Analysing the Role of Leadership Level of Academic Leaders on Job Embeddedness of Faculty: A Study at Tertiary Level in Punjab

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Abstract

The current study aims to analyze the outcome of different levels of leadership on the job embeddedness of college faculty. In the current era of competition, retaining experienced employees is essential for any organization. If employees lose their jobs for any reason, corporate memory is lost. It can cause financial loss as well. In academia, this challenge is as dangerous as in the corporate world. Higher education institutes need experienced employees and experienced instructional leaders. The application of five levels of leadership by Maxwell (2011) gives new direction to the concept of leadership compared to the old theories that leadership affects many dimensions in the organization (Dewi & Wibow, 2020). Organizational culture, employee performance, and retention of corporate memory. Leadership affects job satisfaction and behavior of employees (Haerani et al., 2020). Empirical evidence from research by Arfah & Aditya (2019) and Firman et al. (2020) proved that retaining an organization's human resources brings stability to its performance. There are many knowledge gaps in the literature on the effect of leadership on job embeddedness. As job embeddedness and level of leadership are the latest constructs, studies in educational constructs can only be found on the impact of leadership on job embeddedness. This construct provides logic about the three factors, fit, link, and sacrifice, which enable an employee to stick to job (Shah et al., 2020). This study investigated the effect of the five levels of leadership presented by Maxwell (2011) on the job embeddedness of

college faculty at the tertiary level of the higher education department in the Government of Punjab, Pakistan.

The current study was descriptive. Descriptive research helps in exploring the phenomena. It provides first footprints about any individual and phenomena in a natural setting. It gives the when, what, where, and how replies. It can use many research designs to get information.

This study was designed to elicit information from respondents. Therefore, a cross-sectional survey was conducted to explore the perceptions of faculty. According to (Cohen et al., 2007), Data was gained from participants and was converted into numeric form. It was entered in the spreadsheet of SPSS 20. Data was analysed using quantitative techniques, i.e., Mean and standard deviation were determined. Multiple regression was applied to see the relationship and effect of variables.

The analysis of gained data revealed that the principals of colleges in Lahore division, Punjab, attained fourth level on ALLQ, which is "People Development." College faculty members secured the highest level on all three dimensions of the job embeddedness scale. Data revealed that the stage of leadership that a principal secures firmly affects the job embeddedness level of college faculty members, and there is a resilient and noteworthy association found between levels of leadership and faculty job embeddedness of faculty.

The study concluded that a better leadership level heightens the job embeddedness level of faculty members.

Keywords: Job embeddedness, Levels, Leadership, Position, Permission, Production, People Development, Pinnacle, Higher Education Institutes, Tertiary level, College faculty, Principal

Introduction

Academia is confronting many challenges. The need for dynamic and productive leadership and retention of employees is also included. Leadership strongly affects job-related factors like satisfaction, organizational cultures, and values. Changing demographics is a significant cause of this situation, which is more complex and challenging. Embedding good employees to the job is a challenge. In organizations where faculty are respected and their values and attitudes are protected, their work performance is multiplied (Smith & Peterson, 2020). Leadership also affects the job environment. Old theories of leadership cannot justify new challenges. New constructs in the literature knowledge pool are being added, which need to be addressed. Academic leadership is a complex phenomenon. It has multiple dimensions. One is the relationship between leaders and followers in educational organizations (Smith & Peterson, 2020).

The five stages of the leadership model by Maxwell (2011) are relatively new ways to measure the complexity of leadership in educational setups. It is a massive challenge for leaders in higher education institutes to embed good faculty and enable them to perform well. Job embeddedness is also a

new concept. Mitchel et al. explored it in 2017 while working on their turnover model. The construct of job embeddedness has many dimensions that must be investigated in all working sectors. Some studies investigate this phenomenon, especially in the IT industry (Son, 2012) and the medical field (Prat & Carter, 2017). Cross-cultural research conducted on call centres by Gelfand and Ramesh (2017) has also been found in previous literature. However, this construct needs to be explored in an educational setting. Considering the importance of these two variables, i.e., level of leadership and job embeddedness, the current study was designed to investigate how the outcome of the leadership level influences the job embeddedness of college faculty.

Review of Related Literature

Leadership is critical to any organization (Ruben et al., 2023). In recent times, higher education institutions have become more crucial than ever before. Complex organizational culture has made it challenging for heads of higher education institutes to keep pace with the modern world (Bush, 2022). Previous research provides empirical evidence that the culture of academia is now more complex and needs visionary and dynamic leadership to execute change.

It has become inevitable for them to learn new leadership skills. Recently, there has been a shift in the perception of the role of the heads of institutes. They are considered as academic leaders. To keep pace with the modern world, they should be proactive and accept changes in all the relevant factors, i.e., academia, community, and family (Allen & Peltokorpi, 2023). It has become unavoidable for academic leaders to deal with faculty in a new manner. They must create a soothing working environment to improve their performance. The leadership and its vision determine the success of any higher education institute /organization. This is the charisma of a leader that enables his followers/faculty to perform better and perform remarkably in academics (Bush, 2022).

The phenomenon of leadership in itself contains many directions. It has many dimensions. The type of leadership and to what extent it is required have been under discussion for the last few decades. Many theories about leadership exist in literature, but there needs to be a framework that shows an accurate picture of leadership and its effect on the followers. A glance at the history of leadership provides various concepts about leadership.

Trait theories contain great man theory (1840) and all other trait theories (1930-1940), focusing on leaders' characteristics. These theories are of the view that leaders are born, not made. They consider leadership as the constellation of traits that enable any person to influence followers (Agboola & Benmira, 2021).

The behavioral theories era is from 1950-1960. The emphasis of this theory is on some specific patterns of behaviour. These theories advocate that some behavioural patterns can be learned to be an effective leader. It also created a stance that leadership skills can be learned (Dugan, 2024).

Contingent and situational theories (1960) support the view that a leader should assess the situation and perform. Its proponents, like Fred Fiedler, believe a leader should adopt a style according to the problem (Shala et al., 2021).

Transactional and transformational theories (1990-2000) suggest that today's ever-changing situations demand the most compatible direction. Transactional leadership presents the idea of reward for achieving a goal and punishment for failure to achieve the goal.

Later on, the paradigm shifted from 2001 to 2020 ***towards shared, collective, collaborative, inclusive, and servant leadership. Contemporary*** leadership presents a whole system view and, to some extent, a complete picture of leadership.

However, with the ever-changing effect of demographics and their impact in this globalized world, it is essential to have step-by-step knowledge of leadership procedures and their effects on followers (Kurniawan et al., 2021). In 2011, John Maxwell gave a dynamic idea to the world in the form of five levels of leadership. In his bestseller, John Maxwell propagates that leadership is about influencing followers. If the leader has cordial relations with followers, he can revolutionize this process.

These levels include,

Level 1*Position*
Level 2*Permission*
Level 3*Production*
Level 4 *People Development*
Level 5*Pinnacle*

The first level (*Position*) indicates that the person in command is only a managing authority. He does not possess any connection with other people in the organization. He needs to gain the power to collaborate with others, which will become a hurdle in attaining shared goals. He needs to develop teams and identify the appropriate persons for performing tasks. He needs to possess the quality to enable followers to grow and move forward. He is merely a boss and needs to have the capability to get things done through cooperation and joint.

The second level of Leadership (*Permission*) by John Maxwell determines that the quality of developing relations enables a leader to enhance his Influence. He should spread a value system in an organization that includes ethical, moral, and success values. When a leader embeds him in the organization's value system, it enhances his worth. The Influence spreads far and wide throughout the organization. Bonding between follower and leader becomes strong. Followers start taking responsibility. The power of a leader and the hard work of followers synergize. This is also described by Jha and Pathak (2023). They believe that the leadership is an opportunity to serve. When a leader starts serving the organization, followers follow in his footsteps. Cordial relations are developed, which help in the attainment of goals.

According to John Maxwell, on level three (*Production*) of Leadership, a leader can be successful only if he creates an environment of productivity. Creating such an environment boosts the working ability of an organization. Production is the essence of leadership. The journey of success starts with the success of the leader. If a leader is productive, the organization will grow in the future. Every leadership level contains the qualities of previous levels (Maxwell, 2014). If a leader wants to be productive, he must possess four qualities.

- Spreading his Influence,
- Understanding the difficulties of followers
- Generating new resources
- Paying attention to the capabilities of followers/workers.

It is the assignment of a person in a leading position to give people a chance to grow and flourish. The fourth level of Leadership is *People development*. At this point, the leader creates an opportunity to grow. The growth of any person depends on identifying their capabilities. Engaging the right man in the right task elevates the development process of people and organizations. If a leader inculcates a culture of ownership, the follower considers the organization's growth their duty. Sharing the responsibilities frees up the mind of the leader for further tasks. It vitals his energy (Maxwell, 2014).

The fifth and top level of leadership is the pinnacle. Leaders of effective organizations are always found on the pinnacle level of leadership. They prepare future leaders. If a senior leader retires, a long line of leaders always takes up the matters of organizations in their own hands. It helps to retain the organizational memory. In today's corporate world, retaining good employees and leaders is essential for the survival of organizations. The leader's leadership style also affects employees' retention and job embeddedness (Ghaffar et al., 2023). Increasing people's attachment to jobs is a challenge faced by higher education institutes (Ghaffar & Khan, 2018). The construct of job embeddedness consists of factors like *Fit, Link,* and *Sacrifice*. They are further divided into more branches, which present a comprehensive picture of an individual's embeddedness in job, community, and family. Many factors push an employee to leave the job. They are called *push factors,* and some are called *pull factors,* which attract an employee to the job.

There are three main factors in the JE model.

Fit This level presents the comfort level one feels with community, organization, and family. The JE model's fit dimension contains values and career goals. It represents an individual's attachment to their place and how their organization and community are a source of ease for them (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017).

Link is the dimension of the JE model, which indicates the relations of an individual with an organization, community, and family. It also presents his apprehensions about leaving his job, community, or present organization (Huning et al., 2020).

Sacrifice represents the perks he enjoys in his community, organization, and family. He and his family will suffer if he leaves his job, community, and organization. In a collectivistic culture, the whole family makes decisions and suffers if someone leaves his comfort zone, i.e., Job/organization, community, and family (Elsaied & Elsaied, 2012). Job embeddedness is the other name for the pull factor (Shah et al., 2020). Literature suggests a knowledge gap. Many studies have been done to measure the extent of the Influence of leadership on job-related factors of employees. However, studies need to be conducted on the effect of leadership level on the job embeddedness of faculty.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the current investigation are

1. Discover the stage of leadership of college principals.
2. Determine the level of Job embeddedness of college faculty members.
3. Measure the association between the levels of leadership of college principals and the job embeddedness level of college faculty.
4. Evaluate the effect of the leadership level of college principals on the job embeddedness level of college faculty.

Research Questions

1. What is the stage of leadership for principals in colleges?
2. What is the magnitude of job embeddedness among college faculty?
3. Is there any association between levels of leadership in college Principals and the job embeddedness level of college faculty?
4. What is the outcome of the Influence of the stage of the leadership of college principals on the job embeddedness level of faculty members?

Problem Statement

Due to complex demographic situations in the modern era, the challenges for academic leadership have become complex. There is a dire need to explore how the challenges can be lessened. How can a leader get maximum performance from employees and enhance the embeddedness of staff/faculty in their organization with the help of cooperation and collaboration? This research explored how the level of leadership can be elevated and how it can help improve the job embeddedness of faculty.

Significance of Study

This research filled the gap identified in the literature and provided an empirical base for further study. It also identified the population gap at the tertiary level in Pakistan, which is still under-researched. Current research also fills this gap**.**

Methodology

This research was descriptive. Descriptive research helped researchers answer what, when, and how aspects of phenomena. A cross-sectional survey was conducted to obtain data from respondents. Hunziker and

Blankenagel (2024) believe that the purpose of the cross-sectional study was to discover the generalized relationships among elements. So, it was the most appropriate technique for the purpose. Data was analysed using quantitative methods, i.e., Mean and standard deviation were determined. Multiple regression was applied to see the relationship and effect of variables.

Population & Sample

It is always a crucial stage of study to select the most appropriate sample. It is only possible for a researcher to collect data from part of the population (Etikan & Babtope, 2019). Therefore, in the present study, the appropriate sample was selected from both parts of the population, i.e., from college principals and faculty members of colleges of Punjab. The sample consisted of principals and faculty members from all four districts (Lahore, Kasur, Nankana Sahib, and Sheikhu Pura) of the Lahore Division. The sample was selected carefully. All three types of colleges, associate, graduate, and co-education, are included as they were the true population representatives.

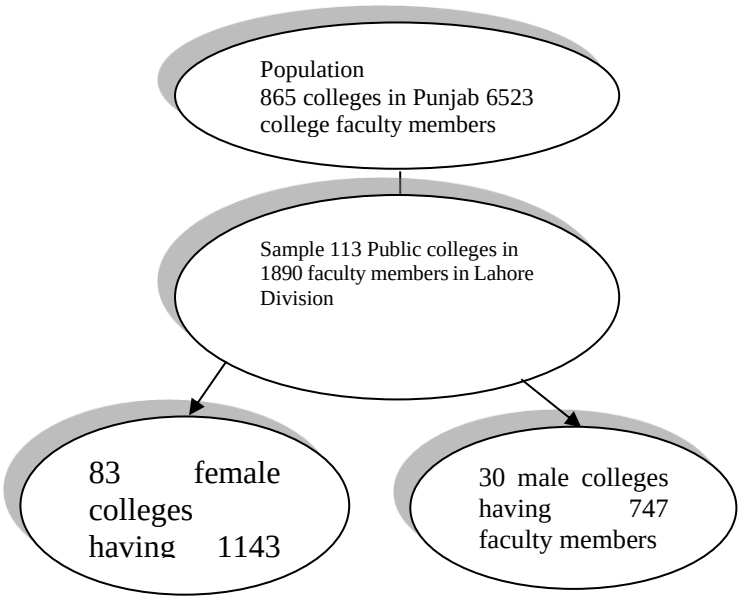

Figure 1: Population and sample of the study
Retrieved from Higher Education Department, Govt of Punjab
https://hed.punjab.gov.pk/

The above figure shows that 865 colleges in the Province of Punjab are the population of the study. Six thousand five hundred twenty-three faculty members are currently working in this department. The sample was drawn by using a random sampling technique. One hundred and thirteen colleges were included in the sample, where 1890 faculty members were serving in different positions. 83 female (1143 faculty members) and 30 male college (747 faculty members) were finally included in the study as a sample.

Table 1.

Number of Principals and colleges in the sample

Sr. No	Gender	Type of College	Number of Principals	Total	
1	Male	Associate colleges	35	44	***Respondents were faculty members of colleges in the Lahore division***
2	Male	Graduate colleges, including co-education colleges	9		
3	Female	Associate colleges	51	69	
4	Female	Graduate colleges, including co-education colleges	18	113	

Retrieved from Higher Education Department, Govt of Punjab https://hed.punjab.gov. pk/

The table above indicates that different types of colleges work in HED, i.e., associate and graduate colleges. Graduate colleges are mostly co-education. One hundred thirteen principals were the population, and the whole population was part of the study. Sixty-nine female principals of associate and graduate colleges and forty-four male principals of associate and graduate colleges participated in the study.

The above table indicates that 747 males.

Table 2

Number of college faculty members in the sample

Sr. No	Gender	Designation	Number of faculty members	Total	
1	Male	Lecturer	212	747	***Respondents of colleges division were from the Lahore***
		Assistant Professor	384		
		Associate Professor	121		
		Professor	30	1143	
2	Female	Lecturer	317		
		Assistant Professor	522		
		Associate Professor	262		
		Professor	44	1892	

Retrieved from Higher Education Department, Govt of Punjab https://hed.punjab.gov.pk/

The above table indicates that 747 male and 1143 female college faculty members were included in the sample. Faculty members from all four types of designations (Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor) participated in the research as the sample.

Research Instrument

Two questionnaires were used to elicit respondents' perceptions. The first Instrument was to measure the perception of college principals. It was adopted. Maxwell developed it in 2011. It was a standardized instrument. The researcher created a separate questionnaire to measure the job embeddedness level of college faculty in Punjab, Pakistan. However, a pilot study was done to check its suitability for Pakistani culture and educational setup in higher education institutes. Cronbach's alpha value for both questionnaires depicts good reliability and internal consistency.

Table 3

Instruments for measuring key variables

Sr. No	Instrument	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach alpha
1	Assessment of Level of Leadership Questionnaire for College Principals (LLQ)	a) Position b) Permission c) Production d) People Development e) Pinnacle	1.1-1.10 2.1-2.10 3.1-3.10 4.1-4.10 5.1-5.10	.94
2	Job Embeddedness Questionnaire (JEQ)	a)Fit b)Link c)Sacrifice	1.1-1.19 2.1-2.19 3.1-3.16	.96

Procedure of Study

The questionnaire was distributed among study participants by the researchers themselves. It was a time-consuming and rigorous procedure. It involved lots of hard work and took a long time to complete. The return ratio of questionnaires was 1732 respondents out of 1892 from faculty members and 97 out of 113 from college principals. It was 92 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively.

Data Analysis

The study design demands quantitative techniques to gain results and understand respondents' perceptions of variables. Data was analysed using SPSS 20 software. Descriptive statistics were applied to each portion of both questionnaires. These statistics helped pinpoint the trend and direction of the respondents' perceptions.

Findings of the Study

Findings from the data provided an answer to research question 1. Data discovered that heads of colleges are at the fourth stage of leadership, "People's Development," on the ALLQ scale.

Table 4

Leadership Level of College Principals

Sr.No. of Level	Name	N	X
Level1	Position	16	2.66
Level2	Permission	11	3.29
Level3	Production	27	3.28
Level4	**People Development**	**39**	**3.36**
Level5	Pinnacle	20	3.16
Overall mean score on the ALLQ scale		113	3.15

The above table shows that 16 principals were on the Position leadership level, and their mean score on this factor is 2.66. It is low but indicates that they have only designated powers. Cordial relations, which are necessary for faculty growth, are not found. This element shows a hurdle in gaining maximum output from faculty. Eleven principals gained a mean score of 3.29 on the second level of the leadership scale, Permission. It shows that these principals have started cooperating. They have good working relationships with faculty. Their faculty consider themselves leaders rather than a boss. Faculty members remain ready to work for them. The mean score (3.28) of twenty-seven principals depicts on the third level that principals are inculcating a culture of growth in their respective educational organizations. They are eager to help faculty in their professional matter. The mean score of 3.36 shows that the fourth leadership level is 39.

Principals are spreading a culture of growth, advancement, and progress among the followers/faculty members. This mean score is relatively higher than other levels. The fifth and topmost level of ALLQ shows that the 20 principals have extraordinary leadership characteristics. They are producing leaders and securing the culture of leadership for the future. The overall mean score on this scale is 3.15. Data analysis answered research question 2. The Job embeddedness questionnaire was operationalized. It is shown in table 5.

Table 5

Operationalization of Job Embeddedness Scale

Sr. No	Range	Level
1	0-2.50	Low
2	2.51-3.0	Medium
3	3.01-5.0	High

Table 6

The mean score of Job embeddedness level of college faculty members

Sr. no	Name of factor	N	X	Level/stage
1	**Fit**	**722**	**3.75**	**High**
2	Link	567	3.43	High
4	Sacrifice	443	3.44	High
Overall mean score		1732	3.53	High

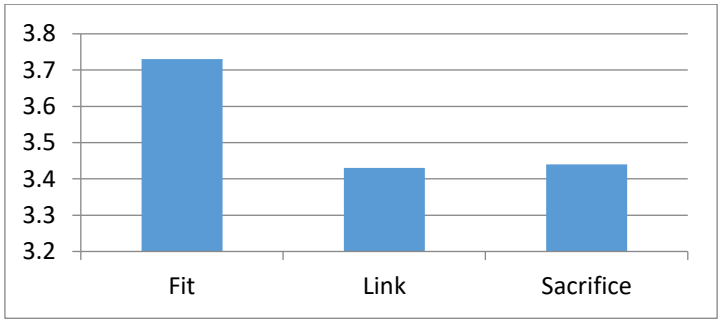

Figure 2: The mean score of college faculty members on the Factors of Job Embeddedness scale

The above graph depicts that college faculty members are the highest on all three scales of JEQ. Regarding *the fit* dimension, the faculty members fit in the community, family, and organization, as it was the factor with the highest mean score of 3.73. They like their place of living and workplace. They enjoy the job's perks and are comfortable with their coworkers. The second factor *is sacrifice*, which is on JEQ. The college faculty members gained a mean score of 3.43, which indicates that leaving their jobs will cause a significant loss to them. In this case, their family will suffer. They cannot leave the job in any case. On the third factor, *Link*, which is sacrifice, college faculty gained a mean score of 3.44, which also falls in the high score category. It shows that faculty links well with organizations, community, and family. They will have to bear a significant loss if they sacrifice this job. Data also provided evidence that replied to the third research question. A strong relationship is found among all dimensions of both variables.

Table 7

Pearson correlation of coefficient between Level of Leadership and Job embeddedness of College Faculty

	Level of Leadership					
	Position	Permission	Production	people development	Pinnacle	Level of Leadership
Job Embeddedness	-.023	.045	.829**	.857**	.572**	.507**
Fit	.128	.358**	.337**	.349**	.336**	.581**
Link	.113	.327**	.317**	.314**	.38**	.290**
Sacrifice	.112	.357**	.332**	.344**	.357**	.374**

**p<.05, **p<.01

Table 7 presents Pearson correlation coefficients between the level of leadership and job embeddedness of college faculty. The table displays the strength and direction of the linear relationship between different aspects of Leadership (Position, Permission, Production, People Development, and Pinnacle) and job embeddedness components (Job et al.). The values range from -1 to +1, where positive values indicate a positive relationship and negative values indicate a negative relationship. Statistically significant correlations are denoted by asterisks, with single asterisks (*) indicating significance at the p<.05 level and double asterisks (**) indicating significance at the more stringent p<.01 level. The analysis reveals strong positive correlations between job embeddedness and specific aspects of leadership, particularly with "People development" and "Pinnacle." However, weaker or non-significant correlations are observed with other aspects of leadership, such as "Position."

Table 8

Results of Multiple Regression Effect of Level of Leadership of College Principals on Job Embeddedness of College Faculty

Variables	B	SE	β	*T*	p-value
(Constant)	2.268	.047		49.329	<.001
Position	-.007	.014	-.007	-.437	.662
Permission	-.011	.010	-.018	-1.07	.278
Production	.118	.017	.267	7.092	<.001
People development	.081	.014	.202	5.494	<.001
Pinnacle	.245	.017	.489	15.135	<.001

Note. R^2=.794

The table above presents the results of a regression analysis investigating the relationship between various independent variables—Position, Permission, Production, People Development, and Pinnacle—and a dependent variable denoted as B. Each row displays the unstandardized coefficients (B), standard errors (SE), standardised coefficients (β), t- statistics, and corresponding p-values. Production, People Development, and Pinnacle show statistically significant positive coefficients among the independent variables (0.118, 0.081, 0.245, respectively), indicating that these factors are associated with increases in the dependent variable. Conversely, Position and Permission exhibit coefficients close to zero, with p- p-values greater than .05, suggesting that they do not significantly predict changes in the dependent variable. These findings indicate that Production, People Development, and Pinnacle are influential factors affecting the dependent variable, while Position and Permission do not significantly impact this analysis.

$JE = B0 + B1pos + B2Per. + B3Prod. + B4PD + B5PI + e$ $JE = 2.26 - .006\ Pos - .010\ Per. - .117 Prod.$

+ .080*PD* + .246*PI*

*Note JE=Job Embeddedness, Pos=Position, Per=Permission, PD=People Development, PI=Pinnacle.

Five assumptions of Linear Regression, i.e., a linear relationship, multivariate normality, no or little multicollinearity, no auto-correlation, and homoscedasticity. All the assumptions were fulfilled.

Discussion

The present research analyses the outcome of the stages of leadership in the faculty JE. The demographics of educational organizations are changing, and it has become more complex. It is challenging for academia and heads of higher education institutes to cope with these modern challenges. Scarce studies can be found on this topic. More than the evidence presented in earlier research is needed to study the variables of this research. By using this new dimension of measuring leadership level in the light of John Maxwell's approach, many new avenues for future research are opened. The results of this study provided exciting facts. A survey by Ghaffar and Khan (2018) and Sakinah et al. (2023) provided information that females are usually less embedded, but this study provided contradictory facts. The research by Sharma and Kirkman (2015) confirmed that marital status positively correlates with leave intentions and low job embeddedness; this study confirms this. As a maiden research in this field, it has provided basic information about these variables and their mutual relationship. Studying these constructs and the effect of different demographics on leadership and job embeddedness is essential.

The perception of culture at all levels of education should be explored. The same is true in the case of Maxwell's leadership model. Levels of leadership positively affect attachment to the faculty job. Its reasons should be explored in a cross-cultural context as well.

Conclusion

The research concludes that these relatively new constructs must be investigated in depth using the effects of different demographics and cultures. Measuring levels of leadership is a new phenomenon. The principals reported being eager to enable faculty to be professionally groomed and advanced. They help them out in this task. Further studies should explore ways to allow principals and stakeholders to make professional development plans for faculty. Easy and better policies should be made to improve the embeddedness level of female college faculty members.

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