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The higher education institutional reform in Albania and its leadership style challenge

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Abstract

The White Paper, which was presented this summer of 2014, is expected to bring the higher education institution system in Albania in front of huge challenging changes; the most important one seems to be the awareness and acceptance of the transformational leadership style, without which the organization's survival in times of turbulence and change would be almost impossible. The aim of our paper was to ascertain the actual leadership style of the higher education institution in Albania and to present recommendations to facilitate this leader transformational leadership process. A methodological triangulation was adopted, as the design required two instruments: a quantitative study through a shortened form of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and a qualitative study through a semi-structured questionnaire. Our finding presented a leadership approach towards transactional behavior style; and furthermore there was not found a low level of laissez-faire leadership exhibited by them. Leadership development in the higher education institution system in Albania resulted to be undervalued and underused and it is one of the reasons why leadership competencies are so scarce.

Keywords: effectiveness, higher education institutions, organizational culture, transformational leadership.

1. Introduction

Since signing the Bologna Process (2003) from Albania as a participating country and after facing legal changes as the consequence, the liberalization and the massiveness of the higher education brought a huge increase (almost a triple) of entering students in both public and private universities in less than 10 years.

These new reforms of the higher education were substantially kind of populist and aimed just for greater numbers, so their outcomes were neither a gradually increase of the public spending for the higher education sector (since almost 78% of the total students belong to the public and owned-by the state universities), nor an improvement of the controlling and the regulatory frame policy. Unfortunately, they produced negative outputs related mainly to the quality of the learning process and the lack of academic and scientific research.

Globally, since the early 1990s, the challenges of school reforms developed the ideas about transformational leadership as perhaps more critical or valued compared to the more traditional one. These continuous reforms in education required leaders to transform schools into autonomous, systems-thinking organizations, revolving around professional learning communities that can embrace change and create a high performing learning environment for students and teachers (Moore, 2009a).

Our research is focused on Albanian leadership styles during the implementation of the White Paper and the new reform on “The Higher Education and the Scientific Research in Albania” and the objective of the study is to define the actual leadership approach in face of this reform challenge.

Research question: *Will the actual leadership of the higher education in Albania be able to successfully manage changes and ensure effectiveness of the higher education reform?*

Hypothesis: *Awareness and the exhibition of high levels of transformational leadership in higher education institutions will imply a successfully management of the new institutional reform in Albania.*

2. Literature review

Leadership is one of the most examined phenomena of the social sciences, yet it seems to be a challenging theme. Leadership is easy to identify in practice but it is difficult to define precisely, given its complex nature. Thus, a specific and widely accepted definition of leadership does not exist and might never be found. According to Bass (2008), “*Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and of the perceptions and expectations of the members*”

2.1 Leadership, organization culture and effectiveness

Different circumstances urge for rapidly organizational changes and this requires leadership skills to link internal and external resources and to improve the required performances and objectives. Leadership required in a culture of change is not straightforward; leaders must be able to operate under complex, uncertain circumstances (Fullan, 2001). Many of the organization’s members should be responsible for organizational achievement and leadership is no longer the one great-man theory. Desired role models of leadership begin at the top and are encouraged at each successive level below (Bass, 1999).

Leadership is a concept universally applicable in all fields, with great benefits; business and education institutions share similar concepts regarding the practice of leadership. “Thus, leaders in business and education face similar challenges – how to cultivate and sustain learning under conditions of complex, rapid change” (Fullan, 2001). Universities are dynamic and complex organizations and nowadays they face multiple challenges: research activities, attracting top students and academic university staff, obtaining funding, implementing new technologies, responding to stakeholders demands (students, staff, community, state), adapting to market changes and governmental reforms. Universities serve mass higher education markets and leadership is regarded as the most important competency for organizations that want to develop their people (Hackett, 1997).

The leadership in a culture of change will be judged as effective or ineffective “not by who you are as a leader but by what leadership you produce in others” (Fullan, 2001). Changes in the marketplace and workforce over the two decades have resulted in the need for leaders to become more transformational and less transactional if they were to remain effective (Bass, 1999). Effective leadership has been recognized as an important factor in determining the success or failure of an organization and one of the important aspects of today's management and leadership development program is the use of specific tools to evaluate this effectiveness of the various types of leadership.

2.2 *The Full Range Leadership Theory (FRL)*

The full range of leadership implies that every leader displays a frequency of both the transactional and transformational factors, but each leader's profile involves more of one and less of the other (Bass, 1999). Transformational leadership was first described by J.V. Downton in *Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in a Revolutionary Process* (1973) to explain differences among ordinary, rebellious, reform, and revolutionary leaders. Later on, the transformational leadership concept of James MacGregor Burns (Leadership, 1978), during his attempt to study political leadership, was influenced by Abraham Maslow's Theory of Human Needs and he described it not as a set of specific behaviors, but rather an ongoing process by which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation".

Transformational leadership theory was later expanded and refined by Bernard Bass (1985) and he defined *transformational leadership* in terms of *how the leader affects followers, who are intended to trust, admire and respect the transformational leader*. Bass (1985) developed Burn's research and clarified the differentiation between transformational and transactional style of leadership, since transformational leadership was seen as the opposite of a transactional leadership. Rather than promoting change within an organization, transactional leaders seek to maintain stability by encouraging consistent performance to meet agreed upon goals; by commonly exchanging rewards for services rendered (Bryant, 2003; Lussier & Achua, 2004). Transactional leadership implies that the leader “works within the framework of self-interests of his or her constituency, whereas the transformational leader moves to change the network” (Bass and Bass, 2008).

Transformational and transactional leadership are viewed by different authors as either competing or complementary. Studies have shown that the transformational leadership style is more effective than the transactional style and it is positively correlated to the performance of businesses (Benjamin, 2006). Although many leaders can be seen as both transformational and transactional in their approach, according to Bass (1985), “the leadership of great men (and great women) of history has usually been transformational, not transactional”. Bass (1985) also brought a third type of leadership to the table, the *laissez-faire* leadership.

2.3 *Bass Theory of transformational and transactional leadership and their behavioral factors.*

Bass (1985) posited that leadership is composed of three second-order domains: transformational, transactional and *laissez-faire*. Contrary to Burns, Bass views transformational leadership as augmenting transactional leadership. Further, Bass sees transformational and transactional leadership as multidimensional concepts composed of several important underlying behaviors.

The full range leadership theory considers nine distinct factors: *five transformational* (inspirational motivation - charisma, idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behavior, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), *three transactional* (contingent reward, management-by-exception active, management-by-exception passive) and *one* non-leadership or laissez-faire leadership factor (Bass, 1985) (Bass & Avolio, 1993a).

Idealized Influence encompasses influence over ideology and ideals, influence over “bigger-than-life” issues (Bass, 1999). It is categorized in two distinct ways (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003): ***Idealized attributes (IA)*** is the leadership factor that influences followers through demonstration of self-confidence and pride. ***Idealized behavior (IB)*** is the leadership factor that focuses on purpose, mission, and ethics as sources of influence.

Inspirational Motivation (IM) is the leadership factor that motivates followers using challenge, optimism, and vision. Whereas Idealized Influence refers to motivating individuals, Inspirational Leadership speaks to the motivation of an entire organization (Hay, 2007) by communicating high expectations and increasing team spirit and enthusiasm (Northouse, 2001).

Intellectual stimulation (IS), as a leadership factor, provides an environment that stimulates innovation and creativity and builds trust to followers. Followers are stimulated to be creative, innovative and also to challenge their own beliefs and values and those of their leaders and organization (Bass & Avolio, 2001).

Individualized Consideration (IC) leadership uses coaching and mentoring as means of motivating followers. The transformational leader who uses Individualized Consideration listens, advises, teaches and coaches to further develop followers.

To motivate followers, ***contingent reward (CR)*** leadership defines expectations and gives recognition upon meeting those expectations. According to Bass (1997), transactional leaders “clarify expectations, exchange promises and resources for support of the leaders, arrange mutually satisfactory agreements, negotiate for resources, exchange assistance for effort, and provide commendations for successful follower performance.” From this perspective, contingent reward is a constructive transaction (Bass & Bass, 2008).

When using ***active management by exception (MBEA)*** the leader monitors follower performance and takes corrective action when performance deviates from the norm or standard expectations (Bass 1997; Bass & Bass, 2008). This factor specifies compliance and punishes for non-compliance to meet goals.

Passive management by exception (MBEP) is a leadership factor wherein the leader remains uninvolved until problems become major. The difference between ***active management by exception*** and ***passive management by exception***, involves the timing of the intervention (Howell & Avolio, 1993), or engaging in transactions that focus on mistakes or delay decisions (Barnett, McCormick & Connors, 2001), In the active process, the manager looks for deviations from rules and standards and acts before problems become serious, while in the passive, action does not occur until problems emerge (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Laissez-Faire (LF) is a leadership factor wherein leaders are disengaged and do not make decisions.

3. Research design

3.1 Method

A Pragmatic approach (mixed methods) was used in this research, enabling a triangulation as the methods, techniques and procedures were associated with quantitative and qualitative data sources. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used simultaneously here. First, quantitative approach was used and then the next, with the second part of the study we tried to expand on the results of the first.

3.2 Methodology

Participants. This study tended to involve the participation of all public and private HEI-s in Albania. Prior to the new reform and the White Paper of the Higher Education and the Scientific Research in Albania, there were a total of 59 HEI-s. As the first phase resulted in a reduction of at least 23 of them, only 36 institutions served as the sampling unit. This sample was accessed via lists obtained from HEI-s and their web-sites. The population of the research was composed of the senior leaders in 11 institutions and there were included these categories: Rector, Vice Rector, Dean, Deputy Dean, Chancellor, Head of Department and General Secretary. The inclusion of these categories of leaders was based on the premise that transformational leadership can be found at all levels of the organization's hierarchy (Avolio, 1999).

The gender composition of the sample was lightly predominated by females (52, 2% female/43, 5% male). The Heads of Departments constituted the largest number (47, 8%), the second high level was that of Deputy Deans (23, 9%), whilst other categories rated almost the same. Tenure in the respective positions was highly skewed (58, 7%) towards 2 to 5 years of experience. Majority of the leaders (34, 78% each) were between the ages 31-40 and 41-50 and this age composition showed a trend of a leadership not towards older people, characteristic of senior leadership levels in organizations. Academic Rank was predominated by Prof. Assoc. Dr. (28, 26%) and Prof. Dr. (28, 26%), followed by PhD (15, 22%), MP, MSc, MA (10, 87%) and Dr. (8, 7%). Table 1 presents all these biographical characteristics of the sample.

3.3 Data collection technique

Two measuring instruments are used here: MLQ-Form 6S and a semi-structured questionnaire, adapted from the previous studies in the literature. The MLQ helped measure three dimensions of leadership style: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership and the semi-structured questionnaire was focused on leadership behavior characteristics.

3.3.1. Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) - Form 6S

The most well-known and effective tool for Transformational Leadership measurement is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, known as the MLQ. Bass and Avolio's (1992) MLQ was an integral part of our methodology. This questionnaire is applied to a wide range of organizational settings as well as with leaders in different cultures (Bass, 1998). Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is the most widely used instrument to assess transformational leadership theory (Kirkbride, 2006) and "is considered the best validated measure of transformational and transactional leadership" (Ozaralli, 2003). It appears on balance that validity and reliability of the scale has been supported (Kirkbride, 2006). Substantive evidence from a

number of studies conducted by Tejada (2001), Avolio and Bass (1999), has showed that the MLQ is indeed a valid instrument across a number of validity types.

TABLE 1. Biographical Characteristics

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Female	24	52.17%
Male	20	43.48%
Missing Values	2	4.35%
Total	46	100.0%
Age		
31-40	16	34.78%
41-50	16	34.78%
51-60	10	21.74%
Over 61	3	6.52%
Missing Values	1	2.17%
Total	46	100%
Years of Experience		
0 – 1	4	8.70%
2 – 5	27	58.70%
6 – 9	8	17.39%
10 and more	5	10.87%
Missing Values	2	4.35%
Total	46	100%
Academic Rank		
MP, Msc, MA	5	10.87%
Dr.	4	8.70%
PhD	7	15.22%
Prof.Assoc.Dr	13	28.26%
Prof Dr	13	28.26%
Akademik	3	6.52%
Missing Values	1	2.17%
Total	46	100%
Leadership Category		
Rector	2	4.35%
Vice Rector	2	4.35%
Dean	4	8.70%
Deputy Dean	11	23.91%
Head of Department	22	47.83%
Chancellor	2	4.35%
General Secretary	2	4.35%
Missing Values	1	2.17%
Total	46	100%

For the quantitative study, the shortened form of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 6S (MLQ-6S) was used and these factors are grouped according to Avolio and Bass's (2004) definitions. The Leader/Self Form, one of the two forms of the MLQ, was completed by the leader themselves, measuring how they perceive themselves with regard to specific leadership behaviors. The MLQ-6S Form includes 21 items measuring exclusively leadership behaviors; they were marked from a 0-4 rating Likert scale. The scale points were 0= not at all, 1= once in a while, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often and 4= frequently, if not always. Every subscale-factor consists of 3 items. Transformational leadership scale consists of 12 items grouped in 4

subscales-factors: Factor 1. Idealized influence (Item 1, 8 & 15), Factor 2. Inspirational motivation (Item 2, 9 & 16), Factor 3. Intellectual stimulation (Item 3, 10 & 17), Factor 4. Individualized consideration (Item 4, 11 & 18). Transactional leadership scale consists of 6 items, categorized in 2 subscales-factors: Factor 5. Contingent reward (Item 5, 12 & 19) and Factor 6. Management-By-Exception (Item 6, 13 & 20); Laissez-faire leadership is one scale-factor, Factor 7 (Item 7, 14 & 21).

Scoring of Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire Short Form-6S. Summing three scores of specified items = factor. Summing scores of factor 1, 2, 3 & 4 = Total Score of Transformational Leadership. Total Score of Transformational Leadership / 04 = Composite average score of Transformational Leadership. Total score of factor 5 & 6 = Total Score of Transactional Leadership. Total Score of Transactional Leadership / 02 = Composite average score of Transactional Leadership. Scores of factor 7 = Total Score of Laissez-faire Leadership. Total Score of Laissez-faire Leadership / 01 = Composite average score of Laissez-faire Leadership.

3.3.2. *The semi-structured questionnaire*

For the qualitative study, a semi-structured questionnaire was used. This questionnaire was based on research by Bennis and Nanus (1997) who interviewed effective leaders in an attempt to identify and ascertain their characteristic behaviors, trait and processes of influence.

Semi-structured Questionnaire:

- 1- How can you define your actual leadership approach, in terms of these leadership styles: transformational, transactional or laissez-faire leadership?
- 2- What past events most influenced your leadership approach?
- 3- What are your leadership behavior strengths?
- 2- What are your leadership behavior weaknesses?
- 5- Which leadership style: transformational, transactional or laissez-faire one will be more effective for your organization?

3.4 *Data collection procedure*

To be able to use the questionnaire in Albanian HEI-s, all the items of the MLQ-6S were translated into Albanian. The emphasis was on translating the content of the items in the best possible way. The questionnaire survey consists of three parts; the first part describes the information of the respondents; the second part measures the three styles of leadership; the third part is a semi-structured questionnaire. The instrument was self-administered, accompanied by a short intro that provided the necessary details about the study. The questionnaires were distributed either electronically or handled in person. They were administrated over a three-month period from June to August 2014. The data were sent to 150 participants, of whom only 46 replied; this constituted a low response rate of 30.67%.

3.5 Data analysis

Statistical analyses were used in this research. Information about the frequency of the demonstration and the level (high, moderate, low) of the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership behaviors of the sample was provided. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the distribution of a set of data through the mean and the standard deviation (SD).

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Quantitative results

Table 2 provides frequency distribution of the leaders' perception of their leadership behaviors.

Transformational leadership behaviors: Inspirational Motivation (51, 45%) and Intellectual Stimulation (45, 65%) were exhibited frequently; and Idealized Influence (48, 48%) and Individual Consideration (50, 36%) were exhibited fairly often. On average, all four behaviors were exhibited frequently (45, 14%).

Transactional leadership behaviors: Contingent Reward (56, 62%) and Management-by-Exception (55, 8%) were both exhibited frequently; and on average, these two behaviors were exhibited frequently (56, 2%).

Laissez-faire leadership: On average, the majority of leaders (43, 5%) exhibited this leadership behavior fairly often.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide frequency distribution of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership factors. Table 6 provides the measures of central tendency and dispersion of the complete data and it leads to the indicators towards the leaders' perceptions of their transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Transformational leadership: The mean is 3.272 and the SD 0.336. This mean implies that the leaders were of the opinion that they exhibited transformational leadership fairly often to frequently. This was a relatively high level of transformational leadership exhibited by them. The SD measures variability around the mean. At 0.34 the SD is low against the mean of 3.27.

Transactional leadership: The mean is 3.29 and the SD is 0.351. The mean implies that leaders held the view that they exhibited transactional leadership fairly often to frequently. This was also a relatively high level of transactional leadership exhibited by them. At 0.351 the SD is low against the mean of 3.29, implying that there is little variation around the mean.

Laissez-faire leadership: The mean is 2,891 and the SD is 0,558. The mean implies that the leaders held the opinion that they exhibited laissez-faire leadership once in a while to fairly often. This was not a very low level of laissez-faire leadership exhibited by them. At 0,558 the SD is not high against the mean of 2,891. This implies that there is little variation around the mean. As a result, the assertion that leaders exhibited laissez-faire leadership once in a while to fairly often varies from leader to leader or tends to become typical among the leaders.

TABLE 2. Frequency distribution of leaders' perception of their behaviors

	Missing	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always	Total
1 I make others feel good to be around me	0	0	0	3	10	33	46
		0%	0.0%	6.5%	21.7%	71.7%	100%
2 I express with a few simple words what we could and should do	0	0	0	0	13	33	46
		0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.3%	71.7%	100%
3 I enable others to think about old problems in new ways.	0	0	1	7	23	15	46
		0%	2.2%	15.2%	50.0%	32.6%	100%
4 I help others develop themselves	1	0	0	2	23	20	45
		0%	0%	4.4%	51.1%	44.4%	100%
5 I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work.	2	0	0	5	11	28	44
		0%	0%	11.4%	25.0%	63.6%	100%
6 I am satisfied when others meet agreed-upon standards.	0	0	0	0	9	37	46
		0%	0%	0.0%	19.6%	80.4%	100%
7 I am content to let others continue working in the same way as always.	0	1	0	3	16	26	46
		2.2%	0%	6.5%	34.8%	56.5%	100%
8 Others have complete faith in me.	2	0	0	1	30	13	44
		0%	0%	2.3%	68.2%	29.5%	100%
9 I provide appealing images about what we can do.	0	0	1	11	21	13	46
		0%	2%	23.9%	45.7%	28.3%	100%
10 I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things.	0	0	0	7	12	27	46
		0%	0%	15.2%	26.1%	58.7%	100%
11 I let others know how I think they are doing.	0	0	1	8	19	18	46
		0%	2%	17.4%	41.3%	39.1%	100%
12 I provide recognition/rewards when others reach their goals.	0	0	0	2	12	32	46
		0%	0%	4.3%	26.1%	69.6%	100%
13 As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything.	0	5	3	10	19	9	46
		10.9%	6.5%	21.7%	41.3%	19.6%	100%
14 Whatever others want to do is O.K. with me.	0	2	4	17	22	1	46
		4.3%	8.7%	37.0%	47.8%	2.2%	100%
15 Others are proud to be associated with me.	4	1	0	4	24	13	42
		2.4%	0.0%	9.5%	57.1%	31.0%	100%
16 I help others find meaning in their work.	0	0	0	3	18	25	46
		0%	0%	6.5%	39.1%	54.3%	100%
17 I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before.	0	0	1	3	21	21	46
		0%	2.2%	6.5%	45.7%	45.7%	100%
18 I give personal attention to others who seem rejected.	0	0	1	3	27	15	46
		0%	2.2%	6.5%	58.7%	32.6%	100%
19 I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish.	0	1	2	8	18	17	46
		2.2%	4.3%	17.4%	39.1%	37.0%	100%
20 I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work.	0	0	0	0	15	31	46
		0%	0%	0.0%	32.6%	67.4%	100%
21 I ask no more of others than what is absolutely essential.	0	4	2	4	22	14	46
		8.7%	4.3%	8.7%	47.8%	30.4%	100%

4.2 Qualitative findings

Regarding their effectiveness, traits and behaviors, leaders used these strategies to manage change in their organizations.

Firstly, leaders defined their actual leadership approach highly towards the transformational one (76, 09%), compared to the transactional behavior style (8.7%).

Secondly, although in a little difference from their actual leadership approach, in order to achieve effective organizations, leaders still choose highly the transformational leadership style (60,87%), compared to the transactional behavior style (19,57%).

TABLE 3. Frequency distribution of Transformational leadership factors

Transformational leadership behaviour	Missing	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always	Total
Idealized Influence	2	0 0.76%	0 0.00%	3 6.06%	21 48.48%	20 44.70%	44
Inspirational Motivation	0	0 0.00%	0 0.72%	5 10.14%	17 37.68%	24 51.45%	46
Intellectual Stimulation	0	0 0.00%	1 1.45%	6 12.32%	19 40.58%	21 45.65%	46
Individual Consideration	0	0 0.00%	1 1.46%	4 9.49%	23 50.36%	18 38.69%	46
On total average	1	0 0.18%	0 0.92%	4 9.54%	20 44.22%	21 45.14%	45

TABLE 4. Frequency distribution of Transactional leadership factors

Transactional leadership behaviour	Missing	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always	Total
Contingent Reward	1	0 0.74%	1 1.47%	5 11.03%	14 30.15%	26 56.62%	45
Management by Exception	0	2 3.62%	1 2.17%	3 7.25%	14 31.16%	26 55.80%	46
On total average	0	1 2.19%	1 1.82%	4 9.12%	14 30.66%	26 56.20%	46

TABLE 5. Frequency distribution of Laissez-faire leadership factor

Laissez-faire leadership behaviour	Missing	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always	Total
Laissez-faire	0	2 5.07%	2 4.35%	8 17.39%	20 43.48%	14 29.71%	46

TABLE 6. The mean and SD of leaders' perception of their leadership styles

Variable	Mean	St Deviation
Transformational Leadership	3.272	0.336
Transactional Leadership	3.290	0.351
Laissez-faire Leadership	2.891	0.558

Thirdly, they utilized their transformational leadership strengths, which included engagement in communication and open-minded for developing trust, listening to all viewpoints to develop a spirit of cooperation, helping the organization by helping others contribute to the organization, people orientation and creating a vision in the organization.

Fourthly, they displayed weaknesses which included lack of trust, poor communication, and inability to take decisions, lack of leadership experience.

Fifthly and finally, they were guided by the past events that most influenced their leadership approach. These include family and mentor influences during their academic or professional life; their achievements through work experiences and completing important projects and promotions and rewards they had gained.

5. Conclusions

The results of the quantitative study showed that on average, leaders exhibited transactional leadership behaviors fairly often and frequently, which indicated that they are transactional in their leadership approach. This level implies that these leaders lead by the exchange relationship they have with their followers. The level of transformational leadership is lower than the level of transactional leadership, although not in high differences, but higher level of transformational leadership would imply that these leaders could manage change fairly successfully. The considerable level of laissez-faire leadership indicates that leaders exhibit non-leadership behavior, which is not positive and tend to risk their ability to manage change successfully.

The findings indicate the problem of the apparent lack of leadership in HEI-s in Albania, and particularly the lack of transformational leadership. This will compromise the leaders' ability to manage the new reforms successfully.

Recommendations

Training in HEI-s leadership should be a focus. Its aim is to guide, to assist and to support HIE-s leadership to successfully navigate the challenges of change. It explores and creates dynamic solutions that address organizational and individual capacity gaps in HEI-s leadership.

Coaching in leadership and especially in transformational leadership could help to equip HIE-s leaders with those behaviors lacking in their approach.

Lastly, it is suggested that the findings of this research be extended to all HEI-s in Albania and even to other public or private sectors.

Limitations

The results of this study could be limited because of the short 21-item MLQ-6S. Participants in the study were voluntary and do not represent the entire management sample from the HEI-s in Albania, furthermore there is also to mention also the large number of suspended institutions in the first stage of the reform. The self-administration mode of the questionnaire could have enhanced the subjectivity of responses, as we used the Leader form, which was completed by leaders themselves and it would naturally contain a bias. Some limitations maybe related to the use of descriptive statistics in processing quantitative data. The degree to which the findings can be generalized to other sectors is questionable as other variables may imply.

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