital, as the employees' perception of specific constructs, and the university as a whole, significantly impacts their job satisfaction, goals execution, productivity, and motivation to work toward a shared vision. This concern is well articulated by Al-Omari (2013), who argues that it is pertinent for leaders to come up with strategies and ways of enhancing the employees' perceptions towards the organisation and ensuring they are highly motivated and committed to their duties. This practice is highly challenging, however, as the employees' perceptions are impacted by a wide array of factors; all of these factors have to be factored in when designing the perception improvement strategies. Nakayama and Sutcliffe (2008), on the other hand, believe that the factors that impact employees' perceptions toward the development of an organisation can be categorised into organisational relationships, decision-making process, the leadership style adopted, and the organisational structure. This implies that, if a leader can significantly the employees' perceptions by improving these internal factors,.

### 2.2 Leadership

#### 2.2.1 Background

An organisation's culture is greatly influenced by its leader and their approaches in guiding their followers (Giuliani & Kurson, 2002). In the case of King Saud University, the institution's leaders are vital; they not only impact the perception of the employees toward different activities but also influence the overall working environment and the organisational strategic focus. In this sense, the university's top executives and senior officers are, therefore, key players in steering the institution towards achieving its corporate objectives. In this regard, any decision made by King Saud University top executives has a significant impact on the institutional development and the general productivity of the workforce. Over the decades, various researchers have explored organisational management and have come up with different explanations regarding the composition of effective leadership in an organisation. In line with this, Uzonwanne (2014) argues that it is vital for organisation leaders to be able to inspire their followers, foster creativity and innovation and advocate for a participative culture that encourages team working rather than dictatorial leadership. In this sense, leaders are credited with the responsibility for establishing a socially responsible environment through strategic planning and the creation of a collaborative work environment that promotes a working environment conducive to productivity.

Through effective leadership, learning institutions such as King Saud University are able to establish and maintain successful teams that have the potential to enhance the organisation's innovation, creativity, its employee motivation, their effective time management, customer service, quality of work, organisational interactions, and communication (among others). In line with this, Rowold and Rohmann (2008) believe that a managerial commitment to employee empowerment and team building leads to the establishment of processes and systems that encourage a productive work environment. It is crucial for managers to establish an organisational culture that encourages its employees to work hard and strive to achieve beyond the expectations.

### 2.2.2 Communication

Effective communication is vital in an organisation and ensures that all of an organisation's processes and operations are carried out effectively. According to Nakayama and Sutcliffe (2008), leadership styles have a positive effect on communication in an organisation. For example, in a democratic leadership style, workplace democracy enhances how the employees and managers interact and communicate. This enhances workplace relations and improves the overall performance of the organisation. This is supported by Brower and Balch (2005), who claim that democratic leadership by an organisation's management fosters open communication, as well as a decentralized form of administration, which in turn encourages symmetrical communication along with optimal employee participation. Past researchers have identified increased organisational trust as a result of democratic leadership. This increase is due to the increase in information sharing and knowledge diffusion within the labor force, and between the employees and managers (Rowold & Rohmann, 2008). In light of this, it is vital for King Saud University to adopt communication measures that encourage face-to-face communication and alleviate the fear exhibited by employees with regard to manager-employee communication.

There is, on the other hand, a need to establish a decentralised workplace environment and a democratic leadership style different. This kind of environment is associated with positive employee-manager relationships, open communication, increased teamwork, and a heightened sense of belonging by the employees. Essentially, this kind of organisational climate promotes creativity and innovation in an organisation and results in increased performance and productivity (Minett, Yaman, & Denizci, 2009). While different leadership styles can be adopted by an organisation, it is crucial to ensure high employee involvement is maintained in whatever style chose. Because King Saud University is a large organisation with a high number of workers, management should ensure that whichever leadership style is adopted values the employees, promotes open communication, and encourages the establishment of a strong rapport between the workforce and the managers.

### 2.2.3 Shared Vision

The implementation of an organisation's vision is impacted by several factors. Effective communication, for example, is vital because any miscommunication can lead to misunderstanding or misconception by the workforce which results in impaired performance and reduced productivity. A study by Hassan and Hatmaker (2014) critically analyses the effect of the change on the ability of organisations to work towards a shared vision. Hassan and Hatmaker established that a shared vision that is brought about through effective communication is vital, especially when implementing organisational change. In support of this, Hariri et al. (2014) claim that leaders who employ a decentralised approach incorporate management, coupled with the use of two-way communication in communicating the shared vision with the employees possess the greatest potential for facilitating a shared vision by the employee personnel. Employees are more likely to be supportive of managerial decisions pertaining to the organisation's vision if the organisation's leaders continuously communicate to them regarding various expectations, goals, and standards via memos, notices, and emails etc. This is because such a communicative approach aids in propagating a healthy manager-employee relationship and establish a strong workplace rapport.

In research conducted by Brower and Balch (2005) on higher learning institutions management, specifically regarding communication, the researchers established that employees felt more comfortable in discussing the University's strategic vision and corporate objectives with the top executives such as the chancellor, rather than other officials such as the deans, heads of department, and their colleagues. This indicates that there is a need for King Saud University's top leaders to continuously craft performance oriented messages that portray the institution's shared vision and communicate them with the managers and all the employees in order to nurture a workplace environment that enhances performance (Minett, Yaman, & Denizci, 2009).

### 2.2.4 Work Environment

In the modern era, organisations are faced with constant internally and externally induced changes due to the evolution of socio-economic metrics that have been triggered by ever increasing technological development. It has become vital for an organisation to adapt to these changes as well as the technological dynamics in an effort to increase their competitiveness. Just like other higher learning institutions, King Saud University has, in one way or the other, been affected by these changes. In this regard, for King Saud University to achieve sustainability and survive in the modern competitive environment, the university must employ a strategic approach to its leadership and promote creativity and innovation in the institution's processes and activities. As suggested by Al-Omari (2013) employees' wellbeing, job satisfaction, innovation, and productivity are important aspects and intuition's work environment should be addressed to ensure increased performance. By promoting a work environment conducive to productivity, King Saud University's management should take various steps

including, but not limited to, eliciting employee feedback on the university development operations, giving employees autonomy and freedom in the decision making of matters within their scope, nurturing creativity, and innovation and encouraging commitment to the organisations strategic goals (Rowold & Rohmann, 2008). These measures would result in increased employee participation in matters concerning the organisation, support innovative and revolutionary ideas, and increase shared concern for excellence.

Job efficacy, job performance, and goal orientation of employees has been found to be impacted by the perception of the workplace environment. According to Faraci, Lock and Wheeler (2013), intra-organisation communication promotes positive job perceptions. On the other hand, appropriate rewards, supportive management policies, enhancing employees' participation in challenging job assignments. In this regard, employees tend to have high self-efficacy and self-beliefs if they perceive the workplace environment to be supportive.

### 2.2.5 Leadership Styles

Leadership is crucial in life; leadership affects every aspect of humanity as it enhances personal, organisational, and socio-economic growth (Hura, 2005). By having a great vision, a leader acknowledges the followers' strengths and encourages them to attain maximum performance within the organisation. Leaders also create a path that guides the members of the group. Leader must, accordingly, have leadership capabilities which enable them to perform their duties efficiently. The leadership concept should be of interest to individuals, organisations, and institutions that wish to achieve high profitability.

The continuous search for effective leaders, has led to the growth of various leadership theories. Leadership research has progressed from studying traits of outstanding leaders to studies of leadership process and behaviors. Hay (2007) recognized two types of leadership behaviours:

- Transformational leadership
- Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership entails a process focused on the rewards, goals, and discipline of the followers. On the other side of the aisle, transformational behaviours motivate subordinates to remain creative and attain better results.

Researchers have investigated transactional and transformational leadership behaviours in both managerial and educational contexts. Transformational leaders use intellectual inspiration to challenge the thoughts, creativity, and imagination of their followers (Hura, 2005). Transformational leaders also recognise the values, mindset, and beliefs of their followers and use them as building blocks for increased performance. They get their followers to re-examine conventional methods of doing things while encouraging them to develop creative strategies for solving problems, making decisions, and performing routine duties. Transformational leaders' exhibit individualised consideration by listening carefully and closely attending to their followers' demands and propagating individualised and institutional growth by acting as coaches and mentors (Pounder, 2009).

Leader inspire followers to deliver beyond their expectations by setting higher targets for their followers, nurturing an environment of trust, and encouraging the employees to rise above their personal self-interest for the sake of the organisation. In one way or another, transformational leaders move the needs of the followers from low level to higher level (Pounder, 2009). From an analytical perspective, it is important to note that transactional leaders are reactive while transformational ones are proactive. Regarding effectiveness in leadership, transactional leaders are believed to be less triumphant than transformational leadership because of the impersonal and simple nature of the leader-follower bond and the lack of the leader's impact on the followers. The efficiency of transformational leadership lies in the fact that it focuses on inspiring followers to overcome their interests for the collective good (Dainton & Zelle, 2014).

According to Pounder (2009), teachers use transformational leadership to integrate personal visions of educational superiority. Their vision turns into a helpful superstructure to benefit students' relationships, their culture, as well as their future. Transformational leadership also accounts for individual and complex forces at work in the society. Transformational leadership is flexible and increases engagement with education. It remains vital for educational institutions to spot transformational leadership behaviours in academic advisors and university leaders. When leaders engage in transformational leadership behaviours, the culture in an educational setting improves (Dainton & Zelle, 2014). With a better understanding of transformational leadership, use of this leadership style in the future is possible. Scholars, academic advisors, and instructors should explore the sphere of transformational leadership and its role in the profession and organisation. Contemporary faculty leaders should enthusiastically encourage transformational leaders and position them in universities, permitting

them to evaluate advising structure and increase the success of academic advising strategies.

### 2.3 Decision Making

#### 2.3.1 Background

An organisation's leaders are credited with the responsibility of enacting a decision making process, from the operational to the strategic level. The way in which the decision-making process is formulated can hinder or promote organisational performance. The leaders must, therefore, ascertain the type of decisions to be made, who participates in the decision making, when to make the decisions and the approach to use during the decision making (Rowold & Rohmann, 2008). It is critical, then, for the organisation to ensure decision making is as streamlined as possible in order to enhance efficiency

#### 2.3.2 The Decision Making Process

Pettigrew (2014) points out that decision-making and problem solving are key skills for life and business; problem-solving involves decision-making. Decision making is particularly important for leadership and management. There are techniques and processes to boost decision-making as well as the quality of decisions.

Decision-making is innate to some characters. These individuals should focus more on improving the quality of their decisions (Osborn & Marion, 2009). Less natural decision-makers can make classic evaluations and should be more decisive so as to act upon the appraisals made. Decision-making and problem-solving are closely related, and each requires ingenuity in the identification and development of options; in this process, brainstorming is useful. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis helps the assessment of the strength of an organisation, a business idea or proposition.

Political, economic, social and technological analysis, on the other hand, assists in the assessment of the potential as well as the suitability of the market (Pettigrew, 2014). Good decision-making needs a mixture of skills, such as creative development or identification of options, lucidity of judgment, effective implementation, and firmness of decision. For group decision-making and problem-solving, or when a consensus is needed, workshops are helpful, and a leader can incorporate these process and tools as appropriate. Effective decision-making processes ensure a definite and clear issue, well-gathered facts, the brainstorming of possible options or solutions, a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of each option, the choice of the best option, and an explanation of the decision to those involved to ensure appropriate implementation (Osborn & Marion, 2009)

#### 2.3.3 Decision Making Pitfalls

Without the correct information, decision-making and progress do not take place (Levy, 2015). It is important for leaders to come up with organisational guardrails that promote a single and unified direction. There are five common issues associated with decision-making:

- 1) **Lack of Clear Management:** If leaders fail to set parameters earlier on, the tendency for doubt to develop increases
- 2) **Unclear Purpose:** Failure to understand the 'why' behind a decision could be compared to driving from Connecticut to Florida without a map.
- 3) **Define the Meeting:** A single way for individuals to make sure they do not walk away from the next meeting confused is to understand the type of meeting that will occur.
- 4) **Lack of Autonomy:** Decisions should be made for the collective benefit, at least within an organisational setting, but individuals making a decision should be left alone to make it (Levy 2015).
- 5) **Wrong People and Place:** This pitfall is connected to decision-making. It concerns getting the power, credibility, and knowledge to say that a decision makes sense and should be executed.

#### 2.3.4 Participatory Decision Making

Decision making in an organisation, especially an institution of higher learning such as King Saud University, is vital and determines the success of the institution. In order to ensure sustainable development at King Saud University, it is vital to understand and streamline the leadership and decision-making system. This streamlining is vital because these two factors impact how the university stakeholders perceived the university. For King Saud University to develop and achieve an increased reputation and prestige in Saudi Arabia, and across the globe, the institution's management has to adopt strategic leadership practices that advocate for innovative research and enhances the students and teachers' career growth and development. In order to secure funding from individual entities, the private sector, and the public sector (such as state funding and sponsored funding), King Saud

University must exhibit excellence in growth and development.

### 2.3.5 Decision Making and Job Satisfaction

As workers begin to trust their management, it encourages and persuades them to contribute in decision-making which increases the effort employees put into their work along with improving their job satisfaction and commitment to work (Levy, 2015). All of the factors above, in turn, lead to a reliable leader-follower relationship. An employee's trust in their management is an important determinant of their willingness to partake in decision-making. Inadequate employee involvement in decision making leads to lower level of job satisfaction and employee commitment. Lack of workers' commitment and commitment increases their likelihood of quitting (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006).

### 2.4 Relationships

According to Nemanich and Vera (2009), the relationships of leadership to their followers are built on the basis of the role expectations as well as agreement between the followers and the leader. Leadership can, therefore, be perceived as the vehicle that aids in creating sound workplace relationships. Correlating good leadership and effective decision-making, moreover, motivate both the leader and the employees. Effective communication and interpersonal skills are nevertheless very important in the creation of good employee relationships (Knapp, Vangelisti, & Caughlin, 2014). These are important because they create a good working environment; employees work towards a shared vision and abide by organisational beliefs and values.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research methodology used, the sample selection process, description of the procedure applied in collecting the data, the design of the data collection instrument, and to provide an explanation of the statistical measures used in data analysis.

### 3.2 Research Participants

A population entails all elements either individuals, events or objects meet the sample criterion for insertion in a study. The research participants in this study are 80 employees working at King Saud University, which happened to be the study population.

### 3.3 Survey Instrument

This study used questionnaires as the data collection instrument. Data collected using a questionnaire is analogous to data collected through interviews, though the questions tend to be a bit shallow. A questionnaire was deemed appropriate to appraise the knowledge and views of the development workers at King Saud University. The title of the questionnaire was 'Perceptions of Employees on the Effects of Decision-Making and Leadership Styles on Relationships and Perceived Effectiveness in King Saud University's Development'. The questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive review of the literature. It consisted of five sections that evaluated background information the contributors and their perceptions of leadership, relationships, leadership effectiveness and decision-making. The questions had a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranged from (*strongly agree*) to (*strongly disagree*) with a mid-point for an unbiased response.

The questionnaires were fashioned on the basis of the theories of leadership, decision-making, effectiveness, and relationships. Questionnaires ensured a high rate of response because they were distributed to participants to complete and collected personally by the researcher. They also needed less energy and time to administer. They, further, provided the likelihood of secrecy due to the anonymous aspect of the completed questionnaires. The questionnaire items were closed making it easy to compare the items.

### 3.4 Reliability and Validity

#### 3.4.1 Instrument Validity

*Content validity*: Content validity is the scale to which a research instrument signifies the study factors. To achieve content validity, the survey content was reviewed by two experts from the Department of Leadership at King Saud University in Riyadh; each had expertise in the area of leadership, decision-making, relationships and leadership effectiveness.

#### 3.4.2 Instrument Reliability

Reliability is the degree of constancy with which a research instrument measures the features it is designed to measure. The survey was piloted with 20 employees in the environment in which the survey would take place. The response rate for the pilot study was 100 %. The internal consistency reliability was established using SPSS

14.0, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .91 for employees' perception scales and alpha = .88 for employees' perception scales.

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sent an email requesting their participation and affirmed to them that their details and responses would be kept confidential. Employees were informed that the exercise would take 15 minutes and were asked to return the questionnaire by email. For the workers who took part, the researcher confirmed receipt of the questionnaire and thanked them for their participation. The participants ended up numbering 80 employees.

## 4. Research Findings and Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

The data from the survey were analyzed and interpreted in relation to the study topic - Perceptions of Employees on the Effects of Decision-Making and Leadership Styles on Relationships and Perceived Effectiveness in King Saud University's Development Context. In this section, the background information related to participants in the study. The results from data analysis were reported and discussed by responding to each research question. Frequency and percentage were reported related to background information from the participants. Means and standard deviations were calculated to determine the levels of perceptions of employees on the effects of decision-making and leadership styles on relationships as well as perceived effectiveness in the research context. 80 participants completed the survey for a response rate of 100%. Study findings are presented in 4 sections: background information on employees, leadership, decision-making, relationships, and leadership effectiveness

### 4.2 Background Information of Employees

Table 1. Background information of parents

Characteristics	Count N= 80	Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	30	37.5
Female	50	62.5
<b>KSU Position</b>		
Dean	3	3.75
Faculty member	50	62.5
<b>College/Department</b>		
Education College	25	31.25
Medical College	20	25.00
Library	14	17.5
Computing and Information Technology College	12	15.00
Engineering College	9	11.25
<b>Years at KSU</b>		
0-5 Years	20	25.00
6-10 Years	50	62.5
More than 10 Years	10	12.5

The study incorporated 30 male and 50 female participants. Of these participants, there were three deans, 50 faculty members, and 27 development officers. Participants were from the education department (25), the medical department (20), the library (14), the engineering department (9), and the computing and information technology department (12). 20 participants had worked in the institution for fewer than five years, 50 of them had worked for 6 to 10 years, and 10 of them had worked for over ten years.

### 4.3 Participants' Responses

Research Question 1: Do King Saud University development workers perceive the style of leadership in the KSU development operation as transactional or transformational?

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation leadership items (n = 80)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
The leaders in development at KSU do not become psychologically involved.	4.10	1.80
The leaders in development at KSU are controlled at all times.	3.90	1.55
The leaders in development at KSU provide rewards and incentives.	4.20	1.75
The leaders in development at KSU think it is significant to have a good rapport with the staff.	4.80	1.68
The leaders in development at KSU share power in decision-making.	4.70	1.70
The leaders in development at KSU use participative management.	4.38	1.63

The participants recorded average rates of involvement of leaders in decision making and participative management with an average mean of 4 and a standard deviation of 1, which is minimal. In terms of psychological involvement, development leaders were well involved and most of the participants (with regard to employee participation) agreed with this. There was also a moderate control of development leaders and provision of rewards and initiatives. This shows that most of the participants agreed with the initiatives and rewards. A great number of participants also strongly agreed that it is important for the university to have a good rapport with their staff, share power in decision making, as well as take part in participative management.

Research Question 2: Do King Saud University development employees perceive decision-making in the KSU development operation as participative?

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for decision-making items (n = 442)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Development decisions are often made at the last minute with incomplete information.	4.15	1.74
Development decisions are made by trial and error.	4.60	1.56
Decision-making power is shared by all development professionals, KSU Foundation employees, and deans.	3.15	1.49
Workers take responsibility for the results and consequences of their decisions.	4.40	1.48
Development decisions are made by a few leaders without input from workers involved in development.	3.90	1.57

The participants recorded that there was an average decision-making process with timely and complete information. They recorded an average mean of 4 and standard deviation of 1. Trial and error were not applied in the process, but decisions were made by all leaders. Development decisions involve few leaders and workers, as shown by an average mean of 3.9 and standard deviation of 1.57. Most participants disagreed that workers take responsibility for their consequences and the power to make decisions is not shared greatly by all development professionals, deans, and KSU Foundation employees. This is demonstrated by an average mean of 3.15 and standard deviation of 1.49.

Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between leadership style, decision-making style, perceived effectiveness and the relationship constructs of control mutuality, trust, satisfaction or commitment?

Table 4. Means and standard deviations for relationship items (n = 442)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Workers in development at KSU are thoughtful to what each other say.	4.70	1.59
Workers in development at KSU believe that my views are genuine.	4.89	1.58
In dealing with individuals like me, workers in development at KSU have the propensity to 'throw their weight around'.	4.66	1.54
Workers in development at KSU treat me justly.	5.01	1.48
Whenever workers make a key decision about development, I know they will be concerned about me.	3.70	1.60
The workers in development at KSU can be used to keep their promises.	4.29	1.77
I feel that workers in development at KSU try to uphold a long-term commitment to me.	4.19	1.68
I feel that workers in development at KSU intent to uphold a relationship with me.	4.77	1.49
There is a long-term bond between me the workers in development at KSU.	4.39	1.39
I am satisfied with KSU	5.22	1.29
I have a mutual relationship with the workers in development at KSU.	4.99	1.30

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Most individuals in development at KSU are satisfied with their connections with the organisation.	4.19	1.42
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The results demonstrated that workers at KSU are not totally satisfied with their interactions with one another. This is evidenced by an average mean of 4 and standard deviation of 1. Most of the participants strongly agreed with this fact. These levels have improved, and most of the workers are happy working at the KSU. Although the rate of involvement in decision making is average, there is increased attention to what an employee says. Employees have a mutual link with one another and are satisfied with their connection with their organisation. Most of the employees, however, have long-term relationships among the employees. The participants also agreed that development workers at KSU are treated justly with an average mean of 5.01 and standard deviation of 1.48. They disagreed that whenever workers made key decisions about development, no one will be concerned about them. This is shown by an average mean of 3.7 and standard deviation of 1.6.

Research Question 4: Do King Saud University development workers perceive the KSU development operation as with effective leaders?

Table 5. Means and standard deviations for leadership effectiveness items (n = 80)

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Development leaders help the staff meet objectives and goals.	4.60	1.42
Development decisions result in effective plans for implementation.	4.33	1.44
Development leaders at KSU use two-way communication to aid mutual understanding with the staff.	4.40	1.43
Development leaders at KSU build strong relationships with other professionals that aid goal achievement.	4.25	1.59
Development leaders help staff create the right image for the university to raise funds.	4.71	1.48
Development leaders help staff increase volunteer, alumni, and donor support.	4.70	1.59

The involvement of leaders in the decision-making process helps employees of the KSU meet organisational goals and objectives. Additionally, there is improved communication in the workplace with the use of two-way communication among workers. There are better, though not strong, working relationships within the institution. Further, the relationships highly help the staff create the right image for the university to raise funds. Employees try to increase volunteer and donor support. The participants showed an average mean of 4 and standard deviation of 1. This shows that the participants strongly agreed that development workers perceive the KSU development operation as effective leaders.

## 5. Discussion

According to Hura (2005), managers perceive their leadership as transformational, and their staffs perceive them as more transactional. Employees in King Saud University's Development context consider the management to display more transformational leadership than transactional leadership. The results of the study showed that, from the employee's point of view, they agreed that the leadership perception of the managers was popular with an average mean of 4 and standard deviation of 1. The study is set in an educational setting (KSU) where bureaucratic culture is stronger and less dynamic. This bureaucratic system is an obstacle to the promotion of transformational leadership. As pointed out by Nakayama and Sutcliffe (2008), however, good leadership styles have a positive effect on the communication aspect in an organisation; the participants pointed out that King Saud University has a strong bureaucratic culture, which is less dynamic.

In looking for every transformational leadership behavior component in terms of standard deviation and the mean, inspirational motivation is the greatest achievement in the three participating groups. This result showed a positive trend in inspirational motivation, communication, and commitment as well as employee relationships. There are greater mean scores and minimal scores of standard deviation. Regarding communication, leaders for leaders who aim to inspire inspirational motivation build their relationship with their followers via interactive communication; they help in the creation of cultural bonding amongst these groups. As Minett et al. (2009) point out, an organisational climate that promotes creativity and innovation leads to increased performance, productivity, inspirational motivation, and creativity which all help to improve commitment and lead to increased confidence and innovation in the workplace. Agreement that inspiration is the most popular leadership behavior in the studied groups might be caused by comparable age between the groups. It makes communication more interactive leading to greater innovation.

Pettigrew (2014) points out that decision-making and problem solving are the key skills required in life and business. Leaders ascertain the type of decisions to be made, who to participate in the decision making, when to

make the decisions, and the approach to use during the decision making (Rowold & Rohmann 2008); this is supported by the study findings. When individuals in an organisation communicate, share visions, and are involved in decision-making, it becomes more understandable because there is a similar method of communication. A good sharing experience in an educational environment might lead to improved relationships and performance of the workers since they are involved in decision-making process. The study findings show a close relationship between leadership style, decision-making style, perceived effectiveness, and the relationship constructs of control mutuality, trust, satisfaction and commitment with average an mean score of 4 and standard deviation of 1.

Highly transformational leadership perceived by the participants presents a positive mark because, according to Ponder (2009), transformational leadership is required to improve the qualities within the university's development workers. For the institution in general, some merits of the performance of transformational leadership include improved innovation as well as the development of positive relationships. In an educational setting specifically, transformational leadership earns its status because of its benefits. Transformational leadership, as well as team development, has a positive impact on team building and communication.

From an analytical perspective, a leader should be able to positively influence their employees by nurturing creativity and innovation in the workplace thereby enhancing their personal and career development, while at the same time ensuring that the corporate objectives are met. Creativity and innovation are crucial. They not only promote the overall organisation's performance, but also encourage effective communication and positive workplace relations. As Faraci et al. (2013) state, job efficacy, job performance, and goal orientation of the employees has been found to be impacted by the perception of the workplace environment. Leaders who provide scholarly stimulation and engage their followers in, more inspired, problem solving, decision making, and out of the box thinking, generate conditions which are more likely to offer a competitive advantage to the organisation.

According to Levy (2015), as workers believe and trust the management, it encourages and persuades their contributions in decision-making that builds the efforts of the employees, benefits their job satisfaction, as well as their commitment to work. Cultures which avoid negative feedback, are ignorant of others and role difference support inconsistent perceptions between followers and leaders. Previous work experience and interactions among employees within institutions of higher learning, and their different point of view, act as components that may create differences in the perception of leadership. In the study, there are various factors that might lead to the very statistical difference between the participants – some of the mean scores are higher compared to the others as seen in the study findings.

Most university employees already have information regarding transformational leadership. Their behavior has not changed to that of transformational leader, however. Environment, or the culture of an organisation, is one of the obstacles in bringing about transformational leadership. When the institution continues to apply the method of reward, focusing on the transactional leadership behavior component (like productivity as well as cost management), it will encourage low enthusiasm in performing transformational leadership practice. High score of transformational leadership in the research might also correlate with the gender of the leader.

Brower and Balch (2005) discovered that employees are more comfortable in discussing the University's matters, strategic vision, and corporate objectives with top executives such as the chancellor, rather than other officials such as the deans, head of departments and their colleagues. In the study, students and institutional workers perceive their leaders as their role models, which is part of the admired behavior compared to other elements of leadership behaviors. This is shown by a mean of 3.15 and standard deviation of 1.49. Leaders within King Saud University behave consistently within their values and model, they behave as they expect others to behave, they set personal examples of what they require, and they build loyalty using simple as well as daily acts that develop the organisation's progress. Leaders should be role models and create an environment that supports their followers through trust, values, recognition, mutual respect, rewards, and praise. They must constantly attempt to model preferred behaviors through their values, actions, and beliefs. This was a positive sign because this is beneficial to reinforce participant's loyalty to their values. This study considers leaders to act successfully as good role models for their followers.

As Hariri et al. (2013) claim, every organisation seeks to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in its operations. The perception of an individual's leadership traits may have no connection to the behaviors contained in direct reports, but their overall efficiency is critical. The implication of the perceptions may have less (or nothing) to do with real leadership behavior. Actual leader behavior might differ for subordinates and they may have differing perceptions of the subordinates. The statistically significant different results were projected on the basis of the literature review, but the big difference points to the fact that there is usually a problem in the link between a

leader and the followers because the perception among them is different; it might lead to poor working relations and communication. In this study, the common perception from leaders that they perform well might be because they did not receive adequate feedback about their weaknesses and lacked methods to address the recommendations from their followers. Leaders need to occasionally receive feedback from their followers relating to their style of leadership. Feedback also shows the demand for leaders to validate their leadership style with a complete analysis of how other people perceive their leadership style.

Based on the literature review provided, several factors can sway leadership perception, decision-making, and working relationships. New leaders accommodate facilitative leadership. In previous research, statistical analytical processes detect no significance difference between the perception of leadership and years of expertise of an employee. Employees' cultural background affects leadership perception although cultural factors might not influence the leadership practice. The mean score and standard deviation of the transactional and transformational component were high in newer than in older employees, however.

The evaluation of leadership behavior and decision making of employees at King Saud University is an introduction of leadership research in the university. As the university is aiming for global accreditation, assessment of leadership culture is essential to create a better learning and working environment. Inconsistent perception of leadership and working relationships should be addressed in a positive manner to establish self-agreement of perception that leads to better working and learning environment.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study was structured within the leadership setting of King Saud University in Saudi Arabia. The main findings principally portrayed statistically significant difference in the perceptions of leadership behavior between the management and the workers, which were backed up by previous research in leadership. Some demographic traits of the study sample influenced the nature of the leadership behavior of the managers at the university. The employees were found to have a relatively positive perception towards the effects of decision making and leadership on King Saud University relationships and development operations. Great variation was nevertheless noted in individual responses in the majority of cases. This was shown by an average mean score of 4 and a standard deviation of 1. King Saud University should ensure that its development workers are actively involved in decision making so as to improve their productivity in development and their relationships at work. Communication is essential, therefore King Saud University management should initiate strategies and workplace metrics aimed at enhancing open communication that propagates a shared vision.

Organisational relationships, decision-making process, the leadership style adopted, and the organisational structure are among the factors that impact the perceptions of workers involved in the development of an organisation. This implies that a leader can significantly improve the employees' perceptions by improving these internal factors. In line with this reasoning, a managerial commitment to employee empowerment and team building leads to the establishment of processes and systems that encourage a productive work environment. This is the kind of organisational climate that promotes creativity and innovation in an organisation and results in increased performance and productivity. While different leadership styles can be adopted by an organisation, it is crucial to ensure that high employee involvement is maintained in whichever style is chosen. Being a substantially large organisation, with high number of workers, King Saud University's management should ensure that the leadership styles adopted values the employees, promotes open communication, and encourages the establishment of a strong rapport between the workforce and the managers

## **7. Limitations of the Study**

While the main objectives of this study were achieved, there are notable limitations. First, owing to financial and time constraints, the researcher only carried out a small scale study. The researcher only focused on the perceptions of employees regarding the effects of decision-making and leadership styles on relationships and perceived effectiveness in King Saudi University. This clearly implies that while the results are generalisable to King Saudi University, they may not be generalisable to all the Saudi Universities.

Second, this research relied on the use of a survey questionnaire as the main data collection tool. From an analytical perspective, there is no guarantee that the respondents provided accurate information as in some cases, some respondents may fail to understand the question, give answers that they think would appeal to the researcher, or just fill the questionnaire blindly without considering the content and context. While the information obtained has been well tabulated and presented, therefore, there is no any guarantee that it is accurate.

Finally, the data gathered from the self-reports (questionnaires) may be subject to bias which is beyond the

researcher's control e.g. some of the participants may exhibit selective memory (remembering or not remembering specific relevant information required in the questionnaire), telescoping (confusing the time in past when certain events occurred), attribution (attributing the negative outcomes and events to external forces but attributing the positive one to one's organisation), and exaggeration of specific events and outcomes.

## 8. Recommendations

First the situation at the university is not bad, by promoting a conducive work environment, King Saud University management should take various steps including, but not limited to, eliciting employees' feedback on the university development operations, giving employees autonomy and freedom in the decision making of matters within their scope, nurturing creativity and innovation, and encouraging commitment to the organisation's strategic goals. These actions would result in increased employee participation in matters concerning the organisation, support for innovative and revolutionary ideas, and an increased shared concern for excellence. By having a great vision, a leader acknowledges the followers' strengths and encourages determination to attain maximum performance within the organisation. Furthermore, leaders create the path that guides the members of the group.

A more proactive study design should be adopted to support a wide scale research using a bigger research sample for more accurate findings that are generalisable to all Saudi Arabian universities. This study would entail the use of a combination of data collection techniques such as questionnaires, observations, and interviews. A combination of these approaches would ensure that the information obtained in one tool can be verified, supplemented, or complemented by data obtained from the other tools. More resources in terms of finance, personnel, and time should be allocated to the research to ensure that the findings are accurate, devoid of bias, and accurately represent the characteristics of the phenomena under investigation.

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