Vulnerability in higher education leadership

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What is Vulnerability and Why is it Important?

Definition

- “The emotion we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure” (Brown, 2018, p.19).

Research Questions

- Does perceived level of vulnerability relate to a certain leadership style (authentic, ethical, or transformational)?
- Is there a relationship between age or gender and vulnerability level?
Literature Findings: Leadership Styles

Authentic Leadership
• “The process whereby leaders are aware of their thoughts and behaviors within the context in which they operate” (Maximo et al., 2019, p. 2).

Ethical Leadership
• “The demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships” (Brown et al., 2005).

Transformational Leadership
• Motivating others through a common mission or challenge that empowers followers and encourages them to develop as leaders (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3).
Current Research Study

• 75 participants in higher education
• 17 question survey
  • Demographics: Age Range and Gender
  • Vulnerability: 2 open-ended and 2 multiple-choice Likert Scale
  • Leadership Styles: 12 multiple-choice Likert scale, 4 for each style
• Conducted via Qualtrics online survey tool
Research Findings

Perceived Vulnerability Level by Age

![Bar chart showing the average vulnerability score by age range.](chart)

**Age Range**  
- 18-24: 12  
- 25-34: 10  
- 35-44: 9  
- 45-54: 8  
- 55-64: 9  
- 65+: 4

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Research Findings

Vulnerability and Leadership Style Scores

Participants Sorted by Vulnerability Score

- Vulnerability Score
- ALQ Score
- ELQ Score
- TLQ Score
Limitations

- Open-ended questions coded by researcher
- Small sample size and short amount of time
- Title of survey/research project
- Self-reporting
- Did not use full leadership style surveys
Conclusion

• Vulnerability is not widely accepted
• Perception is overwhelmingly negative
• Transformational leadership was most identified with regardless of level of vulnerability
• Younger generations appear to be more willing to embrace vulnerability
References


