



Importance Of Leadership Skills In The Education Of Future Scholars/Academics: Leaders-Followers Relations

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Abstract

This study will present theoretical and empirical results about the importance of leadership model currently applied to University lecturers in Albania, and their skill to increase the number of new followers, who will guide teaching in the upcoming years and encourage the desire to become part of the academic, political, economic and teaching activity. The preparation for guide teams and middle-level managers is too limited; therefore it often appears challenging to promote leadership as a key factor for modern education and teaching development. The study will explore the model of leadership applied in teaching and will test how youngsters following the teaching path are in track of their previous guides or build a new model of leadership and contemporary and modern teaching methodology. The study has a quantitative character and approximately 500 professors and students of the University of Tirana will be surveyed. Based on the theoretical and empirical analysis, the study will be closed with some further conclusions and recommendations on the required leadership style in education for the academic staffs of universities in Albania.

1. Introduction

The lecturer or academic in charge of a subject at Universities in Albania is mainly regarded an authoritarian figure, who, through his charisma which often turns into conceit, conveys knowledge to those who tomorrow will be their followers, not to mention the heads of these universities who also have the same form of leadership.

A number of authors admitted that there are many histories of negative and even pathological effects on the charismatic leadership [1]. Other authors have discussed about major concerns focused on arrogance, authoritarianism, creation of dependence, obstacles to develop critical thought, loss of group identity by followers have been consequences of such a "charismatic" leadership that is currently considered outdated and non-ethical [2].

The purpose of the present study is to stress the need for a new form of leadership, so that the prospective followers will be able to adapt their leadership to the market demands, technology, cultural-social and economic changes suffered by the world. The study is focused on the models of leadership in teaching and on the need for a more extensive cooperation with the new followers, in order to build modern forms of teaching and leadership.

The research question of this study is: To what extent the young people who pursue the teaching path follow the tracks of their previous leaders or build a new model of leadership and contemporary and modern teaching methodology and what is the impact rate of their leader in shaping the model of leadership they represent.

Study hypothesis: The new followers basically do not succeed to build a new model of leadership and teaching as a result of its impact on the establishment of their style as their traditional leader.

Testing of hypothesis will be conducted via the statistical method of data analysis rendering the methodology of this research a quantitative approach. The study also includes a theoretical analysis, where some of the most well known authors of this field of study, are analyzed.

2. Literature Review

In a number of recently implemented studies on the style of leadership in higher education, it has followed that teaching methods and leadership style used in teaching in Albania have failed to produce students who are capable of labor market [3]. The aim of University pedagogues is to transmit knowledge, to train and build capable professionals and to improve learning skills [4,5,6]. On the other hand, educational leadership is regarded by some authors as: "A slight change to be proposed on the

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leadership style or methodology used by him, but hard to be applied and extremely hard to be applied, if it is far from what is accepted "[7].

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) admitted that the sustainable improvement of teaching methods depends on the successful leadership [8]. In order to search a sustainable development, the educational institutions seek proactive leaders in education and teaching, who besides creating followers that are capable of teaching and education, will also be able to face challenges and issues, and turn them into new teaching opportunities [9]. According to Ramsden (1998), "we have seriously underestimated the power of leadership, lecture or pedagogue in higher education"[10].

A number of authors have emphasized the potential of a sound, coherent and modern leadership adapted to time, which exerts a positive impact on the teaching process and on the effect it has on the students as followers of the future and institutional performance [11,12,13]. Investigations on the leadership style in higher education have identified the transformational leadership as one of the most effective methods of leadership [14,15,16].

According to Harris, Day, Hopkins, Hadfeld, Hargreaves and Chapman (2003, 29), it is essential for the transformational leadership to face educational challenges in a changing or transitional environment [17], such as the Albanian education.

Bass and Avolio (1994) proposed that transformational leadership consists of the four following dimensions: idealized impact, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration [18], which in fact are characteristics that would be required for the current real situation of the Albanian education, in order to generate new capable followers in this area, but also beyond. The transformational leadership theory emphasizes that there is an emotional link between the leader and his/her follower, so that the followers are apt to identify themselves with a transformational leader to go beyond the call of duty in accomplishing the mission of educational institution and the purpose of education in itself [19]. According to Kouzes and Posner (1993), leadership is a 'mutual relationship between those who choose to guide and those who decide to follow their leader'. Strategies, tactics, teaching methods, skills and practices will be void, if we do not understand the fundamental aspirations of the leader and follower [20]. From this perspective, Albania probably needs such a leadership in higher education.

3. Research Methodology

This study has a quantitative approach under layered and random sampling, with the participation of 431 students and 69 lecturers from the University of Tirana. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and each interviewee were made 38 questions of the standardized questionnaire with closed and open questions. The desire of the study subjects to voluntarily participate in this study was respected. Data obtained from the interviewees were separately analyzed, in order to be further compared and analyzed. Accordingly, all statistical analyses were carried out via SPSS.20, in order to test the correlational relations between the variables and main hypothesis.

4. Data Results Obtained from the Study Sample

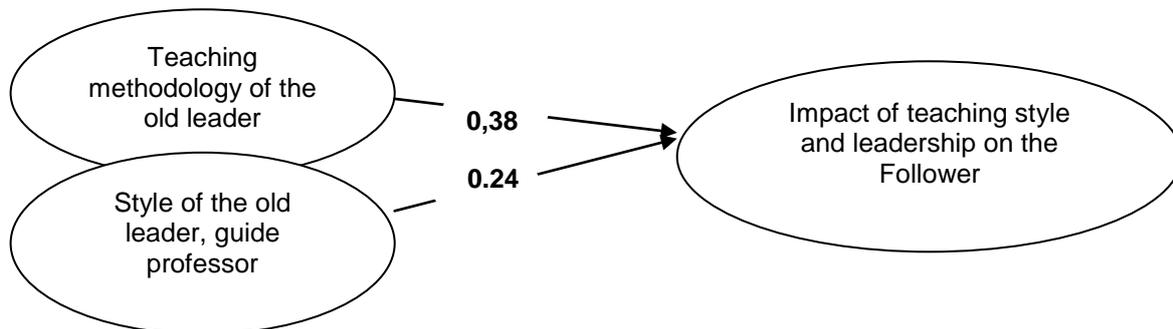
According to the demographic data of this study, it followed that a number of 289 girls and 142 boys, who studied at different Faculties of the University of Tirana, participated therein. The interviewed students were in the last year of Master of Science studies, as it may be the phase of becoming supporters of the professors' assistants. Of 431 students of Tirana University claiming to be part of teaching and who have had experience in providing teaching assistance to their professors, in 83% of cases admitted that their guide was a point of reference or model they would follow. When asked about the characteristics of their professors, in 72% of cases they grouped authority, charisma and conceit as characteristics of their leader. Meanwhile, regarding the teaching process they admitted that in 81% of cases their professors did not agree with the new teaching methods. As a result, in 81% of cases they followed the same teaching method.

Further, the professors questioned in this study acknowledged that in 91% of cases, strong character, charisma, authority and conceit were factors which, according to them, kept the audience attentive and more active. In their opinion, teaching methods were advanced and they mentioned that interactive teaching was applied and lectures were explained by PowerPoint slides. They also declared that new followers pursue these teaching methods and often encounter difficulties because they show tolerance. Thus, in 71% of the cases of students who follow their leader, teaching was considered successful.



The Pearson correlation was applied in order to prove the relationship between the hypothesis variables, where it resulted that there is a statistical and positive link between the variables of MLV=Teaching Methods of Old Leader and SPA= Teaching Style of the New Follower, where for $t = 7.2869$, $df = 12$, $p\text{-value} = 2.648e-12$ (validity lower than 5%), with 95% confidence between the variables in the interval $0.4733494 - 0.2834056$, with a coefficient resulting in the value of 0.3824103 , thereby proving a positive relationship between the variables.

It was further tested the impact rate of SVL= Old Style of the Leaders' Leadership on SPA=Style of the New Following Leader, where it results that for $t = 4.5031$, $df = 12$, $p\text{-value} = 9.494e-06$ (validity lower than 5%), with a confidence of 95 % in the interval: $0.3492130 - 0.1406123$, the coefficient value is 0.2477823 . Even in this case we prove a positive statistical stability between both variables, implying that in our reality the leadership style and methodology of the leader, the old leader influences the style and method of teaching of followers, new leaders. The diagram shows also the impact and degree of relationship between the key study variables.



Further, table no. 1 shows the results obtained from the chi-square test, where the veracity of this study hypothesis was analyzed. As noted in both cases where the independent variable is placed in relation to the dependent variables of this study, it has resulted that at a freedom scale of 10, the chi-square test value in the first case is 21.411 and in the second case it is 64.405, the certainty level is lower than 5%, where we admit that this study hypotheses are proven and statistically valid.

Variables	Table No.1: Pearson Chi-Square Tests	Value	Df	Asymp.Sig (2-sided)
MLV* SMP	Teaching methods of the old leader *Teaching model of the new leader	24.411 ^a	10	0.009
SVL*SPA	Old style of the leader of guide professor * Style of the new following leader	64.405 ^a	10	0.038

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Higher education in Albania currently faces a number of challenges regarding the impact of the old leader on new followers. A lower emotional attachment of the new leaders, either negative or overestimating emotions on the old leaders would be crucial, which in fact significantly affects the academic performance of younger individuals. Some authors suggested substantial individual benefits for the new leaders and higher education institutions, if the youngsters would go off the track of the older ones, in order to build a new model adapted to the present time. In fact, as highlighted by the results of this study, in most of the cases new followers have almost the same attitudes and characteristics as their leaders, thus rendering more difficult the creativity and creative skills of young people, as long as they follow the leaders' path. Academic leadership in Albania has the characteristics of charismatic, authoritarian and conceited leaders, without allowing to bring innovations in higher education. The academic guides will continue to need, above all, superior intellectual skills. As a result, it is imperative to accept new methodologies in teaching and leadership. Based on the above findings, competences such as independence, creative skills, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation as characteristics of a transformational leader would be required to enhance emotional competences and relations associated with the leadership. These should include, *inter alia*, the emotional intelligence which indeed is never treated in Albania and will be in the focus of future studies.



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