



# The Application of Leadership Styles in Higher Learning Institutions: A Case Study of the University College of Bahrain

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**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the dominant leadership styles applied at the University College of Bahrain (UCB) and compare them with the international best practices. All 35 UCB employees participated in the survey agreed that the dominant leadership style applied by UCB management is the transformational leadership style. Comparing the results of the survey with the practices according to literature, it is found that transformational leadership style is the best leadership style to be applied in a higher learning institution. Thus, the current UCB leadership style is already good enough since transformational leadership has been found by many studies to have a positive relationship with job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction has a positive relationship with the overall performance of an organization. Therefore, UCB management needs to maintain the current leadership style and enhance its practices for a better result. This study fills the gap in the literature of leadership since it is conducted in a higher education institution in Bahrain. This study can be used as a reference for further studies and as an input for UCB management to come out with strategic decisions to improve the college's performance.

**Keywords:** Leadership Styles, Higher Learning Institution; University College of Bahrain.

## 1. Introduction

In today's time, the topic of leadership is very important in any modern organizations since it has enormous impact on employee's behavior and action (Seokhwa, 2007). It is also found that a leadership style has a direct impact on employees' job satisfaction and retaining employees' satisfaction determines an organization's success (Cordeiro, 2010). The same case also applies to the higher learning institutions such as the universities and colleges. It is important for a university or a college leader to create an environment that helps faculty members and administrative staff fulfilling their interest and potential in their works (Bryman, 2007).

Wong and Heng (2009) found that retaining faculty members through effective leadership

style results in cost minimization and productivity improvement. On the other hand, ineffective leadership style, which creates faculty members' dissatisfaction, has resulted in a salary premium for the universities or colleges around the world. Therefore, it is very important for any higher learning institutions to know what type of leadership style is dominantly applied at their organizations and evaluate whether the leadership style is already effective or not for their respective organizations.

Despite the importance of understanding the leadership style, there are relatively limited numbers of studies that discuss the application of leadership style in the higher learning institutions especially in the developing countries (Alonderiene and Majauskaite, 2016). Kingdom of Bahrain, being one of the developing countries,



is not an exception in this case. To the best knowledge of the author, there is no prior study that evaluates any application of leadership style in a higher learning institution in the kingdom. It is important to note that Bahrain is regarded as one of the educational hubs in the gulf region. The kingdom was the first state in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that established formal education in 1919. However, the first higher learning institution in Bahrain was only established in 1978 with the setting up of the University College of Arts, Science and Education<sup>1</sup>.

Up to 2016, there are 16 higher learning institutions in Bahrain consisting of 4 public funded and 12 private universities or colleges<sup>2</sup>. One of the leading private colleges in the kingdom is University College of Bahrain (UCB). UCB was founded by Dr. Khalid M. Al-Khalifa, a member of Bahrain ruling family in 2002. The college is specialized in three academic areas namely business administration, multimedia and communication, and information technology<sup>3</sup>. Like other higher learning institutions in Bahrain, UCB is embracing the culture of quality assurance in its operation. The college is committed toward continuous quality improvement. For example, UCB has a specialized directorate for quality assurance which is a part of the college's corporate governance.

Despite the improvement in many areas, according to a report released by the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) in 2010, there are several issues that need to be tackled by higher learning education in Bahrain in order to excel. One of the issues is governance and management<sup>4</sup> which is very much dependent on the leadership style applied. For that reason, this study aims to evaluate the application of leadership styles in the University College of Bahrain (UCB). In other words, the objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To investigate the dominant leadership style adopted in UCB as per the employees' opinion.
2. To comparatively discuss the application of leadership style in UCB with the

ideal leadership style for higher learning institutions according to the literature.

This study is important for UCB management since this study provides the management with an input to make strategic decisions to improve the effectiveness of leadership in UCB. This study is also useful for other higher learning institutions in Bahrain and other GCC countries as a reference for them in order to conduct a similar study within their organizations. It is important to note that knowing the dominant leadership style adopted by your organization is crucial for the collective success of the organization.

## 2. Literature Review

This section discusses three important leadership styles applied in any organizations and provides with some previous studies which discuss the application of leadership styles in higher learning institutions from all over the world.

### 2.1 Leadership Styles

According to the contemporary literature, there are three leadership styles which are dominantly applied in any organizations namely, transactional, transformational and empowering leadership styles (Selart and Johannesen, 2011).

Transactional leadership style is built on the assumption that leaders expect employees to perform beyond expectations. This leadership style is found to fall in the traditional, bureaucratic authority and legitimacy where employees praised with certain valued outcomes if they act according to the leader's wishes (Schermerhorn et al., 2000). Transactional leadership style is based on implicit agreement between a leader and his or her followers. In this style, the leaders clarify their expectations and wishes to the employees. Transactional leaders use both rewards and punishments to influence employees' performance (Tracey & Hinkin, 1998; Trott & Windsor, 1999). Hater and Bass (1988) focus only the reward side and said "Transactional leaders clarify the task requirements and the rewards for compliance and hard efforts to their followers". The authors further explain that when



employees perform tasks “as related to the leader’s wishes”, their efforts are positively rewarded. Howell & Costley (2001) supported Hater and Bass (1988) and quoted as transactional leadership is based on a rational exchange relationship between a leader and his or her followers.

Transactional style has three dimensions namely (a) active management, (b) contingent reward and (c) passive management by exception (Schermerhorn et al., 2000; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998):

- (a) Active management-by-exception: The leader anticipates in evaluating and monitoring followers’ performance and taking the necessary corrective action to solve problems whenever it occurs.
- (b) Contingent rewards or reinforcement: The leader provides rewards and praises the hard worker who achieves high performance as compared to other employees.
- (c) Passive management-by exception: The leader explain his wishes and wait passively for the outcomes. When the results are unfavorable or not as planned, leader provides negative feedback before taking the necessary and corrective actions.

Transformational leadership style is based on the beliefs that leaders inspire the followers to achieve common goals and objectives in the organization (Burns, 1978). Leaders who tend to use transformational style facilitate new understandings by enhancing or altering awareness of the issues. Transformational leaders promote inspiration and excitement when they assign tasks to followers, so they enhance followers to add extra efforts to achieve common goals. Transformational leaders make followers believe in the importance of the work they do to their both organizational and self-developments. Cheng et. al (2003) supports that transformational leaders are smart in inspiring and stimulating employees and creating highly captivating and motivating vision.

Zheng and Grobmeier (2010) argued that transformational leaders have three dimensions

which are (a) inspirational leadership, (b) individualized appreciation, and (c) intellectual stimulation:

- (a) Inspirational leadership: The leader inspires subordinates to add extra efforts in achieving the organizational goals, provides meanings for their engaging and arouses team spirit through passion and cheerfulness.
- (b) Individualized appreciation: The leader appreciates individual needs, and their uniqueness situation. Leaders therefore links the individuals’ current situation and needs to the organization needs and provides valuable supporting and coaching, personnel growth.
- (c) Intellectual stimulation: The leader promotes employees to develop their skills, capabilities and problem solving by enhancing and encouraging the creativity and innovation.

The final leadership style is empowering leadership style. Leaders who adopt this style emphasized on the followers’ self-influence rather than external, top-down influence (Yun et. Al, 2005). Leaders persuade followers to a high degree of freedom to act based on their judgments since leaders believe that followers were an influential source of wisdom and direction. Empowering leaders stress on self-influence; self-management; self-control; and self-leadership in which employees act as leaders (Ahearne et. al, 2005). Empowering leaders consider the importance of creating effective self-leaders in the firm in which employees act as true leaders in managing their works. The concept of “Self-leadership” implies that employees involved in developing actions and participating in various decision-making process in the organization. Studies like Ahearne et. al (2005) and Yun et.al, (2005) confirmed that empowering leadership is a distinct from transformational and other leadership due to the high focusing on self-managing.

## 2.2 Previous Studies in the Application of Leadership in Higher Learning Institutions:

Based on the available literature, it is found that there are many studies that



discuss the application of leadership styles across organizations worldwide including its application in the higher learning institutions. For example, Al-Omari (2007) examined the application of leadership styles in the Hashemite University of Jordan from the perspectives of the faculty members and the department chairs themselves. The study used a survey questionnaire as its research instrument. 413 faculty members and 35 head of departments participated in the survey. In this study, the leadership styles were discussed in the form of task-oriented and human relation-oriented styles instead of classifying them into transactional, transformational and empowering leadership styles. The study concludes that there is a balance of task-oriented and human relation-oriented leadership styles applied by the department chairs at the Hashemite University of Jordan. Task-oriented is closed to transactional style while human relation-oriented is closed to transformational style.

Al-Omari et. al (2008) extended their previous studies by examining the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction according to the perspectives of faculty members and the department chairs at the Hashemite University of Jordan. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between both task-oriented and human relation-oriented styles with overall faculty members' job satisfaction in the university. Hukpati (2009) empirically tested the relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction of faculty members across public and private higher learning institutions in Ghana. 74 faculty members and 12 heads of department participated in the survey. The study concluded that there is a positive correlation between transformational leadership style and overall faculty members' job satisfaction.

Sung et. al (2009) empirically evaluated the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles on faculty members' job satisfaction among the universities in Taiwan. 150 faculty members from universities across

Taiwan participated in the survey. The study concluded that transformational leadership style is perceived to be better style to achieve high job satisfaction than transactional leadership style. Munir et. al (2012) also examined the relationship between transformational leadership style and faculty members' job satisfaction in the four affiliated colleges of Mara University of Technology in Malaysia. 214 faculty members from the 4 colleges participated in the survey. The results again confirmed a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and overall faculty members' job satisfaction.

Amin (2013) evaluated the opinion of faculty members in a public university of Pakistan about the impact of leadership style on faculty job satisfaction. All 287 faculty members of the university participated in the survey. The results of the survey indicate a positive influence of transformational leadership style on overall employee's job satisfaction and the relationship is Statistically significant. On the other hand, transactional leadership style is found to negatively significantly influence on the overall job satisfaction and considered as the least desired leadership style to be applied in a higher learning institution. For the empowering leadership style (*laissez- faire*), the study also found a positive relationship between the style and overall job satisfaction. However, it is not statistically significant.

Bateh and Heyliger (2014) identified the leadership style of administrators in the State University System of Florida, the USA from the perspective of faculty members. A survey questionnaire was employed as the research instrument of the study. 104 faculty members participated in the survey and the data gathered are analyzed using weighted average/mean in order to reveal the dominant leadership style applied in the institution. The survey results reveal that transformational leadership style is the dominant style applied in the institution as shown by the weighted mean of 3.77. Empowering or passive leadership is perceived as the second dominant leadership style applied in the institution with weighted mean of 3.33. For the transactional



leadership, it stood at the least applied leadership style in the institution scoring only 0.81. The study also reveals that transformational leadership style helps the institution in improving the employees' job satisfaction.

Based on the above studies, it can be concluded that leadership styles do influence overall job satisfaction of faculty members. Therefore, identifying the dominant leadership applied within a higher learning institution is important. It also can be concluded from the above studies that transformational leadership style is the best style to be applied in a higher learning institution since it is found to have the highest positive influence on overall job satisfaction of faculty members. This study adds value to the above previous studies by examining the dominant leadership style applied in the University College of Bahrain (UCB). To the best knowledge of the author, there is no prior study conducted in this regard in UCB and probably no prior study has been conducted in other higher learning institutions in Bahrain. Therefore, this study fills the gap in the literature of leadership across higher learning institutions.

### 3. Research Methodology:

This section discusses the research design, method, instrument, data collection and statistical tools employed by this study.

#### 3.1 Research Design, Method and Instrument:

This study is a descriptive type of study discussing the opinion of UCB's faculty members and administrative staff on the dominant leadership style applied in the university. Like other previous studies, this study utilizes quantitative research method using questionnaire as its research instrument (Al-Omari, 2007; Al-Omari, 2008; Hukpati, 2009; Sun et. al, 2009; Munir et.al, 2012; Amin, 2013; Batih and Heyliger, 2014).

The questionnaire consists of 2 sections namely the demographic profile of the respondents and 10 leadership statements reflecting each leadership style. The first section consists of gender, age, faculty or

administrative staff, and length of service. In the second section, 10 statements reflecting the three leadership styles namely transformational, transactional and empowering leadership styles are presented in the sequence of Statements no 1-3 reflect transactional, Statements no 4-7 reflect transformational, and 8-10 reflect empowering styles. The statements are as follows:

1. Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) continuously motivates employees through a system of rewards and punishments.
2. Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) immediately interferes and takes a corrective action when employees do not meet expected performance.
3. Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) clearly clarifies responsibilities of achieving university and the department's missions.
4. Employees are proud and feel comfortable to work with their superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) who communicates organizational values and beliefs.
5. Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) coaches you and other employees towards carrier objectives and encourages development of technical and soft skills.
6. Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) believes that a positive working environment is significant for personal and professional development.
7. Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) is very supportive and provides guidance to inspire personal skills in solving challenging tasks.
8. Employees take self-initiative in solving target tasks and exceeding expectation.
9. Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) offers little or no guidance in achieving tasks and deadlines.
10. Employees are provided with all materials, rights and power to make decisions and achieve goals by their own.



The respondents are given 5-likert scales as follows (Hidayat and Fustenberger, 2016):

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral / I don't know
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

### 3.2 Data Collection and Treatment

Questionnaire was distributed to all employees of UCB and the filled-up questionnaire was used as the data for this study. Microsoft Excel was used to analyze the gathered data. Weighted mean and the frequency distribution percentage of the responses were used as the statistical tools with the below equations:

4. The percentage of each score was computed with the use of this formula:

$$\% \text{ Distribution} = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

where:

$F$  = frequency of an item or response

$N$  = total number of items or responses

5. Weighted Mean – the arithmetical average when all the scores are added and divided by a number of items obtained with the formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

where:

$M$  = Mean

$\sum X$  = sum of scores/measures in the series

$N$  = number of cases

The above equations have been employed by similar studies using survey questionnaire as their research instrument (Hidayat and Al-Hur,

2016 and Hidayat et. al, 2017).

## 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of the survey, their analyses and the dominant leadership style applied in UCB. It is important to note that all full time UCB employees consisting of faculty members and administrative staff were involved in the survey. During the survey period which was taken in the Fall semester 2015-2016 academic year, there were total 35 employees working for UCB (HR Department of UCB)..

### 4.1 Survey Results

In term of demographic profile, UCB is a female dominated institution where around 63% or 22 of its employees are female while only 13 or 37% are male. In term of age group, around 85.7% or 30 employees are in the range of 20-50 which is the productive age group. Only 5 employees or 14.3% are above 50 years old. Most of them are top management of the university.

In term of division between academic (faculty) and administrative staff, UCB has 16 full time faculty members or 46% and 19 administrative staff or 54%. In term of the length of service at the university, the majority of the employees (19 employees or around 54.3%) have been working for more than 5 years. This is a good indicator of employee retention. Based on the result, it is also expected that the majority of the employees are satisfied with their job as shown by their relatively long length of service at the college.

Table 1 below summarizes the demographic profile of UCB employees in terms of gender, age, occupation and length of service. The discussion on the survey results related to the 10 leadership style statements is made directly after the table.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Demographic		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	13	37
	Female	22	63
	Total	35	100%
Age	< 20	0	0
	20-35	16	45.5
	36-50	14	40
	> 50	5	14.3
	Total	35	100%
Occupation	Faculty Member	16	46
	Administrative Staff	19	54
	Total	35	100%
Length of Service	< 1 Year	5	14.3
	1 – 5 Years	11	31.4
	6 – 10 Years	15	42.9
	> 10	4	11.4
	Total	35	100%

In term of leadership style statements, for the first statement, “Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) continuously motivates employees through a system of rewards and Punishment”, the majority of the employees (19 employees or around 54. 3%) agreed with this statement. This statement is an indicator of transactional leadership style. In term of weighted mean, this statement obtained the score of 3.37 which still in the range of “neutral” however quite close to “agree”. Table 2 below summarizes the respondents’ responses to the statement no. 1.

For statement no. 2, “Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) immediately interferes and takes a corrective action when employees do not meet expected performance”, 27 respondents or 77.14% of UCB’s employees agreed with this statement. Again, this statement indicates the application of transactional leadership style in UCB. In term of weighted

mean, the score for this statement is 3.77 which is in the range of “agree”. Table 3 below summarizes the respondents’ responses to the statement no. 2.

**Table 2. Respondents’ Responses to Statement No. 1**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.86
Disagree	7	20
Neutral	8	22.86
Agree	16	45.71
Strongly Agree	3	8.57
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	3.37	

**Table 3. Respondents' Responses to Statement No. 2**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.86
Disagree	3	8.57
Neutral	4	11.43
Agree	22	62.86
Strongly Agree	5	14.28
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	3.77	

**Table 4. Respondents' Responses to Statement No. 3**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.86
Disagree	2	5.71
Neutral	4	11.43
Agree	20	57.14
Strongly Agree	8	22.86
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	3.91	

**Table 5. Overall Scores of Transactional Leadership Style**

Statement	Weighted Mean
No. 1	3.37
No. 2	3.77
No. 3	3.91
Overall	3.68

With regard to statement no. 3, "Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) clearly clarifies responsibilities of achieving university and the department's missions", 80% of the employees or 28 employees agree with this statement indicating the application of transactional leadership style within UCB. In term of weighted mean, this statement scores 3.91 mean which can be interpreted as "agree". Table 4 above summarizes the respondents' responses to the statement no. 3.

For the overall results of the transactional

leadership style, the overall weighted mean is 3.68 with verbal interpretation of "agree". It means UCB employees agree that transactional leadership style is applied within their institutions. Table 5 above summarizes the overall score of the application of transactional leadership style in UCB.

The next 4 statements (Statement 4-7) will reflect the application of transformational leadership style within UCB. For statement no. 4, "Employees are proud and feel comfortable to work with their superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) who communicates organizational values and beliefs", the majority of the employees or 80% of them agree with this statement. This statement indicates the application of transformational leadership style within UCB. In term of weighted mean, this statement scored 4.06 mean which can be interpreted as "agree". Table 6 below summarizes the respondents' responses to statement no. 4.

**Table 6. Respondents' Responses to Statement No.4**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.86
Disagree	3	8.57
Neutral	3	8.57
Agree	14	40
Strongly Agree	14	40
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	4.06	

**Table 7. Respondents' Responses to Statement No. 5**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	5.71
Disagree	2	5.71
Neutral	10	28.58
Agree	18	51.43
Strongly Agree	3	8.57
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	3.54	

For statement no. 5, "Your superior (e.g:





president, HOD, director) coaches you and other employees towards carrier objectives and encourages development of technical and soft skills, 60% of the respondents or 21 employees agreed with this statement. In addition, in term of weighted mean, the score obtained by this statement is 3.54 with verbal interpretation of “agree”. The result shows the application of transformational leadership style within UCB. Table 7 above summarizes the respondents’ responses to statement no. 5.

For statement no. 6, “Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) believes that a positive working environment is significant for personal and professional development”, the majority of UCB employees agree with this statement (27 employees or 77.14%). This indicates the application of transformational leadership style within UCB. In term of the weighted mean, this statement obtains a mean of 3.86 which falls under the range of “agree”. Table 8 below summarizes the respondents’ responses to the statement.

**Table 8. Respondents’ Responses to Statement No.6**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.86
Disagree	2	5.71
Neutral	5	14.29
Agree	20	57.14
Strongly Agree	7	20
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	3.86	

**Table 9. Respondents’ Responses to Statement No. 7**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.86
Disagree	2	5.71
Neutral	12	34.29
Agree	11	31.43
Strongly Agree	9	25.71
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	3.71	

**Table 10. Overall Scores of Transformational Leadership Style**

Statement	Weighted Mean
No. 4	4.06
No. 5	3.54
No. 6	3.86
No. 7	3.71
Overall	3.79

For statement no. 7, “Your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) is very supportive and provides guidance to inspire personal skills in solving challenging tasks”, the majority of UCB employees (20 employees or 57.14%) agreed with this statement indicating the application of transformational leadership style at UCB by its management. In term of the weighted mean, this statement obtained a score of 3.71 with verbal interpretation of “agree”. Table 9 above summarizes the respondents’ responses to statement no.7.

The overall scores for the transformational leadership styles is 3.79 with verbal interpretation “agree”. It indicates that there are elements of transformational leadership applied in UCB by its management (e.g: President, HODs and Directors).

Statement no. 8 “Employees take self-initiative in solving target tasks and exceeding expectation” is related to empowering leadership style. This statement was agreed by 26 UCB employees (74.29%) indicating the application of empowering leadership style at UCB. In term of weighted mean, the statement obtained a score of 3.91 which means “agree”. Again this is indicating the application of the empowering leadership style at UCB. Table 11 below summarizes the respondents’ responses to statement no.8.

With regard to the statement no. 9, “your superior (e.g: president, HOD, director) offers little or no guidance in achieving tasks and deadlines”, most of the respondents disagree with this statement. 19 respondents (58.29%) either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement. This is indicating the less application



of one of the aspects of empowering leadership style at UCB. When it comes to the weighted mean, this statement scores 2.66 which might be interpreted as “neutral”. Table 12 below summarizes the respondents’ responses to statement no.9.

For statement no 10, “employees are provided with all materials, rights and power to make decisions and achieve goals by their own”, the majority of the respondents (13 employees or 37.14 percent) is “neutral” to the statement. They are neither agree nor disagree with the statement. In term of weighted mean, the score for this statement is 3.14 which means also “neutral”. The respondents are not sure this aspect of empowering leadership style applies at UCB. Table 13 below summarizes the respondents’ responses to statement no.10.

**Table 11. Respondents’ Responses to Statement No.8**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	2	5.71
Neutral	7	20
Agree	18	51.43
Strongly Agree	8	22.86
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	3.91	

**Table 12. Respondents’ Responses to Statement No. 9**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	5.71
Disagree	17	48.58
Neutral	9	25.71
Agree	5	14.29
Strongly Agree	2	5.71
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	2.66	

When it comes to the overall scores of empowering leadership style, it is found that the overall scores stood at 3.24 which means

“neutral”. The result indicates that UCB employees in general are not sure whether the empowering leadership style is applied by UCB Management or not. It can also be interpreted that even though it is applied, the degree of its application is not dominant. Table 14 below summarizes the overall scores of empowering leadership style. The next section discusses the dominant leadership style applied by UCB management.

**Table 13. Respondents’ Responses to Statement No. 10**

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	5.71
Disagree	8	22.86
Neutral	13	37.14
Agree	7	20
Strongly Agree	5	14.29
Total	35	100.0
Weighted Mean	3.14	

**Table 14. Overall Scores of Empowering Style**

Statement	Weighted Mean
No. 8	3.91
No. 9	2.66
No. 10	3.14
Overall	3.24

#### 4.2 Dominant Leadership Style and its Discussion

As per the above survey results, it can be concluded that there is an application of aspects of each leadership style by UCB management with varying degrees. From the three leadership styles, the majority of the respondents agreed with the application of two styles namely transformational and transactional leadership styles. While for the empowering leadership style, the respondents are neutral or not sure about its application by UCB management. However, one of the aspects of empowering leadership style “Employees take self-initiative in solving target tasks and exceeding expectation” is



applied by UCB management as perceived by UCB employees. Based on the weighted means of each leadership style, it can be concluded that the most dominant leadership style applied by UCB management is transformational leadership style which obtained an overall score of 3.79. The second dominant leadership style applied by UCB management is transactional leadership style with an overall score of 3.68. The least applied leadership style at UCB is empowering leadership style with an overall score of 3.14. Table 15 below summarizes the dominant leadership styles applied by UCB management as per UCB employees' opinion.

**Table 15. Rank of the Application of Leadership Style by UCB Management**

Leadership Style	Weighted Mean	Rank
transformational	3.79	1
Transactional	3.68	2
Empowering	3.14	3

The finding of the study is favorable since transformational leadership style has been viewed as the best style to be applied in a higher learning institution by the literature and the previous studies (Hukpati, 2009; Sung et. al, 2009; Munir et. al, 2012; Amin, 2013; Bateh and Heyliger, 2014). In other words, the current UCB leadership style is already in line with the best practice. It is expected that UCB employees are satisfied with their leaders and relating the results to the HR department data, at UCB the turnover at UCB in average is 5.8 years or almost 6 years<sup>®</sup>. For an institution with a significant number of expatriates, this figure is already good enough. Even though there is a need of further empirical investigation, this can be an indication that UCB employees are in general satisfied with their jobs.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study managed to achieve its objectives in investigating the dominant leadership style adopted in UCB as per the employees' opinion and comparing the results with the best practice according to the literature. It can be concluded

that the dominant leadership style in UCB is the transformational leadership style, followed by transactional leadership style and the least dominant is the empowering leadership style. It also means that UCB management is inspirational, appreciating individuals' capabilities and stimulates intellectual expression. Comparing the results with the best practice, it is found that the leadership style in UCB is already in line with the best practice. The previous studies indicate that the best leadership style to be applied in a higher learning institution is the transformational leadership style. This style is positively correlated with the overall job satisfaction and the organizational performance as a whole.

Despite the positive results, this study has some limitations that can be filled up by further studies. First, this study does

Second, this study was only conducted in UCB, therefore future studies can investigate the leadership styles in other universities and colleges in Bahrain. Third, unlike some previous studies, this study does not evaluate the relationship between leadership style and the overall job satisfaction of faculty members and academic staff.

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