

The Prevailing Leadership Style in State Administrations A Case Study of Employees within the Financial Oversight of Ghardaia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the prevailing leadership style among financial oversight employees in the province of Ghardaia. A questionnaire was conducted to a sample of 89 employees, adopting a descriptive research approach. Following a statistical analysis of the data, the findings indicate that while there is no particular leadership style that is the most dominant, the democratic style significantly manifested as the most prevailing compared to other administrative leadership styles among financial oversight employees in the municipality.

Keywords

Administrative leadership styles (democratic style, autocratic style, laissez-faire style); prevailing leadership style.

Introduction

Resources are deemed one of the most valuable assets within administrative organizations, for their role in the success, efficiency, sustainability, and growth of these organizations. Additionally, they are the most complex resource, as they are subject to numerous internal and external influences. Human nature causes employees to respond variably to these influences, resulting in differing behaviors. Studies on human behavior within organizations have garnered significant attention from researchers in the field of management, focusing on employee behaviors and attitudes, performance, environmental impacts, and the effects of these factors on organizational performance and effectiveness. Human resources require effective administrative leadership capable of preserving and benefiting from these assets, especially in today's world characterized by rapid developments and changes across various fields. Administrative leadership serves as a central pillar upon which all activities in organizations are based. The leadership style performed by a leader is a fundamental factor in the success or failure of an organization, as it influences employees' behaviors in both their formal and informal roles. This highlights the role of the administrative

leader, who must be aware of their employees' behaviors in order to guide them towards achieving both organizational goals and their personal objectives.

In the context of the public sector in Algeria, there is currently a pressing need for individuals who can deliver excellence in order to keep pace with technological advancements and ongoing administrative reforms, both at the organizational level and in human resource management.

Research Question

This research revolves around the following questions: What is the prevailing leadership style in financial oversight institutions of Ghardaia province?

Research hypothesis

The prevailing leadership style in the financial oversight institutions of Ghardaia province is the democratic style.

Research objectives

Every scientific research has a goal it endeavors to achieve and aims to clarify the ambiguities

surrounding it. In this context, the objectives of our study are as follows:

- To identify the prevailing leadership style in the financial oversight institutions of Ghardaia province.
- To determine whether there have been efforts made by managers to create a work environment characterized by teamwork and cooperation that meets the psychological and economic needs of employees. This involves assessing the extent to which theoretical ideas align with reality by addressing the issue in the field, understanding it, and analyzing and interpreting it through field data.

Research significance

Scientifically

We have observed from the previous literature a divergence of opinions regarding the leadership style adopted by senior leadership among subordinates in various environments. Consequently, the results of this study will serve as additional support and reinforcement for one of the existing viewpoints found in earlier research on leadership styles in a new context, specifically within public administrative institutions (the financial oversight sector of Ghardaia province).

Practically

This study contributes to increasing the awareness of managers in public administrative institutions, as well as budget oversight institutions (financial controllers in Ghardaia province), regarding the foundations, principles, and positive aspects of administrative leadership. This awareness encourages them to focus on applying these principles, which will positively impact their subordinates (employees). Furthermore, this research may contribute in understanding the leadership role and its various styles, as well as their impact on employees. This knowledge directly influences performance and, consequently, affects public administration and its sustainability in general.

The theoretical Framework of the Study

Administrative Leadership

Fleish defined it as: "the continuous effort to influence individuals and persuade them to accept work in order to achieve the organization's goals according to the style determined by the leader. (2003, p. 34). On this part, North House defined it as "a guiding and influencing process over the activities and tasks required from members of work groups." (Cited in Belout, 2005, p. 416). Overall, it is the guidance of individuals' behaviors, coordination of their efforts, and balancing their motivations and desires in order to lead the group to achieve the organization's goals efficiently. This can only be achieved through the voluntary compliance of group members to the administrative leader, due to the characteristics, qualities, and abilities they possess, as well as favorable conditions that help them influence the group. (Al-Badri, 2002, p. 28).

Styles of Administrative Leadership

There are several classifications of leadership styles based on different criteria. According to the classical classification, which is one of the most common, leaders are categorized based on their style and method of influence. This classification limits leadership styles to three types: the democratic style, the autocratic style, and the laissez-faire style.

The autocratic style

The autocratic style is considered a leader-centered approach where the leader exclusively makes decisions and sets policies and plans without involving subordinates. The autocratic leader concentrates most of the authority and powers in their hands, while the execution of their orders and instructions is left to subordinates, who are subject to strict supervision and monitoring. (Hassan, 2004, p. 71)

The democratic style

The democratic style is based on involving subordinates in decision-making, allowing room for initiative and creativity, and recognizing their efforts. The leader exercises general supervision to motivate them to increase productivity, relying

on influence rather than using formal authority to engage them and establish two-way communication. Theoretically, the democratic leadership style encourages subordinates to work as a cohesive unit to maximize the mental and physical potential of employees, resulting in a high sense of belonging that drives them to enhance their efficiency and improve their performance. Thus, democratic leadership fundamentally relies on human relationships, participation, and delegation of authority.

The laissez-faire style (chaotic or anarchism)

Under the laissez-faire style, the leader does not possess an official authority but serves as a symbol of the organization, granting complete freedom to subordinates in determining their goals and making decisions related to their work. The laissez-faire leader believes that developing subordinates' abilities and increasing their potential in the workplace is achieved by providing them with full freedom to exercise authority and complete independence in accomplishing their tasks. Therefore, the laissez-faire leader focuses on providing general guidance to subordinates through vague instructions and general observations, allowing them to set their own goals within the framework of the organization's overall objectives. (Kanaan, 1999, p. 244)

Research Method

We have chosen the descriptive approach as a suitable methodology for this study, which focuses on examining the phenomenon as it exists in reality. It aims to provide a precise description of the phenomenon, expressing it both qualitatively and quantitatively. Furthermore, it does merely collect information related to the phenomenon; it also analyzes the data, revealing its various relationships to interpret it and reach conclusions that contribute to improving and developing the reality. (Obaidat et al., 1999)

Population

The community selected for this study to achieve its objectives consists of all employees of the Regional Directorate of Budget in Ouargla, Ghardaïa province. This includes four municipal financial oversights: (Metlili, El Meniâ, Ghardaïa, El Guerara, and the Province of Ghardaïa itself). The total number of employees in these oversight institutions is estimated to be 89. The following table illustrates this:

Table 1 Distribution of items of the original population depending on the financial oversight institution

Financial Oversight	Original Population	Percentage
Financial Oversight of El Meniâ Municipality	17	19%
Financial Oversight of Metlili Municipality	19	21%
Financial Oversight of Ghardaïa Municipality	12	14%
Financial Oversight of El Guerara Municipality	10	11%
Financial Oversight of the Province of Ghardaïa	31	35%
Total	89	100%

We can observe from the table above that the financial oversight of Ghardaïa province is the largest in the municipality in terms of the number of employees, with a total of 31 employees, representing 35% of the total, followed by the municipality of Metlili with 19 employees, accounting for 21%. In the third place comes the municipality of El Meniâ with 17 employees, representing 19%. The fourth position is held by the financial oversight of Ghardaïa municipality with 12 employees, making up 14%. Finally, the municipality of El-Qarara comes in fifth place with 10 employees, representing 11%.

Sample

The study population, as previously mentioned, consists of employees of the financial oversight institutions affiliated with the Regional Directorate of Budget in Ouargla (Province of Ghardaïa, municipality of Metlili, municipality of El Meniâ, Municipality of Ghardaïa, and municipality of El Guerara). The total number of employees is estimated to be 89, according to statistics recorded on December 31, 2018. It was

decided to select the sample as a whole, comprising all 89 employees. They were selected using a comprehensive sampling method based on ease of access to them, as well as the small size of the original population, ultimately forming the total number of the primary sample (see Table 02).

Table 2 Distribution of the original population items and the sample size from each financial oversight institution

Financial Oversight	Original Population	Size of the sample representing the population	Percentage
El Menia Municipality	17	17	19.10%
Metili Municipality	19	19	21.34%
Ghardaia Municipality	12	12	13.48%
El Guerara Municipality	10	10	11.23%
Province of Ghardaia	31	31	34.83%
Total	89	89	100%

It is worth noting that this study was actually conducted at five financial oversight institutions located within the Province of Ghardaia.

Characteristics of the Research Sample

Based on the collected questionnaires, the characteristics of the study sample can be shown as follows:

Distribution of the sample according to gender

Table 3 Distribution of sample according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	36	47%
Male	40	53%
Total	76	100%

The table above shows that the number of females reached 36, representing 47%, while the number of males was estimated at 40, representing 53%. Therefore; it is evident that the percentage of males exceeds that of females.

Distribution of sample according to seniority

Table 4 Distribution of sample according to seniority

Years of seniority	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5	20	26.31%
More than 5	56	73.69%
Total	76	100%

It can be observed from the table above that the category of employees with less than five years of service consists of 20 employees, representing 26.31%, which is the lowest percentage of the sample size. In contrast, employees with five years of service or more total 56, accounting for 73.69%. This indicates that the majority of the surveyed employees belong to the category with five years of service or more.

Distribution of sample according to age

Table 5 Distribution of sample according to age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 36 years	44	58%
More than 36 years	32	42%
Total	76	100%

We can observe from the results of the table above that the number of individuals under the age of 36 is 44, representing 58%. Meanwhile, those aged 36 and above total 32, accounting for 42%. This indicates that the number of employees working in financial oversight who are under 36 years old is greater than those who are 36 years old or older.

Research Tools and its Psychometrics Properties

In any research, the researcher should choose appropriate tools for data collection and analysis, based on the nature of the research and the objectives that they seek to achieve through the study. Accordingly, a specific questionnaire on administrative leadership and was conducted for that reason, and here are its characteristics:

Research Tools

A questionnaire titled "Administrative Leadership" has been developed according to the following stages:

- **Previously applied Questionnaires:** Some previously applied questionnaires were used and modified to fit the studied sample. The questionnaire was then presented to specialists for their opinions and feedback. Additionally, a validity and reliability test was conducted by distributing it to a random sample, after which the questionnaire was finalized in its completed form.

- **Questionnaire on Administrative Leadership:** This questionnaire was conducted to identify the prevailing leadership style at the level of financial oversight in the Ghardaïa province, as well as to understand the relationship between different administrative leadership styles. The items in this questionnaire are distributed across three dimensions:

- **The Autocratic Style Dimension:** This dimension includes 8 items, which are: (4, 8, 11, 15, 18, 21, 23, 26). It focuses on concentrating authority in the hands of the manager or leader, the necessity of obedience from all employees to their orders, and the strict implementation of laws, among other aspects.

- **The Democratic Style Dimension:** This dimension includes 10 items, which are: (1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 13, 16, 20, 25, 27). It focuses on understanding employees' feelings regarding interpersonal relationships with those they interact with in the work environment, their sense of belonging, participation in decision-making, and recognition of individual differences, among other aspects.

- **The Laissez-Faire Style Dimension:** This dimension includes 9 items, which are: (3, 6, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 22, 24). It revolves around the absence of intervention by the manager or leader in employees' performance, focusing on satisfying all workers, as well as the potential for laxity within the administration, among other aspects.

The Correction Method

The weights of the items in the Administrative Leadership Scale are distributed on a scale of one to five, as follows: Strongly agree (1 degree), disagree (2 degrees), neutral (3 degrees), agree (4

degrees), strongly agree (5 degrees). Thus, the maximum score for the questionnaire is $(27 \times 5 = 135)$ and the minimum score is $27 \times 1 = 27$.

Psychometric Properties of the Research Tools of the Administrative Leadership Questionnaire:

- Reliability of the Administrative Leadership Questionnaire

The reliability of the Administrative Leadership Questionnaire was confirmed using the internal consistency validity method and the criterion-related comparison method.

- Reliability of Internal Consistency

After calculating the correlation coefficient (Pearson's correlation coefficient) between each item and the total score of the dimension to which it belongs. The results are shown in the following table based on the dimension order:

- The first dimension: The Autocratic Leadership

Table 6 Values of the correlation coefficients between the level of each item and the total level of the first dimension (The Autocratic Leadership)

Number	Item	The Correlation Coefficient Value	Statistical Significance
04	The director prioritizes the fulfillment of tasks over employees.	0.666**	Significant
08	The director retains all the powers of the work at his hands	0.477**	Significant
11	The director uses pressure and threats on employees to perform their work.	0.719**	Significant
15	The director considers discussion and exchanging opinions with employees a waste of time.	0.619**	Significant
18	The director gives instructions and insists on their implementation, regardless of the employees' opinion.	0.538**	Significant
21	The director intervenes in the way tasks are fulfilled to make sure the work is done	0.134**	Significant
23	The director does not consider organizing meetings, and when they occur, they are ineffective due to poor organization.	0.618*	Significant
26	The director prioritizes improving their position at the expense of work and employees.	0.591**	Significant

It is clear from the table above that all correlation coefficients between the score of each item and the overall score of the dimension to which it belongs are statistically significant, where the values of the correlation coefficients in this dimension ranged between 0.134 and 0.744.

- The Second Dimension: The democratic style

Table 7 Values of the correlation coefficients between the level of each item and the total level of the second dimension (The democratic style)

Number	Item	The Correlation Coefficient Value	Statistical Significance
01	The director involves employees in the decision-making process.	0.611**	Significant
02	The director delegates part of his authority to some employees according to their responsibilities.	0.504**	Significant
05	The director works to coordinate efforts and cooperation between employees.	0.445**	Significant
07	The director seeks to develop employees' skills and abilities to raise their standards.	0.953**	Significant
09	The director provides employees with an opportunity to discuss work problems to address them.	0.915**	Significant
13	The director gives employees the opportunity to communicate with him easily.	0.806**	Significant
16	The director is keen on objectivity and fairness when evaluating employees.	0.905*	Significant
20	The director considers employees' abilities and capabilities when distributing tasks.	0.850**	Significant
25	The director balances between work requirements and employee needs.	0.881**	Significant
27	The director seeks to program training courses for all	0.874**	

It can be observed from the results included in the table above that the values of the correlation coefficients between the score of each item and the overall score of the dimension to which it belongs are statistically significant, where the values of the correlation coefficients in this dimension ranged between 0.445 and 0.953.

- The third dimension: The laissez-faire style

Table 8 Values of the correlation coefficients between the level of each item and the total level of the third dimension (The laissez-faire style)

Number	Item	The Correlation Coefficient Value	Statistical Significance
03	The director provides advisory support to employees when submitting their requests.	0.262**	Significant
06	The director is lenient with employees who are deficient in performing their work.	0.790**	Significant
10	The director does not have a clear policy for monitoring and following up on employees' work.	0.32**	Significant
12	The director leaves the task of solving work problems to the employees.	0.494**	Significant
14	The director allows employees the freedom to choose tasks and methods of accomplishing them.	0.310**	Significant
17	The director seeks to satisfy all employees.	0.316**	Significant
19	The director gives employees great freedom in making appropriate decisions for them.	0.476*	Significant
22	The director makes decisions unilaterally without considering the opinions of others.	0.350**	Significant
24	The director does not care about holding meetings, and if they are held, they are ineffective due to poor organization.	0.392**	Significant

It can be observed from the results included in the table above that the values of the correlation coefficients between the score of each item and the overall score of the dimension to which it belongs are statistically significant, where the values of the correlation coefficients in this dimension ranged between 0.310 and 0.790.

The divergent validity

This method is based on one of the concepts of validity, which is the ability of the questionnaire to distinguish between the two extremes of the properties it measures. Perhaps the most distinctive classification of levels of excellence is the one that divides the scale into upper and lower extremes, where 33% of the excellent end (upper section) and 33% of the weak end (lower section) are taken.

Table 9 Results of the divergent validity of the tool

	n	Arithmetic mean	Standard variation	Degree of freedom	Calculated T-value	Tabulated T-value	Statistical significance
Upper group	09	98.44	6.55	16	6.53	2.92	Significant at 0.01
Lower group	09	76.88	7.40				

It can be observed from the table that the calculated value of "t" (6.53) is greater than the tabled "t" (2.92), and it is significant at (0.01). Thus, the questionnaire clearly distinguishes between the two groups, indicating that the questionnaire has discriminative power and, therefore, a degree of validity.

Validity of Administrative Leadership Questionnaire

Validity, in short, is the assurance of obtaining the same results if the test is re-administered to the same individual or group. In this study, the validity of the administrative leadership questionnaire was confirmed through two methods, which are:

Split-half validity (the first and second half)

The test is divided into two equal parts, and the test of the current study is composed of 27 items, where the first half includes items 1 to 14, and the second half includes items 15 to 27.

Table 10 Results of the split-half validity

Correlation coefficient	Before adjustment	After adjustment	Level of significance
Administrative Leadership	0.41	0.58	Significant at 0.01

We can observe from this table that the correlation coefficient reached 0.41, and after adjustment with the Guttman's coefficient, it increased to

0.58, which is significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that the questionnaire is valid.

Validity using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the administrative leadership questionnaire was estimated at 0.65, which is significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, the questionnaire possesses a high degree of validity.

Applying the Study Tools

After obtaining approval from the administration of each financial oversight office to conduct the study, the exploratory study phase was conducted to ensure the psychometric properties of the study tools. The final version of the data collection instruments was prepared for application on the final sample, which consisted of 89 individuals. It should be noted that initial approval was obtained from the regional budget director in Ouargla, followed by approval from the financial controllers of the municipalities of El Ménia, Metlili, Ghardaïa, El Guerara and the province Ghardaïa,. Subsequently, the distribution process took place among the final sample by approaching various departments within each financial oversight office. Contact was made with the heads of the offices to request permission to initiate the process of contacting the employees present in the department and distributing the questionnaire to them. Personal contact was then made to explain the instructions and the response method. During the distribution process, an agreement was reached with each financial oversight office on a suitable date for returning and collecting the questionnaires. A total of 76 copies were retrieved, noting that no copies were discarded.

Limits of the study

- **Human limits:** The study was applied on a sample of financial oversight employees in the province of Ghardaïa, totaling 89 employees.
- **Time limits:** The field study was conducted during the academic year (2023), from March to April of the same year.
- **Spatial limits:** The study was conducted in five financial oversight in the province of Ghardaïa.

Statistical analysis tools

After collecting the questionnaires, the data was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program, and the results were analyzed using appropriate statistical tests. This was done to ensure the psychometric properties of the study tools on one hand, and to test the formulated hypotheses on the other. Based on this, the statistical processing tools utilized were as follows:

- **Pearson Correlation Coefficient** to assess the validity of the study tool.
- **Cronbach's Alpha** to measure the validity of the study tool.
- **Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation**

Results & Discussions

To answer the hypothesis stating that the prevailing leadership style in financial oversight institutions is the democratic leadership style, we relied on the mean and standard deviation for each dimension, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 9 Results of the hypothesis

Administrative Leadership Styles	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Importance Ranking
Democratic Leadership Style	37.50	7.73	01
Laissez-faire Leadership Style	28.40	5.03	02
Autocratic Leadership Style	24.60	5.36	03

It becomes clear from the table that the three administrative leadership styles are practiced in the financial oversight of the Ghardaïa province. However, at the level of styles, the degree of practice varies, with the democratic leadership style coming first with an arithmetic mean of 37.50, followed by the laissez-faire leadership style in second place with an arithmetic mean of 28.40, and then the autocratic leadership style in third place with an arithmetic mean of 24.60.

The hypothesis states that the prevailing leadership style in the financial oversight institutions of Ghardaïa Province is the democratic style. The results indicate that there is no predominant leadership style, although the democratic style surpasses other administrative leadership styles. These findings align with the study by Alya Tahtouh (2016) titled "The Impact

of Administrative Leadership Styles on Organizational Citizenship Behavior – An Empirical Study on Female Employees of King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah," which demonstrated that the democratic leadership style ranks first, followed by the laissez-faire style, and then the autocratic style. The researcher believes that the human role of a director or a leader is not limited to their relationships with subordinates but also includes their role as a subordinate subject to higher authorities. This is referred to as the role of subordination, which requires the leader to maintain a balance between directives received from higher authorities and those given to their subordinates. Through the leader's practice of the three leadership styles mentioned, it can be concluded that the autocratic leadership style is characterized by their exclusive authority. Studies by Lewin et al have shown that autocratic leaders tend to be harsh and rigid in their dealings with subordinates. In contrast, the democratic style is based on the principle of involving subordinates in the decision-making process, while the laissez-faire style allows complete freedom for subordinates to set their goals and make decisions related to their work.

It can also be asserted that a leader who employs various leadership styles demonstrates an awareness and understanding of the situations that call for the appropriate style. This adaptability is embraced by modern organizations, as autocratic leadership ensures subordinates' loyalty in executing decisions (Maher, 2004). Conversely, the democratic style aims to foster creativity among human resources, as highlighted in the study by Driouche Chahinez (2011-2012) titled "The Impact of Organizational Leadership on the Development of Human Resource Creativity."

Studies have revealed that the positive effects and advantages of the democratic style contribute to boosting morale, creating a positive social environment, and deepening the sense of belonging to the group, while also providing psychological stability and security for employees. From another perspective, the researcher believes, based on situational theory, that the leadership style varies depending on the maturity of subordinates (employees) and the demands of the situation. In this context, it can be

said that a leader must possess flexibility and a high level of necessary skills to diversify their behavior according to the changing needs of their employees. According to Hersey and Blanchard's theory, an effective leader is one who can diagnose the requirements of the situation, determine the maturity level of their subordinates, and adapt their leadership style accordingly. Therefore; The researcher believes that the study's finding of no predominant leadership style merely reinforces support for situational theory, while also reflecting the leader's awareness and understanding of the leadership role they play.

Conclusion

The current study is deemed one of the most important behavioral studies in the field of industrial and organizational psychology, as it focuses on examining organizational psychological phenomena within the environment of organizations. This discipline also provides solutions to the problems faced by human resources, whether they are leaders or subordinates. The topic of the current study was addressed due to its significant importance in the field of organizational behavior, specifically concerning the prevailing leadership style among employees of the financial oversight offices in Ghardaïa Province. Through this study, the nature of the prevailing leadership style was revealed. After discussions of data, the most significant finding of this research is that there is no predominant leadership style in the Regional Directorate of Budget in Ouargla, as all three styles are practiced by the director, with a notable emphasis on the democratic style over the others. In light of the obtained results and the conclusions drawn by the researcher, several recommendations can be proposed, which we hope will contribute to the development and modernization of the administrative field in general and human resource management in particular:

- Enhancing the practice of democratic leadership in all its aspects, particularly by involving employees in decision-making. Implement intensive training programs aimed at improving and developing skills, while also

focusing on the human and social aspects of employees.

- Making more efforts and exercise careful consideration when nominating and selecting suitable administrative leaders according to fair and objective criteria and standards.
- Encouraging directors to create an organizational environment that fosters and enhances voluntary behaviors among employees.
- Adopting Islamic Principles and the leadership model of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), characterized by justice and compassion.

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