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Assessing leadership in Greek schools

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Abstract

This paper investigates and construes leadership in public schools in Greece, while acknowledging it as a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness and success. Leadership is assessed via a theoretical as well as a practical model (field research). Data is being processed via a multi-method approach. It is found that, under the present circumstances, leadership is rather weak and usually achieves modest results. It seems that it could be useful to employ new, non-hierarchical management patterns. The results bring new insights into leadership behavior, which may be practically employed in organisations; especially the novel leadership analysis tool showcased here.

Keywords: *education, leadership assessment, networked management, school manager*

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Introduction

Research Problem/Hypothesis

Both research and conventional wisdom acknowledge management and leadership of an organization or service as a critical factor of organizational and educational effectiveness and success (Bell 2007; Bennis 1989; Conger and Kanungo 1988; Fullan 2001; Heck and Hallinger 2005; Hersey and Blanchard 2000; Hickman 1992; Hoy and Miskel 2005; Kotter 2001; Kouzes and Posner 1995; Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach 1999; Μπουραντάς 2005: 282; Πασιαρδής 2004: 110; Pont, Nusche and Moorman 2008; Yukl 2009). Successful achievement of objectives, quality improvement and efficient functioning of administration presuppose not just shaping and strengthening stability, but also organizational change and adaptation (Burns 1978; Cuban 1988; Kotter 1990a; 1990b: 6-7; 2001; Leithwood and Duke 1999: 53). This requires strong leadership.

However, in Greece, leadership in educational organizations is often rather weak. Indeed, inefficient evaluation and accountability (Eurydice 2008: 104; Ζουγανέλη, Καφετζόπουλος, Σοφού και Τσάφος 2007: 145; OECD 2011: 54; Σπανού 1996: 38; 48; 2001: 177; Τσουκαλάς 1987: 139-140; Τσούκαλης 2006: 15-25), strict adherence to norms and hierarchies, tight resources, improper staff management and selection, politicization and particularism in administration, clientelism, patronage and corporatism are assumed as barriers to leadership (Γκότοβος 2005; Κατσαρός 2008; Μακρυδημήτρης 2006: 52; Μιχόπουλος 1998; Μπουραντάς 2005; OECD 2011; Σαΐτης 2005; 2008; ΥΠΕΠΘ 2008; Χυτήρης και Άννινος 2004). Consequently, organizational and administrative underdevelopment, low productivity, mismanagement, excessive centralization and lack of a modern spirit are detected (European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice 2013: 103-105; Karagiannis 2014; OECD 2011: 55; Σωτηρόπουλος 2010: 117-118; Τσούκαλης 2006: 15-25). In these conditions, managers lack the required autonomy and freedom of action (Μακρυδημήτρης και Μιχαλόπουλος 2000: 501; 692; OECD 2012: 502-503)[1] and are not facilitated to adopt leadership behavior and act effectively as decision makers, inspirers and change agents.

On the other hand, it is understood that the educational work is delivered by a "community of equals" holding specialized knowledge and autonomous behavior. Furthermore, the nature of education and its management structures and the interplay between its constituents are horizontal and of a cross-sectional nature. Vertical organizational structures cannot cope with the multidimensional and complex problems and needs. Responding to the need of adaptation to current circumstances would prompt to open organizational concepts (Νονάκα και Τακεούτσι 2001: 206). Or, as Fullan (1993: 33-38) put it, to the synthesis of aggregate and decentralization powers, to the balance between individualism and collective diversity, to the directional command line (bottom-up and vice versa). A genuine and ongoing collaboration and communication between those engaged in organizational behavior is then required, which tends to become more like a network-formed structure, with a horizontal and equal, rather than hierarchical, command and rule (Μακρυδημήτρης 2004: 135-136, 147). Most probably, the manager-leader is best perceived as a participative network agent (networker) or as Plato's "weaver" (Μακρυδημήτρης 2004: 68ff., 130ff.; 2008). In this way, organizational networking and

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[1] High school autonomy is common practice in the developed world (Eurydice and Eurostat 2012: 49 ff; OECD 2010: 70-71). Often, the role of central government is downscaled in favor of the local organizations (Felipe, Fasih and Patrinos, with Santibáñez 2009; Honingh and Hooge 2009; Hudson 2007; Ozga 2009; Rhodes 1997; 2007). The issue of autonomy should be seen in relation to the kind, level, scope and consequences of the accountability it entails (Leithwood, Edge and Jantzi 1999).

communication technocracy emerge, with collective management bodies, policy communities and networks being purposeful as administrative tools that complement strict hierarchies and vertical, centralized control. Networked administration prefers methods such as cooperation/working group, network, committee, team of experts, consultation, de-concentration of responsibilities to hierarchical layers, functional differentiation and interdependence, uniform action planning, prearranged goal-setting.

Network analysis emphasizes the continuity in the relationship between interest groups and departments of administration (Bevir and Rhodes 2003: 22). The networked leadership pattern involves groups (networks) that bear a strong resemblance to policy communities (Rhodes and Marsh 1992: 182, 186). It is the positions and roles that partners assume and the relationships among them, rather than people who occupy them, that designate the network (Marsh and Smith 2000).

Consequently, this paper is critical because it brings new insights into leadership behavior and management practices of Greek managers, in a system (Greek administration) where leadership is not encouraged.

Research Objective

The purpose of this paper is to investigate and assess leadership in public (secondary and tertiary) education management in Greece. The suitability of the current management-leadership pattern is examined, with a particular emphasis on flexible, networked management practices.

Research Questions

1. How is leadership manifested in educational management? What results does it produce?
2. Are traditional, hierarchic management patterns of the Weberian, classical bureaucratic organization and service convenient? Or perhaps a new management and leadership paradigm is needed, given the diffuse of knowledge and the anti-hierarchical logic that governs the professionals?
3. How are networks formulated in educational administration? What problems is management attempting to resolve through horizontal networked management methods?

Empirical Research

Leadership Assessment Template

By reviewing relevant literature on patterns and dimensions of leadership behavior and/or leadership assessment models (Avolio, Bass, and Jung 1999; Bass 1985; Bass and Avolio 1994; Bennis and Nanus 1985; Conger 1989; Conger and Kanungo 1988; 1994; Kent, Crotts, and Aziz 2001; Kotter 1990a; 1990b; 2001; Kouzes and Posner 1993; 1995), the dominant (positive, effective) leadership behaviors have been identified.

Figure 1: Key leadership factors in homologous scholarly work

Bass (1985), Bass and Avolio (1994), Avolio et al. (1999)	Bennis and Nanus (1985)	Conger and Kanungo (1988; 1994), Conger (1989)	Kent et al. (2001)	Kotter (1990a; 1990b; 2001)	Kouzes and Posner (1993; 1995)
Intellectual stimulation		Empowering others to achieve the vision			Challenging the process
	Vision	Articulating a vision	Visualizing Greatness	Establishing direction	Inspiring a shared vision
Individualized consideration		Commitment and sensitivity of members' needs	Empowering the "We"		Enabling others to act
Idealized Influence (Attributed Charisma)	Deployment of self		Managing One's Self	Aligning people	Modeling the way
Inspirational leadership	Trust through positioning	Building trust	Care and Recognition	Motivating and inspiring	Encouraging the heart
Idealized Influence (Perceived Charisma)	Meaning through communication	Communicating an inspiring vision	Communicating for Meaning		

Figure 2: Leadership Assessment Template (theoretical version)

Leadership component	No	Leadership practice
I. People and Groups (PE)	1	Cooperation development (CO)
	2	Empowerment of people (ST)
II. Ameliorative change (CH)	3	Adaptive improvement (AD)
	4	Ingenuity and Innovation (IN)
III. Ethical commitments (CU)	5	Establishment of vision (VI)
	6	Values formation (VA)
IV. Activation (MO)	7	Trust building (TR)
	8	Encouragement and Recognition (EN)
V. Effectiveness (RE)	9	Effective management (EM)
	10	Networked management (NE)

Drawing upon the above review, a (provisional) analytical Template (hereafter TEMPLATE) for the assessment of leadership was constructed. The TEMPLATE uses five criteria (components) to assess leadership. Each criterion encompasses two management practices that express specific leadership behaviors. The components and practices shape the independent (environmental) variables, while leadership is the dependent variable

(outcome). Almost all of the variables are people-oriented. The transformational perspective (Burns 1978: 20) of the TEMPATE is distinctive. The last practice (networked management practices) is included in the TEMPLATE due to the relative working hypothesis (the need to adopt those practices) and also due to the interest displayed in literature for networked management in education.

The TEMPLATE contains interlinked statements, which convey indicative assumptions about how leadership is manifested. More specifically, the following thirty assumptions (six per component, three per practice of the TEMPLATE) are made for those who exercise management and leadership effectively:

A. Are people-oriented (component I). More specifically, they:

Develop cooperation (practice 1), with behaviors such as:
• Listen carefully and respect the views of others (assumption 1).
• Develop collaborative working relationships and encourage teamwork (assumption 2).
• Carefully evaluate different views before making decisions (assumption 3).

Empower people (practice 2), with behaviors such as:
• Allow people enough autonomy and freedom at work (assumption 4).
• Help people grow both personally and professionally (assumption 5).
• Attend to the needs, abilities and wishes of others (assumption 6).

B. Are oriented towards the need for adaptation to ameliorative changes and continuous improvement (component II). More specifically, they:

Promote adaptive improvement (practice 3) with behaviors such as:
• Systematically recognize the need for change and adaptation and promote similar actions (assumption 7).
• Apply methods to improve staff and organizational performance (assumption 8).
• Encourage proposals for administrative improvement (assumption 9).

Invent and innovate (practice 4), with behaviors such as:
• Encourage the utilization of opportunities, and the introduction of innovation (assumption 10).
• Reconsider the suitability of practices in use (assumption 11).
• Devise and propose new problem-solving ideas and approaches (assumption 12).

C. Support ethical commitments (component III). More specifically, they:

Establish a vision (practice 5), with behaviors such as:
• Drive people to a common direction and a vision for the future (assumption 13).
• Urge people to develop their own personal visions and to incorporate them into the common vision (assumption 14).
• Speak about common goals and prospects with faith and enthusiasm (assumption 15).

Take part in shaping values and give a corresponding meaning in their action (practice 6), with behaviors such as:
• Speak about values and ethics and act accordingly (assumption 16).
• Take part in formulating ideas and attitudes (assumption 17).
• Alter wishes and aspirations of people (assumption 18).

D. Activate and motivate (component IV). More specifically, they:

Build trust (practice 7), with behaviors such as:
• Express their faith in people's abilities (assumption 19).
• Relegate to second place individual interests for the sake of the team (assumption 20).
• Transfer confidence and pride to people (assumption 21).

Encourage and recognize people (practice 8), with behaviors such as:
• Recognize in public and praise the positive contribution of people (assumption 22).
• Find ways to reward achievements (assumption 23).
• Praise and support good performance of people (assumption 24).

E. Are effective (component V). More specifically, they:

Manage effectively (practice 9), with behaviors such as:
• Create a feeling of satisfaction to people (assumption 25).
• Uplift performance of people beyond their own expectations (assumption 26).
• Achieve the effective functioning of people and unit / units they manage (assumption 27).

Exercise networked management practices (practice 10), with behaviors such as:
• Develop new partnerships with business units and bodies (assumption 28).
• Widely use working groups and involve units of different hierarchical levels in their work (assumption 29).
• Promote the charge of responsibilities outside the hierarchical rule (assumption 30).

The more a manager is disposed to performing these behaviors and the higher the frequency and intensity these behaviors occur, the more leadership is expected to be enhanced.

Sampling

The TEMPLATE was then used in field research. The subjects of the sample (n = 55) were selected purposefully (Gall, Gall and Borg 1999: 294-296; Patton 2002: 230-242) using recommendations (LeCompte and Preissle 1984: 76-77). Multiple cases were studied - nine secondary schools situated in the vicinity of Athens and ten organizational units of the University of Athens (three faculties, five departments, two subdivisions). Two schools were identified as best or exemplar or paradigmatic cases (Goetz and LeCompte 1984; Miles and Huberman 1994) and were deliberately included in the sample because they were uncommon and reinforced the findings. The subjects were not only managers, but also teaching staff from the managers' workplace who do not hold management positions, so as to control for the bias of the respondents. Gender participation was balanced. Pluralism in fields of specialization was ensured. Large age and experience ranges were accommodated.

Data Collection

The empirical evidence was collected during the winter of 2013 (17 weeks) in the subjects' workplace, with four methods: one-to-one interviews, group interviews (only for school teachers), open discussion and observation. In focus groups, in order to eliminate the subjective perceptions of respondents and improve the accuracy of measurements, the unanimous decision of each group, rather than the average leadership score of individual evaluations, was taken (Kirkman and Rosen 1999; Tesluk, Zaccaro, Marks and Mathieu 1997).

The main research tool was a questionnaire, which mainly included semi-structured questions that go in line with the TEMPLATE. The degree of agreement with the statements of the TEMPLATE was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale: 0 = none, 1 = low, 2 = moderate, 3 = high/very high, 4 = extremely high.

Figure 3: Matching the questionnaire's questions, variables and research questions

No	Question	Corresponding to:		
		Leadership practice*	Leadership component *	Research question**
-	General and biographical data (First part) (…)	-	-	-
1	Which elements constitute the "effective conduct" of a manager?	-	-	1, 2, 3
2	What are the major challenges and problems faced by managers?	-	-	2, 3
3	To what extent is there a team spirit and teamwork? Please comment.	CO	PE	1, 2
4	Do you work in networks? (If yes) Please describe their powers, composition and organization. What results do they produce?	NE	PE	1, 2, 3
5	Has/have your school(s)/unit(s) of responsibility developed partnerships with other bodies? (If yes) Please describe.	NE	PE	1, 2, 3
6	To what extent are conditions in place that encourage (individual/group) improvement? Please describe.	AD	CH	1, 2
7	Do you apply new ideas, approaches or procedures? (If yes) Please describe.	IN	CH	1, 2
8	On what evidence would you rely to see how effectively your school(s)/unit(s) of responsibility operate? How satisfied are you?	EM	CH	1, 2. 3
9	To what extent is a teacher/professor inspired by common direction and vision? Please describe.	VI	CU	1, 2
10	Are specific values, ethical principles or morals promoted in your workplace? (If yes) Please describe.	VA	CU	1, 2
11	Please describe the interpersonal trust climate.	TR	MO	1, 2
12	How do you react to (individual/group) great efforts or success?	EN	MO	1, 2
-	Free space (Third part) (…)	-	-	1, 2, 3

Legend

See figure 2 ante
*** See introduction ante*

The questionnaire was not provided, since it served as a guiding tool for the collection of data. Before use, the questionnaire was tested for its conceptual validity, was pilot tested, was evaluated for its statistical reliability (alpha=0.90) and was reviewed by external evaluators (peer debriefers) (Guba and Lincoln 1989: 237; Lincoln and Guba 1985: 283; 308-309). This process led to the provisional TEMPLATE.

Figure 4: Leadership Assessment Template (provisional version)

Leadership component	No	Leadership practice
I. People and Groups (PE)	1	Cooperation development (CO)
	2	Networked management (NE)
II. Ameliorative change (CH)	3	Adaptive improvement (AD)
	4	Ingenuity and Innovation (IN)
	5	Effective management (EM)
III. Ethical commitments (CU)	6	Establishment of vision (VI)
	7	Values formation (VA)
IV. Activation (MO)	8	Trust building (TR)
	9	Encouragement and Recognition (EN)

It has been endeavored to ensure that the questions elicit the desired information without prejudging the answers, or leading to desired responses, or even revealing the researcher's intentions. Questions spur sharing of personal evidence, detect causes and demand a judgmental thinking and substantiation of positions expressed. Both causal and non-causal questions are posed. Defensiveness has been avoided - the word "why" is not present in questions; nor are any negative or undesirable dimensions of leadership. A balance is followed between two interpretative approaches, namely variance theory and process theory (Mohr 1982). Variance questions tend to focus on contrasting and correlating variables. Rather, process questions deal with how certain facts or features affect other facts or features, as well as with the sequence of events that lead to leadership. Process questions generally precede and variance questions follow. Both research questions and questionnaire questions are not only descriptive, but also interpretative.

Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis were used (Brewer and Hunter 1989; 2006; Creswell 1994; 2005; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). To improve the reliability and validity of results, data and methodological triangulation was used. Data were ordered not only by education level, but also by variable, staff category and case. This multi-method approach gives depth and validity. The flow of analysis takes place starting from the statistical description of general and biographical data. Then, leadership is examined and described in terms of its significance (intensity) and the results it brings. Subsequently, the leadership phenomenon is interpreted. The attempt to describe and construe leadership was oriented toward diversity and variables, as well as procedures (Maxwell 1992). To generate meaning from data, contradictions and inconsistencies in the data were sought. Also, alternative interpretations were attempted.

Qualitative analysis followed three distinct stages, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles and Huberman 1994: 10-12). Statistical packages were used, such as SPSS, Atlas.ti, Excel and Lisrel. Non-parametric statistical tests and procedures suitable for ordinal data (leadership measured on a Likert-type scale) have been primarily applied. However, the cumulative leadership scale (total scores or weighted sums of many questions) is expressed by descriptive statistical measures[2]. Homogeneity of observations was additionally tested by the use of quantified leadership measurements, leadership z-scores, scatter plots and box plots of variables, and Categorical Principal Components Analysis. Moreover, correlation statistics were used to measure the association between leadership variables and leadership index (Kendall's tau and Spearman's rho), leadership across educational levels and sexes (Mann-Whitney test), leadership and biographical data, and managerial categories and educational levels (Kruskal-Wallis test & Kendall's tau and Spearman's rho). Other statistical forms employed include bivariate analysis, sensitivity analysis of observations, and qualitative exploration and interpretation through dynamic analysis, problem analysis and causal factor analysis.

During the planning phase, the research plan was presented to peer debriefers (academic staff from various Universities) for contemplation and feedback. The findings of the analysis were further controlled and verified by receiving feedback from informants («member checks») (Guba and Lincoln 1989: 238-241; Lincoln and Guba 1985: 314 -316; Miles and Huberman 1994: 275-277).

Synthesis of findings

No extreme or outlier cases were detected. Therefore, divergent values have not been eliminated. Aggregate leadership scores were standardized to a percentage scale with the following transformation formula: Total score x 100 / (number of observations x highest grading scale point). The scores were divided into three categories depending on importance: low (0-33), moderate (34-66) and high (67-100). Average or high correlation between scores of individual variables and total leadership score are noted for all variables but NE (Kendall's tau b & and Spearman's rho)[3]. The four greatest contributors to leadership are CO, EM, TR and EN.

Leadership scores in both educational levels under study are very close. Besides, correlation coefficients (Kendall's tau b and Spearman's rho) of leadership scores between staff of the two educational levels are particularly weak. Mann-Whitney test ascertains that leadership performance in tertiary education is slightly higher than in secondary level, although not statistically significant (U = 133, z = -0.334, two-tailed p = 0.756). The level of significance, when corrected for tied observations, changes marginally to 0.738. The value of the absolute z value divided by the square root of the sample size gives a 0.055 effect size, which indicates a very weak link between the scores of the two educational levels. PE contributes the most to leadership behavior, while components CH and CU are much less responsible for the leadership phenomenon. It is worth mentioning that CU is the only latent variable that displays a noticeably higher charge in tertiary in relation to secondary level.

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[2]The assumption that aggregated, Likert-type data represent continuous measurements is common practice. See, for example, Avolio *et al.* (1999), Conger and Kanungo (1994), Kent *et al.* (2001) and Kouzes and Posner (1993).
[3] Besides the correlation of each variable with total leadership score, non-parametric measures of bivariate dependence (Spearman and Kendall) were used for all leadership variables. The aforementioned statistical criteria exhibit a weak and negative value for pairs NE-IN and NE-VI, whereas a positive relationship is discovered in all other pairs of variables.
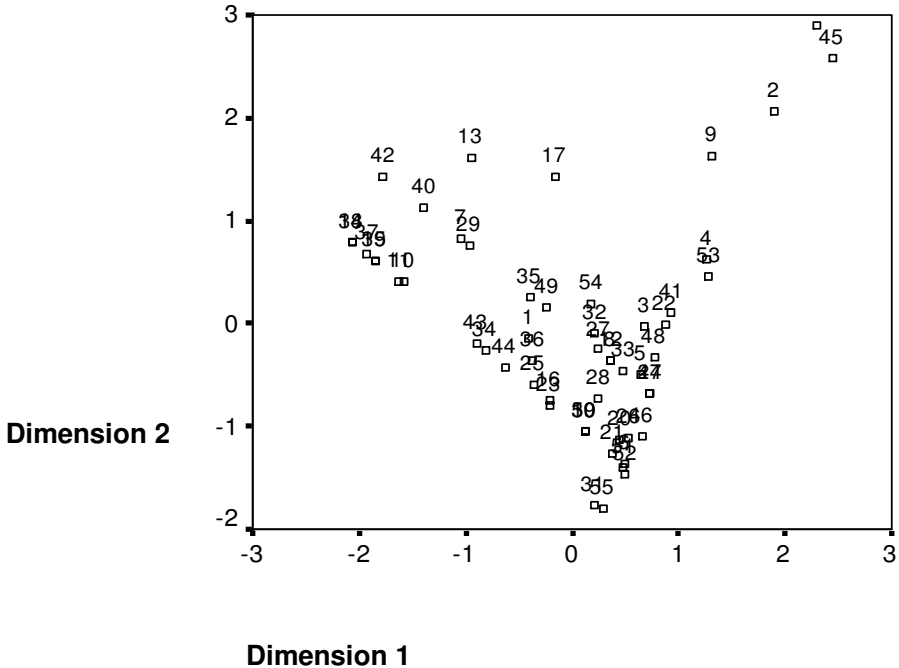
Figure 5: Dispersion of observations

Dimension 2

Dimension 1

Figure 6: Charges of leadership variables by educational level

	Leadership score by variable									
	CO	NE	AD	IN	EM	VI	VA	TR	EN	Σ
Secondary level	41,4	34,6	24,0	24,0	29,8	18,3	26,0	39,4	26,0	29,3
Significance	√√	√√	√	√	√	√	√	√√	√	√
Tertiary level	50	27,3	20,5	22,7	40,9	27,3	36,4	31,8	31,8	32,1
Significance	√√	√	√	√	√√	√	√√	√	√	√

Significance (0-100): √ low, √√ medium, √√√ high

Figure 7: Bivariate correlation between administrative practices and total leadership score

	CO	NE	AD	IN	EM	VI	VA	TR	EN
Kendall's tau_b	0,706	0,204	0,524	0,469	0,605	0,490	0,501	0,643	0,675
Significance	0,000	0,132	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Spearman's rho	0,809	0,257	0,649	0,581	0,698	0,585	0,607	0,770	0,781
Significance	0,000	0,125	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000

Figure 8: Charges of leadership components by educational level

	Leadership score by leadership component				
	PE	CH	CU	MO	Σ
Secondary level	38	26	22,1	32,7	29,3
Significance	√√	√	√	√	√
Tertiary level	38,6	28	31,8	31,8	32,1
Significance	√√	√	√	√	√

Significance (0-100): √ low, √√ medium, √√√ high

Staff categories exhibited in a comparative perspective are school managers and school counselors (secondary education), and Faculty members (tertiary education). Four typologies of leadership may be identified: I. Collaborative (component PE), II. Innovative (component CH), III. Visionary (component CU), IV. Inspirer (component CU). Following the findings from the statistical analysis: Managers are quite collaborative, but hardly innovative. They sufficiently achieve to build trust (refers to school counselors), but do not create a common, well-defined and concrete organizational vision. They do not particularly promote an adaptive improvement and do not take a dynamic part in shaping the cultural and ethical context. They do not adequately recognize, praise or encourage great efforts, high performance or success and do not exercise management very effectively. The Kruskal – Wallis test does not show a statistically significant difference in leadership performance among staff categories (Chi-square= 2.129, p= 0.546). Kendall's tau b and Spearman's rho reveal a very weak correlation between staff categories and leadership scores.

It is evident that leadership performance is rather poor. It has been found that none of the examined leadership behaviors and practices is practiced in a high frequency or intensity. Another interesting finding is that leadership performance of the two sexes does not seem to vary[4]. Biographical data have not been used as control variables, since it is shown that differences in leadership performance in relation to biographical data are not statistically significant (Kruskal – Wallis test) and do not associate linearly (Spearman test).

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[4] Yukl (2009: 547-549) noted that literature on gender differences in leadership behavior does not lead to clear conclusions.

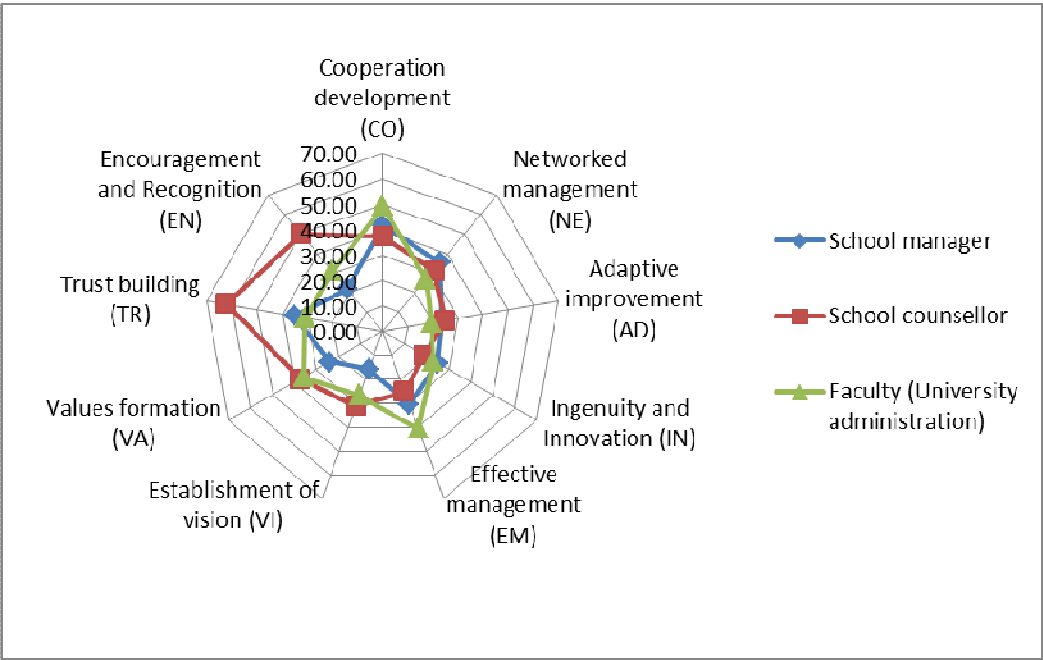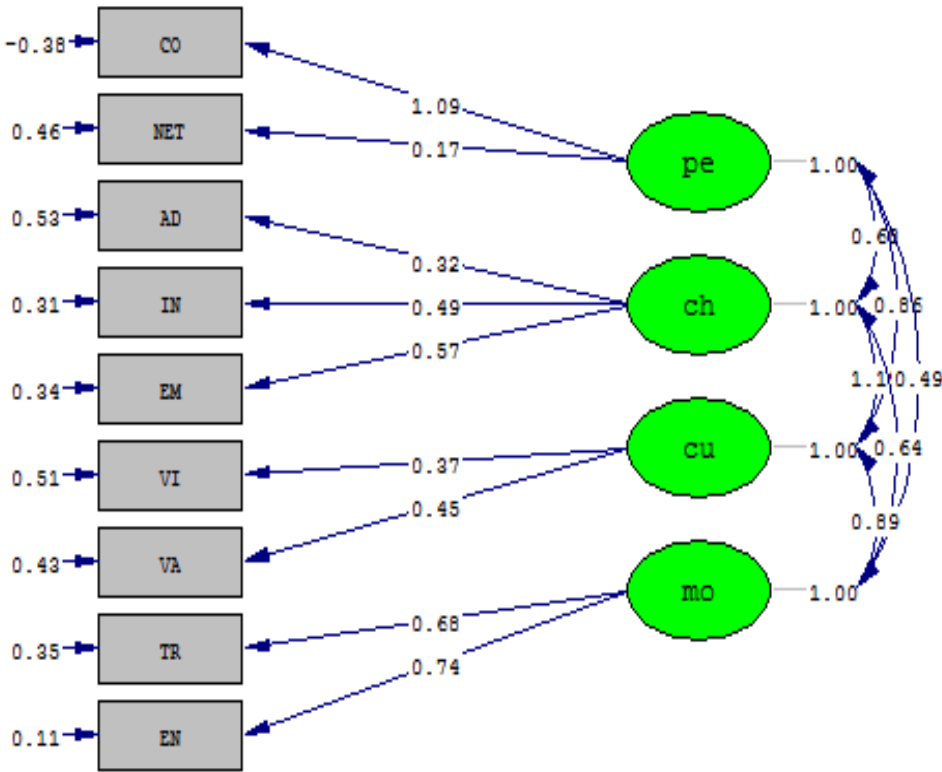**Figure 9: Leadership profile of managers**

Figure 10: Path diagram of the metric model

Finally, the data has been proven to be suitable for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The latent variables of the TEMPLATE (leadership components) were modeled with the use of a Metric Model. The Metric Model is able to interpret the causal direction of the latent variables and the relationships between observed and latent variables. Moreover, the emerging findings can be used to formulate hypotheses regarding causal mechanisms of leadership. As in any path diagram, the assumption of linearity of the proposed causal relationships is made. CFA checks the plausibility of multiple correlations suggested by the TEMPLATE. CFA also helps in investigated the ability of the TEMPLATE to reproduce the patterns of relations arising from field observations.

Due to the ordinal nature of data and the relatively small sample size, the maximum likelihood method for polychoric correlation matrices is applied. Also, the calculations of the parameters of the CFA are based on the asymptotic covariance matrix of the sampling correlations. The model fits well to most but not all of the data. However, the small sample size underestimates the model fit and cancels out the significance of certain indicators.

Figure 11: Model fit: Indicators

Maximum Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square (C1)	42.773 (P = 0.0034)
Browne's (1984) ADF Chi-Square (C2_NT)	33.158 (P = 0.0445)
Estimated Non-centrality Parameter (NCP)	21.773
90 Percent Confidence Interval for NCP	(6.844; 44.461)
Minimum Fit Function Value	1.156
Population Discrepancy Function Value (F0)	0.588
90 Percent Confidence Interval for F0	(0.185; 1.202)
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.167
90 Percent Confidence Interval for RMSEA	(0.0939; 0.239)
P-Value for Test of Close Fit (RMSEA < 0,05)	0.00917
Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI)	2.453
90 Percent Confidence Interval for ECVI	(2.050; 3.067)
ECVI for Saturated Model	2.432
ECVI for Independence Model	6.015
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.833
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.872
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.486
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.925
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.932
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.714
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	0.0703
Standardized RMR	0.108
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.834
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.644
Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI)	0.389

All variables but NE receive t-values higher than 1.96. This finding is an indication that the independent variables affect the dependent variable (leadership), which confirms the validity and predictive power of the TEMPLATE. The t-values test reveals that the variable that mostly influences latent variables is EN and the least important is NE. The findings for the variable NE indicate the need for either its rejection from the TEMPLATE or for its

transformation so as to achieve a better model fit. In addition, the loading of the variable "networked management" was found poor. Furthermore, its correlation with both the overall leadership ratings and with other variables was weak (occasionally, a negative bivariate correlation was observed) and not statistically significant. Overall, the imperfect fit and weak charges the CFA model provided for networked management, its small potential influence over the latent structure "People and Groups", as well as its rather low discriminatory power and reliability, all lead to the elimination of the variable NE from the TEMPLATE.

Figure 12: Leadership Assessment Template (final version)

Leadership component	No	Leadership practice
I. People and Groups (PE)	1	Cooperation development (CO)
II. Ameliorative change (CH)	2	Adaptive improvement (AD)
	3	Ingenuity and Innovation (IN)
	4	Effective management (EM)
III. Ethical commitments (CU)	5	Establishment of vision (VI)
	6	Values formation (VA)
IV. Activation (MO)	7	Trust building (TR)
	8	Encouragement and Recognition (EN)

Concluding remarks

Conclusions/summary

This paper uses a novel TEMPLATE in field research to identify and measure the dominant variables of positive leadership behavior in Greek schools. All leadership components are vital and act synergistically, although not commensurate. Networked practices have been found to have a minor contribution to leadership and results, because working in networks is not common practice. Due to several parameters, leadership in Greek education is imperceptible and is not favored. The image of a manager is very close to that of a traditional manager-bureaucrat and nowhere near the standard of an effective "leader" of a modern educational organization.

In the Greek case, networks are formed, almost exclusively, on a voluntary basis or as a result of an administrative mandate. It is also clear that networks are deficient in organization and operation. The functions of planning and programming are superficially and unprofessionally exercised. Pivotal leadership roles (coordinator, conciliator, facilitator, arbitrator, observer, critical thinker) allocated to members are poorly defined, overlap between the competent persons or are rather randomly distributed. Furthermore, differentiation of tasks is unnecessarily low. Ineffective delegation of roles and tasks is observed. The share of power between decision makers is based on hierarchical grounds. The confined and introvert character of networks and their subordinate role curtail their corresponding share of responsibility for results.

Although networked practices are neither common nor developed, it is acknowledged that networked management may benefit organizations. The potentially positive impact of networks can be seen as follows: they ease access to collaborative activities, shorten distances, exchange expertise and knowledge, exploit synergies, generate revenues, increase efficiency, create added value, heighten reputation, boost results, shape a collaborative culture, enhance democracy and a meaningful participation in decision making, discharge management, portion out responsibility, speed up decision-making, facilitate the acceptance of proposals, promote trust, revive interest in offering, increase extraversion, expand administrative flexibility, lead to less centralization of administration, mitigate adverse effects of rigid hierarchy.

However, the perspective of developing and using alternative management and leadership patterns of a more equal and horizontal cooperation does not have a plain rationale. The share of responsibility and accountability between networks and the vertical hierarchy must be precisely defined in proper dimensions, according to the centralization of power and how the discretion is shared among managers. At the same time, new trends in management, in teaching and in learning processes and social challenges and peculiarities that school has to manage redefine leadership roles.

Merit/Significance

This piece of writing serves as a useful resource for educational leaders, practitioners, researchers and policy makers. It brings new insights into leadership behavior. Overall, this piece furthers the discussion over what is important in leadership and to what degree. The documentation and reflections apposed here aspire to spur further research, re-conceptualization or meta-analysis of leadership.

Besides, the TEMPLATE, a novel leadership tool, may be practically employed in organizations, in activities such as self-evaluation, selection of candidates for training, promotion of improvement interventions, strategy development/planning, policy formulation, design of staff incentive schemes, and recruitment and personnel selection.

Originality

A key contribution is two novel analytical tools – namely a leadership assessment questionnaire and the corresponding theoretical construct (TEMPLATE) – which were used in empirical research, instead of employing ready-made models from the literature. Some additional features may also be noted.

The primary research conducted is one among few empirical attempts in Greece that assesses educational leadership and its components, with an emphasis on networked management patterns. Common practice is to study the behavior and action of the manager in the "macro" or "medium" level, so the "micro" level has not been adequately studied. Besides, the study extends over to secondary and higher levels of education, and covers different staff categories and hierarchical levels. This comparative approach offers a framework where our findings may be more fully understood (De Vaus 2001: 40-41). The conventional option is to cover only one educational level. Methodologically, this work is innovative in many more ways (see relevant section above).

Also, it is mostly common in social research that a mere description or realization of the situation under study is cited, without studying the factors causing phenomena, thus validating a more or less known reality. A potential originality of the study is that it delves into the mechanism of specific leadership behaviors in administration and the challenges

and dilemmas incurred. It also examines results of events (administrative practice, leadership, effective management, achievements) and processes (leadership behavior, principles of organization and administration, management pattern, administrative functions). This is in fact new knowledge acquired.

Limitations and Delimitations

The definition of a phenomenon (leadership) and its determinants cannot always be empirically supported. Even if logical or semantic links between given behaviors are theoretically substantiated, these behaviors may not be present in their entirety, particularly in dissimilar conditions (Brewer and Hunter 2006: 119-120).

One thing that is to be acknowledged is that a direct comparison of research results with those of other related research would not be expedient, due to the fact that novel leadership assessment tools have been used here. To complicate matters more, appreciating the relative contribution of a manager is painful and may lead to a blunder. An additional concern in the Greek case has been the low availability of performance indicators and data on assessments, evaluations and appraisals, while this information is rarely understood in a uniform manner.

Last but not least, the sample size was relatively small, as is usually the case in qualitative research, so it is proper to draw conclusions with caution. The findings are by definition context-sensitive and are not meant to be generalized.

Recommendations for future research

Alternative methodological choices, such as multilevel analysis (individual, dyadic, group or organizational level), exploration of negative or undesirable leadership behaviors or a focus on causal analysis could come as reasoned and advantageous. Also, each leadership practice (variable) could be studied separately.

It appears interesting to expand the sample in size and/or scope to include parents, administrators and stakeholders from several geographical areas and organizational levels, in the public or private sphere.

In the context of a comparative study, counterpart organizations or peers in Greece and other countries could be compared. Another possibility is the comparison of findings of similar works across time to check their validity.

Lastly, leadership data could be integrated into econometric or social models so as to be correlated to micro (e.g. technology, strategy, size, knowledge, perceptions etc.) or macro perspectives (e.g. culture, innovation, mortality, human rights, expenditure, political stability etc.).

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