

DOI: 10.24193/OJMNE.2022.38.07

## LEADERSHIP STYLES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF EUROPEAN UPPER SECONDARY SYSTEM: THE CASE OF ALBANIA

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**Abstract:** *School leadership plays an essential part in school the performance and productivity. The leadership style of a school leader is the one that makes the difference in the success of a school as a result of the encouragement, motivation and care shown by all acting actors of school, and especially by teachers. This paper intends to examine leadership styles displayed by public high school principals in Albania and highlight negative aspects of leadership styles practiced by school leaders. For the fulfilment of this work, the standardized questionnaire Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Form 6-S (Bass & Avolio, 1992) was used to highlight the leadership styles, implemented to a sample of 78 public school principals of the upper middle system in the country. The questionnaire was translated into Albanian and adapted from the original considering also the specific Albanian culture. The results of this research demonstrate that school leaders show confusion about the use of their leadership style, stating that they often use all the three leadership styles from the most positive to the negative one as described in the Model of transformational leadership*

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**Keywords:** Leadership style; public high schools; transformational leadership; education style.

### 1. Introduction

The Albanian pre-university education system has often been criticized for its leadership style. According to the National Strategy for Pre-University Education (2014-2020), the teaching staff of a school resembles a community of professionally isolated individuals, rather than a professional organization that shares responsibilities and jointly seeks and finds out solutions for

quality achievement of the students. Professional assistance to teachers by school leaders is negligible. As a result, since 2018, school leaders of the pre-university system must be certified by the School of Principals, established with the aim of improving the management quality of pre-university education institutions, although there is still a dilemma today whether the school director should be a leader or a manager.

According to Anderson, Ford, and Hamilton, the combination of management and leadership is needed to transform an organization and the people in it. According to them, management and leadership should be developed and integrated all together due to constant changes the society is experiencing in all human aspects and the leader should know how to manage in order to appropriately respond to such changes (Anderson, Ford & Hamilton, 1998).

The educational institutions management has a direct impact on improving performance, motivating, and increasing the teachers' professional capacity, as well as creating a cooperative and positive climate in the school environment. It is therefore important for the director as a leader to be equipped with leadership skills, to choose the right job, the guaranteed and applicable curriculum, to set challenging goals, to include parents and the community in a safe and systematic environment of collegiality and professionalism (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005).

The main tasks of school leadership, according to Hargreaves and Fink, are divided into two major roles: the teaching and the leadership role. The teaching role focuses on educating and training students through motivating and challenging activities, aiming to raise productive children for the society (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003).

## **2. Literature review**

Various paradigms have been used to describe its direction and effectiveness, changing over the past decades to move from a traditional leadership to what is defined as the new leadership. According to Hoy and Miskel (2001), leadership styles are categorized into two major theoretical groups.

The first set of theories deals with traditional direction, which is categorized on bases of personality, behavior, or situation. The second set of theories deals with new approaches to leadership, which are characterized by a charismatic (inspiring) and transformative leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The term “transformational leader” was first used by Downton in 1973 (Downton, 1973). Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms the individuals. It is a process focused on assessing the motivation of followers, and the satisfaction of their needs by considering them above all human beings. Transformational leadership is one of those approaches emphasizing the emotional and charismatic aspects of leadership.

The model of interactive and transformational leadership was addressed in 1987 by the political sociologist Burns in his book *Leadership*. Burns proposes that Leadership be treated as a more realistic and sophisticated form of understanding power and exercise of self-belief, exchange, and the transformation emanating from it (Burns: 1987).

In the same period that Burns book came out, House published his theory on charismatic leadership, often described as apparently similar to the transformational leadership (House, 1976). Originally the concept of charisma was used to describe a special gift that characterized the individuals possessing it and gave them the ability to carry out extraordinary things.

In 1985, Bass, known as the Leadership Continuum, followed in Burns footsteps by expanding and redefining Transformational Leadership. Bass (1985, pp.11-13) applied Burns conceptualization to organizations and developed a new leadership model which identifies three leadership processes, namely transactional, transformational, and *laissez-faire*.

According to Bass, Transformational Leadership motivates followers to do much more than they expect of themselves by putting into practice the following: a) increasing the level of followers’ awareness on the importance and values of the expected objectives; b) encouragement of followers to go beyond their personal interests in interest of the group and organization, and c) invitation to followers to deal with needs of a high level.

### **Bass Model of Transformational and Transactional Leadership**

<i>Transformational Leadership</i>	<b>Transactional Leadership</b>	<b>Non-Leadership</b>
First Factor <i>Idealized influence and charisma</i>	Fifth Factor <i>Contingent reward and constructive transactions</i>	Seventh Factor <i>Laissez-faire and non-transactional</i>
Second Factor <i>Individualized consideration</i>	Sixth Factor <i>Management-by-exception, active and passive, and corrective transactions</i>	

Third Factor		
<i>Intellectual stimulation</i>		
Forth Factor		
<i>Inspirational motivation</i>		

Source: Model of the transformational leadership approach (Northouse, 2004). *Leadership Theory and practice*. Sage Publications.

### *Transformational Leadership*

First Factor, *idealized influence and charisma*. Leaders present a strong role model for subordinates (Winkler, 41). The leader embraces high moral and ethical values and reinforces pride, respect, and faith among followers. (Flynn, 2009:3) Through their enthusiasm, they become a source of inspiration and charismatic identification (Bass, 1985).

Second Factor, *individualized consideration*. Leaders allow followers to grow through personal challenges, through the process of delegated authority, and pay attention to those who seem less involved in the group. They develop a particular kind of relationship with the followers, in which their concerns and needs are understood and shared (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Third Factor, *intellectual stimulation (stimulation)*. Leaders encourage followers to challenge their conventional problem-solving abilities and explore other opportunities in order to stimulate deeper and innovative thinking (Barling, Comotis, Gatién, Kelloway and Kelly, 2003:163). They are supported in questioning their beliefs, assumptions, and values (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

Forth Factor, *inspirational motivation (inspiration)*. Leaders use appropriate symbols and images (Bass & Avolio, 2001) to help others focus on their work, and try to make them feel that their work is significant. This includes developing and communicating an appealing vision (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

### *Transactional Leadership*

Fifth Factor, *contingent reward and constructive transactions*. Leaders tell others what to do in order to be rewarded, emphasize what is expected from them to recognize their accomplishments and avoid punishment (Bass, 1985). Success criteria are agreed upon by both parties with the achievement being either rewarded or punished.

Sixth Factor, *management-by-exception, active and passive, and corrective transactions*. Leaders are not inclined to establish standards and put new systems in place and assume that the status quo is acceptable. They use corrective criticism, give negative feedback, and negative reinforcement (Northouse, 2001).

#### *Laissez-Faire*

Seventh Factor, *laissez-faire and non-transactional*. Leaders are happy to let things go on their own and allow others to do their own job. They make no attempts to motivate followers or satisfy their individual needs. Leaders avoid responsibilities and decision-making (Bass, 1998). It is also viewed as an avoidance of leadership responsibilities which could result in a lack of direction for the organization.

### **3. Methods of research**

#### ***Research site***

This research focuses on the leadership styles displayed by leaders of public upper secondary schools in Albania. The main objectives of this paper are the following: a) Studying the leadership styles applied by high school directors for their leadership style; b) Identifying the leadership styles used mostly by directors of public high schools in Albania; c) Identifying whether school directors use the negative leadership styles without being aware of their use.

For the completion of this work, quantitative methods based on the interpretive paradigm were used, to describe and analyze the leadership styles in public pre-university education system through the standardized *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*, form 6-S (Bass & Avolio, 1992).

#### ***Instruments***

The instrument used in this study was a standard questionnaire composed of two parts. Over the last two decades, the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ) has been developed and validated (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Further, it was utilized in several empirical researching works, particularly those concerned with the relationship between leadership styles and other factors. This scale consists of 21 items answered by the subordinates using a five-point Likert scale. The scale points are: 0 = not at all,

1= once in a while, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4= frequently, if not always. The original version of this scale consists of two parts: the first one describes the information of the respondents, and the second one measures the three styles of leadership. For purposes of the preset study, the focus is on the second part that reflects three styles of leadership.

The 21 items of MLQ are grouped into 3 sub-scales, and each sub-scale describes a behavior of leadership (transformational, transactional, and *laissez-faire*). The Transformational Leadership includes the following: 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). The Transactional Leadership includes: Factor 5. Contingent reward (Item 5, 12 & 19); and the Passive/Avoidant Behavior includes: Factor 6. Management-By-Exception Passive (MBEP) (Item 6, 13 & 20) and Factor 7. *Laissez-faire* (Item 7, 14 & 21).

The questionnaire was translated into Albanian language and adapted from the original taking in consideration the Albanian culture.

### Participants

Population of this research are principals of high public school in Albania. Population is 382 (Instat, 2019, p.73). Participants consist of 78 principals of high public school in Albania (20.4 % of population). It included 20 (24.6%) male and 58 female (74.4%) principals. Of these, 48.7% have a MA / MSc and 42.3 a bachelor's degree, a small percentage 6.4% have completed doctoral studies and only 2.6% have a high school diploma.

Figure.1

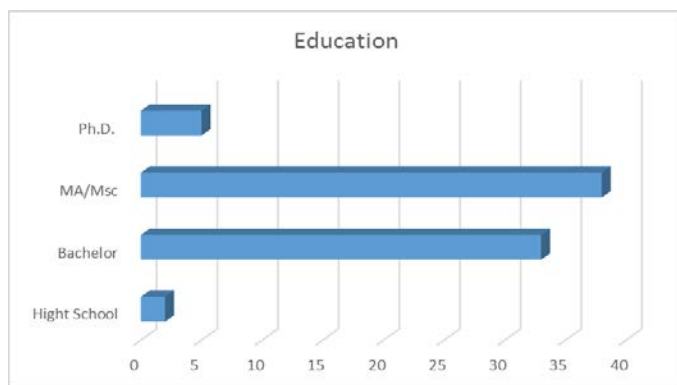
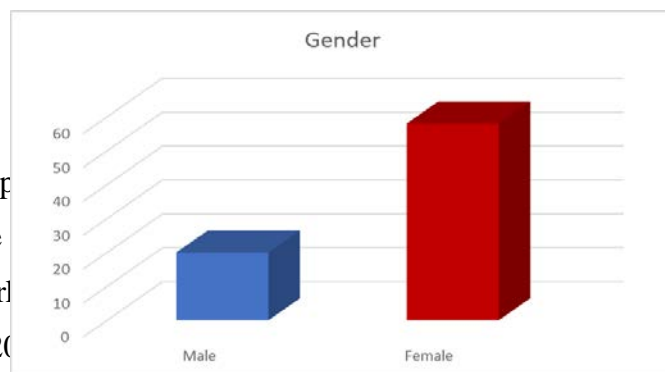


Figure. 2



### *Statistical Analysis*

The measuring instrument was coded to facilitate data registering and the analysis process. Once the data collection was completed, they were analyzed using the IBM SPSS version 20.0 statistical package and the data were interpreted based on descriptive analysis.

Table 1. provides measures of central tendency and dispersion of the leaders' responses to the 21 questionnaire items.

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis: Measures of central tendency and dispersion**

Items	No	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Q1	78	3.6282	.06854	.60537	.366	-.331	.272	.005	.538
Q2	78	3.7692	.05137	.45365	.206	-1.723	.272	2.042	.538
Q3	77	3.5974	.05626	.49364	.244	-.405	.274	-1.886	.541
Q4	77	3.6104	.05594	.49086	.241	-.462	.274	-1.835	.541
Q5	76	3.4737	.06616	.57674	.333	-.537	.276	-.663	.545
Q6	78	3.7179	.05443	.48073	.231	-1.343	.272	.661	.538
Q7	76	3.2105	.11132	.97044	.942	-1.518	.276	2.680	.545
Q8	78	3.3462	.07705	.68047	.463	-1.576	.272	6.167	.538
Q9	76	3.5132	.06621	.57720	.333	-.693	.276	-.490	.545
Q10	78	3.3846	.06638	.58622	.344	-.329	.272	-.689	.538
Q11	77	3.5714	.06250	.54841	.301	-.782	.274	-.471	.541
Q12	77	3.3506	.06859	.60189	.362	-.327	.274	-.634	.541
Q13	75	2.7067	.12983	1.12434	1.264	-.623	.277	-.372	.548
Q14	77	2.6883	.10169	.89236	.796	-.705	.274	.870	.541
Q15	75	3.07	.077	.664	.441	-.926	.277	2.390	.548
Q16	75	3.4933	.07912	.68524	.470	-1.270	.277	1.387	.548
Q17	77	3.2338	.08651	.75909	.576	-.608	.274	-.385	.541
Q18	77	3.4416	.07277	.63853	.408	-.710	.274	-.469	.541
Q19	78	3.5000	.07468	.65959	.435	-.975	.272	-.163	.538
Q20	76	3.7105	.06160	.53705	.288	-1.713	.276	2.113	.545
Q21	73	3.2055	.12636	1.07959	1.166	-1.445	.281	1.297	.555

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of leadership behaviors**

Leadership style	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently	Missing	Total
Idealized influence	0	0	2	47	26	3	75
	0%	0%	2.6%	60.3%	33.3%	3.8%	96.2%
Inspirational motivation	0	0	1	34	49	4	74
	0%	0%	1.3%	30.8%	62.8%	5.1%	94.9%
Intellectual stimulation	0	0	0	42	34	2	76
	0%	0%	0%	53.9%	43.6%	2.6%	97.4%
Individualized consideration	0	0	0	32	44	2	76
	0%	0%	0%	41%	56.4%	2.6%	97.4%
Contingent reward	0	0	1	37	37	3	75
	0%	0%	1.3%	47.4%	47.5%	3.8%	96.2%
Management-By-Exception Passive	0	0	3	38	32	5	73
	0%	0%	3.8%	48.7%	41.1%	6.4%	93.6%
Laissez-faire	0	3	12	35	21	7	71
	0%	3.9%	15.4%	44.8%	26.9%	9.0%	91%

Table 2 provides measures of central tendency and dispersion of the leaders' responses to the 21 questionnaire items frequency distribution of 7 factors of leadership style.

For Transformational Leadership, the first factor, *idealized influence and charisma*: 60.3% of the leaders say, they use it fairly often. Second factor, *individualized consideration*: 62.8% of the leaders say, they use it frequently. Third Factor, *Intellectual stimulation (stimulation)*: 53.9% of the leaders say, they use it fairly often. Also in the case of forth factor, *inspirational motivation (inspiration)*, 56.4% of leaders say, they use it frequently.

**Table 3: Frequency distribution of Transformational leadership factors**

Factors	No	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Idealized influence	75	3.34	.049	.423	.179	-.271	.277	-.399	.548



Inspirational motivation	74	3.59	.047	.406	.165	-.876	.279	.154	.552
Intellectual stimulation	76	3.40	.047	.408	.167	-.103	.276	-1.039	.545
Individualized consideration	76	3.52	.042	.363	.132	-.489	.276	-.445	.545
<b>Transformational leadership</b>		3.40		.400		-.434			

In Table 3, for all four transformational leadership factors, the mean is 3.40, and the standard deviation 0.400. Skewness represents the value -.434, which means that leaders held the view that they exhibited transactional leadership fairly often. This was also a relatively high level of transformational leadership shown by the 78 leaders who correctly completed the questionnaire.

**Table 4: Frequency distribution of Transactional leadership factors**

Factors	No	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
	Contingent reward	75	3.44	.046	.400	.160	-.437	.277	-.364
Management-By-Exception Passive	73	3.36	.050	.426	.181	-.527	.281	-.236	.555
<b>Transactional leadership</b>		3.40		.413		-.482			

In table 2 is shown that for the fifth factor of Transactional Leadership, contingent reward and constructive transactions, 47.4% of the leaders say, they use it fairly often, and 47.5% of the leaders say, they use it frequently, while for the sixth factor, management-by-exception, active and passive, and corrective transactions, 48.7% of the leaders say, they use it fairly often.

In table 4, for both transactional leadership factors, the mean is 3.40, and the standard deviation 0.418. Skewness is represented by the value -.482, which means that leaders held the view that they exhibited transactional leadership fairly often.

Table 5: Frequency distribution of Laissez-Faire leadership factor									
Factor	No	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
	Laissez-faire	71	3.03	.082	.689	.475	-.953	.285	1.092

Table 2 shows that for the *laissez-faire* and nontransactional factor, 44.8% of leaders say they use it fairly often.

In Table 5, for *laissez-faire* leadership type, the mean is 3.03, and the standard deviation 0.689. Skewness represents the value -.956, which means that leaders held the view they exhibited *laissez-faire* leadership fairly often.

#### 4. Conclusions

In 1990, in their book *Handbook of leadership, Theory, research and managerial applications*, Bass and Stogdills stated that leadership is conceived as the focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as a particular behavior, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role, as initiation of structure, and as many combination of these definitions (Bass and Stogdills, 1990).

Avolio and Bass proposed that transformational leadership would be most highly correlated with effectiveness followed by transactional and passive style of leadership (passive management by exception and *laissez-faire* leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

The results of quantitative study showed that the level of transformational leadership is more or less the same as the level of transactional leadership, as leaders exhibited these styles of leadership fairly often.

Also, Laissez-Faire leadership data are more or less the same as the level of transformational leadership and transactional leadership data. It is clear from the data results that school leaders show confusion and uncertainty about the leadership style they apply in high school.

Currently in Albania, based on Law no. 48/2018 “On some additions and changes to Law no. 69/2012, ‘On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania’”, as amended, article 14:

*“The candidate for director and deputy director of educational institution must possess at least the category “Qualified teacher” and be equipped with the certificate of head of pre-university educational institution. The certification of the candidate for director and deputy director of educational institution is performed after the development of obligatory preparatory training in the School of Directors, for the management of the educational institution...”*

A training process that may serve in the future for school leaders to clarify their perceptions of leadership style they apply, to improve the quality of performance of the management of pre-university education institutions and to acquire the necessary competencies by displaying universal characteristics of effective leaders, such as: sense of vision, ability to set goals and planning, personal charisma, strong communication skills, strong sense of self and personal convictions, relationship and empathy skills, and the ability to motivate and influence others (Sample, 2002).

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