

CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES OF STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DONJA GORICA

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Abstract

The research performed on a sample of 210 students of the University of Donja Gorica (UDG), Podgorica, Montenegro, aimed to determine their leadership profiles' characteristics and examine the possible connection and the impact of selected demographic variables on its manifestation. In accordance with the total transformational leadership of Bass and Avolio, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X, self-rated version) was applied to measure the components of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. The results of descriptive, comparative (t-test and ANOVA) and correlational analysis of the obtained data showed that the leadership profiles of UDG students are characterized by high scores for the transformational leadership factors (individual consideration, charisma, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation), also followed by high scores for the contingent reward factors and management by exception - active related to transactional leadership, but with lowest scores for management by exception - passive and laissez-faire leadership. Such a leadership profile with predominant transformational qualities makes a good base for future leadership effectiveness. The results of the impact of demographic variables (gender and playing sports) were discussed in the context of their consistency/inconsistency with the findings of previous research, theoretical and practical implications, and, specifically, regarding current policy and vision of UDG, entirely compatible with strategies used by efficient transformational leaders.

Key words: LEADERSHIP PROFILE / GENDER / PLAYING SPORTS / STUDENTS / UNIVERSITY OF DONJA GORICA / MONTENEGRO

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INTRODUCTION

Although leadership in the last few decades has been the focus of interest of researchers from various domains of social sciences, it seems that this interest is the most significant and most present today. This phenomenon is not hard to explain, since the results of a considerable number of studies, conducted in the fields of business, sports, army, education, health, administration..., unmistakably indicate that the efficiency of organizing and the success of organizations, companies, campaigns, services, clubs, as well as the satisfaction, motivation, and dedication of employees, largely depend on the quality of leadership.

The importance of leadership and leaders in the effective realization of the goals of each organization, as well as in recognition of its value and identity, both on the national and global market, is best illustrated by the examples in sports and large global companies. Names of the leaders and fields of their activities sometimes should not even be mentioned; telling the names of their leaders, founders, and/or creators of their politics and development makes it clear to everyone who this is all about.

Most contemporary psychologists agree with Cox (2012), who states it is much easier to give the examples of extraordinary leadership than to explain it; speaking of leadership in sports, he gives examples of great football trainers, managers (sports directors) or captains, such as John Wooden and Phil Jackson (basketball), Pat Head Summit (women's basketball), Vince Lombardi (American football), sir Alex Ferguson (Aberdeen, Manchester United), sir Bobby Moore (England), Franz Beckenbauer (Bayern Munich), Pep Guardiola (Barcelona), Carlo Ancelotti (Parma, Chelsea), etc.

Numerous leadership theories appeared trying to answer one of the following simple questions: "What makes the leader great and successful? Is it about certain personality traits or specific behaviors? Could leadership be learned, or are leaders born like this? Is a leader successful in all, or only in some situations?" Modern psychologists classified them in different ways as: clusters trait theory, behavioral situational and relational theories, transformational leadership theories, and cognitive approaches to leadership (Murray, Mann, Mead, 2010); cluster theories of universal traits of leaders, universal behavior theories of leaders, situational specific traits, situational specific behavior (Cox, 2012; Tod, Thatcher, Rahman, 2010); clusters leadership theories based on individuals (trait and behavioral approaches) and leadership theories based on the person and the environment (Lane, 2008: Fiedler's contingency theory, Chelladurai's multidimensional model of leadership in sport); as well as cluster trait approaches, behavioral approaches (in non-sport settings and sport), situational and interactional approaches (Weinberg & Gould, 2019).

Murray, Mann, and Mead (2010) think that the definition and understanding of leadership contribute to its effectiveness. Most definitions of leadership refer to behaviors, traits, or abilities related to the task of leading people in a particular direction. The above authors underline that leadership is much more complicated than any definition; consequently, it should be regarded as art and science of influencing others by credibility, capability, and dedication (p. 107). Northouse (as cited in Weinberg and Gould, 2019) defines leadership as the process through which a person influences a group of persons to reach a common goal. The leader knows the goals and tasks of the team or the group, gives directions, and provides resources for their realization. A transformational leader motivates his followers and associates to do more than they originally intended or more than they thought possible (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Bass & Bass 2008). He sets challenging expectations and aims for high standards of achievement. Transformational leadership concerns the behavior of the leader who transforms and inspires his subordinates to work beyond their interests for the well-being of the organization (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). The transformational leader is driven and directed by his vision, which is the key of leadership, and leadership is the key to success for the organization (Nanus, 1992, as cited in Murray et al, 2010).

Towards a full range of transformational leadership model

Unlike Burns (1978), who considered transformational and transactional leadership to be mutually opposed, Bass and his followers (from 1985 onwards) empirically confirmed transformational and transactional leadership as two positively correlated dimensions at opposite ends of the leadership continuum, complementing each other. Bass and Riggio (2006) underline that transformational leadership is to a certain extent an extension of transactional leadership, which emphasizes the transaction between other leaders, colleagues, and associates. Transformational leadership is brought to a higher level. It inspires the followers to be dedicated to the shared vision and goals of the organization or team, stimulates them to be innovative regarding the ways of problem-solving, and develops their leadership capabilities through education, mentoring, challenges and support.

It should be emphasized that transformational leadership has much in common with charismatic leadership, but charisma makes only a part of transformational leadership. Suggestion by Bass and Steidlmeier of the existence of authentic and pseudo-transformational leadership served to Luthans and Avolio in 2003 to develop a concept of authentic leadership, defining it as a “form of transparent and ethical leader behavior which encourages openness in the exchange of information needed for decision making, accepting the contribution of the associates” (Avolio, Walumbova, Weber, 2009, p. 423).

The model of the full range of leadership by Bass and Avolio includes four components or factors of transformational leadership, three factors of transactional leadership, and passive or laissez-faire leadership.

Charisma is the first factor and common denominator for *individualized influences* embodied in the behavior and attributes of leaders, inspiring the others to work on the realization of the accepted vision. Such leaders serve as standards/models for the identification, to be admired, respected, and believed.

Although according to the opinion of Bass and Bass (2008) *inspirational motivation* could not be separated from charisma, in the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ-5X) by Bass and Avolio (2004), it is estimated as a factor describing leaders communicating high standards to their associates, inspiring them through motivation to become dedicated to the organization, to share its common vision, to achieve performance level beyond their own expectations. Through inspirational motivation, transformational leaders create team spirit, challenge, and give importance to their employees' work.

Intellectual stimulation is the third factor indicating leadership that emphasizes the importance of intellectual capital, stimulates the associates to be creative and innovative, to look at problems differently, observe, analyze, evaluate and solve challenges and problems in new ways.

Individual consideration is the fourth factor of transformational leadership, indicating that the leader pays special attention to the needs of each associate for achievement and growth, recognizes individual characteristics and differences, and values the individual accordingly. He does it by creating new opportunities for learning in a stimulating climate, helping the associates achieve higher business efficiency levels.

Transactional leadership with its three components (*contingent reward*¹, *management by exception - actively*² and *management by exception - passive*³), as well as *laissez-faire* (non-leadership behavior),⁴ makes the full scope of leadership behavior measured by MLQ-5X.

¹ Contingent (conditional) reinforcement can be positive in the form of rewards, praise and recognition, or negative in the form of active or passive forms of management

² Management by exception - actively represents a corrective transaction that is less effective than a contingent reward or transformational leadership component (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

³ Management by exception—passively characterizes leaders who passively wait for exceptions (deviations), errors and omissions to occur and only then take corrective action.

⁴ Bass and Riggio (2006) define it as avoidance or absence of leadership, or as inactive and ineffective leadership.

Contingent reward, according to the opinion of Bass and Riggio (2006), represents a constructive transaction influencing the associates' motivation to achieve higher efficacy levels. The contingent (dependent) reward is transactional and external when it is material (e.g., higher salary); it is transformational when it includes an internal psychological process, such as praise for good work.

Management by exception - actively represents a corrective transaction that is less effective than contingent reward or transformational leadership components (Bass, & Riggio, 2006). The leaders actively monitor their associates' deviations (exceptions) from the agreed standards, observe their effectiveness to prevent possible downtime, or take corrective action on time, if necessary.

Management by exception - passively characterizes leaders who passively wait for exceptions (deviations), errors, and omissions to occur and only then take corrective action. They only interfere when necessary to correct those deviations after they have appeared or when the problems become severe or chaotic, intending to bring performance back to previously established quality standards.

Laissez-faire leadership is defined as avoidance or absence of leadership or as inactive and ineffective leadership (Bass, & Riggio, 2006). Laissez-faire leaders adopt "hands-off" or "let things ride" non-transactional style, i.e., they let things go as they go, do not interfere with work, postpone decisions, do not give feedback, deny responsibility. They make little or no effort to guide their associates, help them meet their needs, or grow and develop.

Leadership and education at the University of Donja Gorica

Having in mind numerous benefits of transformational leadership combined with specific components of transactional leadership confirmed in previous research, on the one hand, and the vision of the University of Donja Gorica (UDG) that students, parallel to acquiring the necessary expert knowledge and experience, also acquire valuable skills of life, leadership capabilities, philosophy and way of thinking enabling them to be the future initiators and creators of new ideas and different approaches in their business environments, thus contributing to the faster and more successful development of individuals as well as the global society, on the other hand, the subject of this research could more precisely be defined by the aim to:

- (1) Determine the quality and structure of the existing leadership profile of UDG students;
- (2) Examine the influence of selected demographic variables on preference, i.e., a greater or lesser probability of the occurrence of particular leadership styles;
- (3) Estimate the research results compared to the results of similar research,
- (4) Identify certain leadership styles specificities of the students of this university, and
- (5) Show implications of the acquired findings for further pedagogic practice at higher education institutions to keep pace with the requirements of modern education of future leaders in any profession, not only in typically managerial ones.

In accordance with the above goals, as well as the data obtained by review mainly of foreign research, because domestic research is quite rare or nonexistent, the following syllogisms of cognition have been established, from facts about UDG students to conclusions (metric and analytical results in the field of leadership):

- (1) It is expected that transformational leadership will be predominant in the leadership profile of the UGD students and that laissez-faire (also known as passive-avoiding, non-leadership) behavior will be the least represented, regardless of their gender and other demographic variables.
- (2) Demographic variables (gender/sex and playing sports) will be confirmed as significant contingent variables, more or less influencing the preference of leadership styles of the UGD students. More specifically, differences will be expected in leadership behavior due to gender, and previous and current playing sports will be the contingent and predictor variable which, as such, contributes significantly to the differences in the leadership profiles between athletes and nonathletes, especially in the transformational leadership domain.
- (3) The results obtained in this study will partially or fully confirm the results of most foreign and rare or sporadic research in Montenegro and its surroundings. Affirmative conclusions are

expected regarding past good pedagogic policy and practice at UDG and the necessity for its implementation and continuous improvement through the organizational structures of the University (career office, innovative centers, incubators, entrepreneurial nest), and the development of professors' competency, contributing to the creation of leaders for the successful functioning in the "future of miracles."

METHOD

Sample

210 UDG students of both sexes participated in the research voluntarily. More than a half (N=116) were students of the first year, 54 were the second-year students, and 40 were the third- and fourth-year students. Basic information on demographic characteristics of respondents sample as a whole.

Instrument and procedure

In the research, the MLQ-5X form of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire by Bass and Avolio (2004) was used, intended to measure the three main components of the multidimensional leadership factor (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire). MLQ-5X version translated to the Serbian language was used, which was also used by Kanjevac (2015) for the managers' leadership styles in wholesale companies. The questionnaire consists of 45 assertions/descriptive items, and the respondents have to estimate, on a 5-point scale, how much each refers to them (0= not at all; 1=once in a while; 2=sometimes; 3=fairly often; 4=frequently, if not always). The reliability of MLQ as a whole (self-report version) on a sample of 62 managers in Serbia was 0.845 (Kanjevac, 2015), and on a sample of 500 secondary school pupils in Niš (version assessing the leadership behavior of professors) was between 0.448 and 0.783 for its nine factors (Jovanović, 2017), which could be acceptable, because the number of items was extremely low (4 each). In this research, the reliability of MLQ was determined by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was 0.84 for the questionnaire as a whole, 0.83 for the transformational leadership factor, 0.64 for transactional leadership, and 0.73 for laissez-faire leadership (Table 2).

Data collection was performed during the winter semester of 2019/2020 from the UDG students of all majors and years. It was administrated by previously trained interviewers - 4th-year students of the Specialistic studies of the Faculty of Sports Management.⁵ According to the previous agreement with the subject professor, the interviewers came to classes, informed students about the research goal and voluntary participation. Also, the respondents were guaranteed confidentiality of personal data since it was emphasized that the data would be used for the research only. Questionnaire completion took about 15 minutes on average.

Data processing and analysis

The data was processed by IBM SPSS statistics (statistic package for social sciences), version 20.0. Descriptive statistics, or the measures of central tendency and variability, were used to describe students' leadership styles, and their connection and/or conditionality by sociodemographic variables was tested calculating Pearson's correlation coefficients, Student's t-test, and one-way variance analysis (One way ANOVA).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Data presented in Table 1 show that there are more female than male students in the respondents' sample (57.6% : 42.4%), but their average age is almost identical. More than half of the respondents were or are still playing sports, and among them is a higher percentage of men than

⁵ Many thanks to the students for the responsible and professional administration and scoring of the Questionnaire.

women (57.3% : 42.7%). The average sports experience of male students was 6.4 years, and 5.2 years for female students. More than 60% of respondents have previously completed one of many vocational schools, and 35.7% gymnasium.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic variables		N	%	M	SD
Gender and age	Men	89	42.4	21.26 years	3.88
	Women	121	57.6	21.27 years	4.40
Playing sports	No	99	47.4		
	Yes	110	52.6		
Sports experience	Men	63	57.3	6.43 years	3.12
	Women	44	42.7	5.20 years	3.90

Respondent's leadership profile

The characteristics of students' leadership profiles are shown in Table 2 as average values and standard deviations of MLQ factors. Also, the table contains the data on Cronbach's alpha coefficients as a measure of MLQ scale internal consistency and consistency of its major components, as well as descriptive statistics obtained on a normative sample for Europe (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

It is clear that the UDG students' leadership profile is dominated by the characteristics of transformational leadership, then transactional, while laissez-faire or passive-avoiding leadership is the least prominent. Let us look at the subcomponents of multifactor leadership separately. We could conclude that individualized consideration (M=3.32) (individual estimation or considering the needs of individuals and responding to those needs), idealized influence accomplished through leader's charismatic behavior (M=3.22), inspirational motivation (M=3.22), and intellectual stimulation (M=3.21) are the most prominent components of transformational leadership. Together with a highly expressed preference for contingent reward as the dominant component of transactional leadership (M=2.21), they form the critical characteristics of self-assessed leadership behavior of the students of

Table 2. Basic statistical parameters of leadership styles of UDG students with descriptive statistics of the normative sample for Europe

MLQ factors	UDG students, N=210				Normative sample, N=1134	
	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD
Transformational leadership (1-5)	3.23	.41	1.85	4.00		
1. Idealized Influence, behavior	3.22	.54	1.50	4.00	3.00	.55
2. Idealized Influence, attribute Charisma (1+2)	3.15	.55	1.00	4.00	2.83	.55
3. Inspirational Motivation	3.19	.48	1.63	4.00		
4. Intellectual Stimulation	3.22	.57	1.50	4.00	3.00	.60
5. Individualized Consideration	3.21	.50	1.75	4.00	3.02	.48
Transactional leadership (6-8)	2.68	.46	1.50	4.00		
6. Contingent Reward	3.32	.56	1.25	4.00	3.10	.50
7. Management by exception - active	2.68	.46	1.50	4.00		
8. Management by exception - passive	3.21	.52	1.75	4.00	3.02	.52
9. Laissez-faire	2.87	.54	1.25	4.00	2.20	.79
	1.96	.94	.00	4.00	.96	.60
	1.42	1.01	.00	4.00	.62	.51
Cronbach's alpha for MLQ as a whole	.840 (45 items)					
Transformational leadership	.829 (20 items)					
Transactional leadership	.639 (12 items)					
Laissez-faire	.732 (4 items)					

the University of Donja Gorica. These data confirm the first syllogism or the expectation that the components of transformational leadership will dominate in the leadership style of UDG students, followed by somewhat less present transactional forms of leadership and the least inclination to the passive modes of leadership, such as management by exception and laissez-faire (non-leadership) behavior.

To respond entirely to the first research question and to confirm or deny the syllogism about the dominance of transformative leadership style in UDG students, the obtained data were compared to data obtained on the normative sample for MLQ-5X (self-report version) for Europe (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Research results in the surrounding countries and the majority of other reviewed foreign research are not suitable for comparison with the present sample results for several reasons. Most of these non-experimental monitoring were performed on older persons already having experience as managers or directors in various work contexts, whether or not they investigated factors such as the impact of demographic variables on leadership styles, a connection of leadership styles with emotional intelligence, perceived leader performance, the effectiveness of teaching, productivity and satisfaction of associates, the success of pupils and students, or dealt with psychometric properties of MLQ questionnaire in different cultural environments, etc. (Alsayah, 2011; Eagly & Johannsen-Smidt, 2003; Francis, 2017; Greinman, 2009; Grunes, 2011; Hardman, 2011; Jovanović, 2015; Kanjevac, 2015; Rowold, 2009; Webb, 2005). Besides, in most studies, the method of leader assessment by his subordinates, supervisors, and colleagues was used, and the obtained scores (usually representing a combination of several assessment modes) could not be compared to scores obtained by self-assessment of own leadership behavior. In certain investigations, a different way of response scoring was used (e.g., the scale between 1 and 5), which is not consistent with the original MLQ questionnaire having the five-point 0-4 scale.

The comparison of MLQ scores obtained on the sample of this research with the values of the normative sample (self-report version) shows that UDG students describe themselves with higher average values on all factors of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. Values obtained by Student's t-test will show if these values illustrate significant differences in leadership styles between these two samples. Since this comparison is not the subject of this investigation, it could be said that the UDG students and respondents from the normative sample generally have very similar leadership profiles in which the most common factors are transformational, followed by two factors of transactional leadership (contingent reward and active management by exception), the least common being passive management by exception, and non-leadership or passive-avoiding behavior. Once again, it should be emphasized that the research results fully confirmed the first syllogism.

Demographic variables and leadership style

Gender and leadership style

Table 3 shows the average values and standard deviations of MLQ factors for male and female respondents and the results of comparative analysis (t-test) between them. Contrary to expectations, no statistically significant differences were observed in the leadership profiles of male and female students. As a matter of fact, female students consider themselves the more charismatic leaders, primarily due to higher average scores on idealized influence through behavior being a role model to their associates to follow and emulate, through winning and paying respect, motivating them to give their best. The charisma of girls is also manifested through the idealized influence of personal attributes such as high ethical values, empathy, considering the needs of others before personal needs, setting challenging goals for the associates, avoiding the use of power for personal gain, the manifestation of self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-determination. Interestingly, female UDG students are more inclined to individualized consideration than their male peers, i.e., showing interest and care for their subordinates, understanding their needs and feelings, recognizing their talents and interests, and helping them in the fulfillment and realization, recognizing and celebrating their achievements. The same is with a higher inclination of female than male students for using contingent (conditional, dependent) rewards as the major component of transactional leadership. They are more willing to exchange effort, commitment, and fulfillment of goals by employees for various rewards. As leaders, they insist more on the exchange between themselves and employees and provide certain rewards when their followers meet agreed goals.

Unlike their female colleagues, the leadership profiles of male students show a greater tendency for passive management through exceptions and more frequently use laissez-faire leadership. The

truth is, they achieve slightly higher scores on intellectual stimulation than female students, but quite noticeable (although statistically insignificant) differences in the inclination to passive management by exception (passively waiting for the errors of their subordinates to emerge, and only then taking specific measures) and the inclination to laissez-faire leadership. Compared to their female colleagues, male students in leader roles express less their views on important issues, do not give feedback, try less to help their associates fulfill their needs.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and differences among students/respondents (t-test) in relation to gender

MLQ factors	Gender	N	M1 and (2)	SD1 and (2)	t	p
Transformational leadership (1+2+3+4+5)	M	89	64.39 (3.21)	7.99 (.40)	-.267	.790
	F	121	64.70 (3.23)	8.52 (.43)		
1. Idealized Influence, behavior	M	89	12.63 (3.16)	2.34 (.58)	-1,501	.135
	F	121	13.08 (3.27)	2.02 (.50)		
2. Idealized Influence, attributes	M	89	12.57 (3.14)	2.19 (.55)	-.153	.878
	F	121	12.62 (3.15)	2.18 (.54)		
Charisma (1+2)	M	89	25.29 (3.16)	3.71 (.46)	-.785	.433
	F	121	25.70 (3.21)	3.77 (.47)		
3. Inspirational motivation	M	89	12.98 (3.24)	1.95 (.48)	.420	.675
	F	121	12.84 (3.21)	2.53 (.63)		
4. Intellectual stimulation	M	89	13.10 (3.27)	1.99 (.50)	1,527	.128
	F	121	12.68 (3.17)	1.98 (.49)		
5. Individualized Consideration	M	89	13.02 (3.26)	2.21 (.55)	-1,462	.145
	F	121	13.48 (3.37)	2.25 (.56)		
Transactional leadership (6+7+8)	M	89	32.52 (2.71)	5.95 (.49)	.729	.467
	F	121	31.95 (2.66)	5.26 (.44)		
6. Contingent reward	M	89	12.58 (3.15)	2.26 (.57)	-1,595	.112
	F	121	13.05 (3.26)	1.95 (.49)		
7. Management by exception - active	M	89	11.64 (2.91)	2.36 (.59)	.854	.394
	F	121	11.38 (2.84)	2.05 (.51)		
8. Management by exception - passive	M	89	8.29 (2.07)	3.80 (.95)	1,470	.143
	F	121	7.52 (1.88)	3.72 (.93)		
9. Laissez-faire leadership	M	89	6.06 (1.51)	4.13 (1.03)	1,157	.249
	F	121	5.40 (1.35)	3.95 (.99)		

Notes: M1 is the average of the cumulative scores on the factor, and M2 (given in parentheses) is the average per item. Values for standard deviations are given in the same way. SD1 refers to M1 and SD2 to M2.

They avoid accepting personal responsibility, give associates the freedom to work „on their own,” and without the leader's influence, they only intervene when they have to. Data presented in Table 3 point to some differences in the leadership styles of the students of different gender, which are only partially in accordance with other investigations and their meta-analyses, usually showing the difference between men and women in the assessment of the leadership behavior of their superiors (professors, instructors, directors), but not in the self-assessment of own leadership style (Barbuto, Fritz, Matkin & Marx, 2007; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Druskat, 1994; Eagly & Johannsen-Schmidt, Engen, 2003; Francis, 2017; Jovanović, 2017; Rosenbusch & Townsend, 2004; Suranga & Mendis, 2017; Walumbowa & Ojode, 2000).

The results of analyzed studies reveal that women assess their leaders much more as transformational, and men assess them as transactional and laissez-faire. Not taking into account the statistical significance between average MLQ scores of men and women being only slightly higher in women for the characteristics of transformational, but lower for the characteristics of transactional and laissez-faire leadership, Suranga and Mendis (2017) unduly conclude that women have more transformational and less transactional and laissez-faire attributes than men. The nonconformity of findings regarding gender differences in the leadership behavior so far is also shown by the study of Oshagbemi and Gill (2003), detecting just one statistically significant difference in MLQ (self-report version) profile of managers of different gender in Great Britain regarding inspirational motivation, that is far more represented in the leadership behavior of male than female managers (Mm=3.00 :

Mf=2.88), and accordingly, they conclude that there are much more similarities than differences in their behavior. The same conclusion applies to the respondents of different gender in this investigation because UDG students manifest much more similarities than differences in their actual and potential future behavior. Data presented in Table 4 additionally confirm no statistically significant correlations between respondents' gender and components of their leadership behavior. Francis (2017) also finds that gender has no influence on transformational and transactional leadership in Lagos.

The above findings, together with the results of this research on the nonexistence of significant differences in the leadership behavior of men and women, are of exceptional value because not only do they break down prejudices about the existence of male and female leadership styles (Shanmugam & Haigh, 2007), they also show that contemporary woman in Montenegro increasingly accepts and manifests the properties of androgyny as a more acceptable form of gender role (highly expressed male and female attributes) compared to earlier feminine, because androgyny has proven to be a factor of greater psychological health and success of the modern woman. The same trend has long ago been confirmed in women who play sports compared to those who do not (Bačanac & Lazarević, 2002). Of course, neither dividing leadership to male and female nor asserting one style to be better than another is justified. It would be adequate to conclude that leadership in modern, highly challenging, and variable environment includes flexibility in manifesting masculine and feminine attributes and balanced leadership complying with particular requirements, needs, and characteristics of the situation and followers.

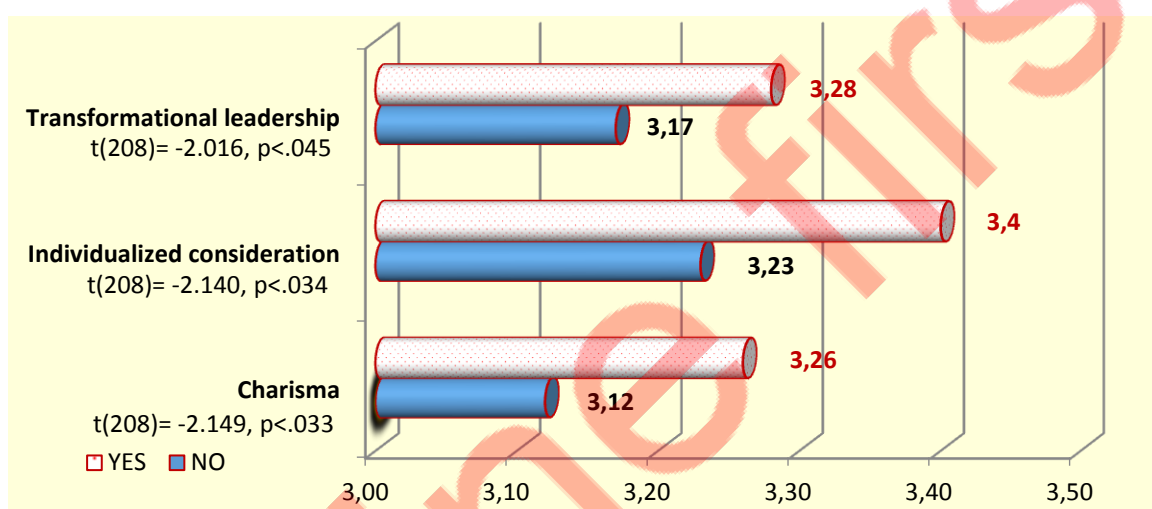
Playing sports and leadership style

Few or no studies have investigated the connection between playing sports and particular leadership styles' preference or use. There is a widespread opinion among sports experts that top athletes are great leaders, although it is not entirely based on empirical data. A good example is the publications of Bailey (2012), Hanson, B. and Hanson, L. (2014), in which they define and explain five reasons why athletes become great leaders. These are the determination that, together with discipline, focus, patience, and persistent practice, leads to the successful overcoming of many obstacles and the realization of one's talent; teamwork, in which everybody functions in harmony as a whole; appreciating following of the leader in a joint effort to achieve the set goals; cognitive complexity enabling them to struggle with hundreds of unpredictable factors in highly variable situations of the game and the ability to handle pressure successfully.

Graph 1 represents the leadership behavior factors showing the statistically significant differences between students who played sports and those who were not sports competitors. The listed data and the values of the correlation coefficient (Table 4) confirm playing sports to be an essential factor contributing to a more potent manifestation of transformational leadership in general, particularly charismatic leadership and individualized consideration. Students athletes have learned through their own sports experience to have and to nurture a direct relationship with their leaders, whereby the leader takes care of their motives and needs (individualized consideration), becomes a role model for his associates who identify with him, adopt his vision, goals, behavior style, high moral standards, different values, and attitudes, become more willing to accept the news, want to be innovative and creative, to look at problems from a different perspective, to achieve more than their initial expectations, to set high goals for themselves and their team, to see themselves and the team in a different and brighter future. In other words, they become charismatic leaders, the leaders who respect the differences in the individual needs and motives of their associates, and the fact that they will, partly and under the influence of the leader, change over time towards respecting and acknowledging the needs of others, accepting the challenge, developing a climate of creativity, innovation, intellectual stimulation, and developing the ability to recognize, understand and successfully solve incoming problems of their associates. The differences in average scores for transformational leadership of students athletes and non-athletes are also confirmed by correlation coefficients, showing the connection of playing sports with transactional leadership to be positive and

significant ($r=.14$, $p<.05$), with charismatic leadership combining idealized Influence by behavior and attributes ($r=.15$, $p<.05$) and with management by exception ($r=.15$, $p<.05$).

The above findings confirm the syllogism that playing sports positively influences the development of transformational leadership style, directly confirming the training and competition practice and existing opinions that athletes are successful leaders, not only in the sports field but also in other contexts where they continue their professional careers. Through practice, the value of sports, and direct work, they were probably encouraged and motivated by their trainers not to be scared of the changes, to be innovative, inventive, and creative to use their sports and individual potentials maximally. Playing sports teaches young people how to be successful leaders and motivate others for training, changes, and creativity, which is the essence of transformational leadership. The results of this research represent a real confirmation of the pedagogical practice and policy of the UDG management that highly estimate and encourage sports activities of the students of this university, expecting numerous positive benefits of those activities to their future personal and professional development.



Graph 1 . MLQ factors on which a statistically significant difference was found among the respondents in relation to playing (YES) / not playing sports (NO)

Table 4 . Relationship between MLQ factors to gender and playing sports

	Transfor- mational leadership	Chari- sma	Inspirat. motiv- ation	Intelle- ctual stimul.	Indivi- dualized consider.	Transa- ctional leader.	Contin- gent reward	Manag. by excep active	Manag. by excep passive	Laissez faire
Gender	.18	.05	-.03	-.10	.10	.05	.11	-.06	-.10	-.08
Playing sports	.14*	.15*	.10	.02	.15*	.06	.02	.02	.07	.06

Note: * $p<.05$

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The conducted research has certain limitations on the student population in general, especially concerning the insufficient representativeness of the sample of respondents. The sample included only students from one private university in Podgorica. Also, the information on leadership styles of UDG students was obtained based on their self-report, and the majority of them had no previous experience in leadership.

Thus, obtained results require confirmation in future research that should be more appropriate regarding design and measuring instruments to assess particular psychological, cultural, valuable, ethnic, and other characteristics of respondents in the role of antecedents of their leadership behavior. Also, new research should include the assessment (by students) of leadership behavior of management

and teaching staff at the faculties, because they directly or indirectly (by their authority, enthusiasm, vision, creativity, and dedication) influence the formation of students' leadership behavior, their academic success, and satisfaction with the faculty. This is confirmed by numerous studies cited by Bass and Bass, 2008 (Brown & Moshavi, 2002; Philbin, 1997; Major, 1988; etc.) which results indicate that satisfaction with the faculty is positively related to transformational leadership of their department managers; that the satisfaction of professors, their perceived efficacy and devotion were higher if the secondary school directors were transformational; that the pupils achieve greater success at schools managed by directors with higher transformational leadership than the ones with lower transformational leadership. Leithwood (1995, as cited Bass & Bass, 2008) concludes that it happens because transformational leadership leads to goal identification, development of school vision and its inspirational spreading together with the expectation of high functioning of professors and pupils; inclusion of staff, professors, parents and pupils; structural development from bottom to top; development of cultural collaboration/cooperation.

Theoretical and practical implications

Although the realized research has many limitations, and we can observe it as the first but essential step in arousing interest in further studies of leadership profiles of students, management, and teaching staff at the universities and secondary schools in Montenegro, it is a significant contribution to the promotion of transformational leadership theory. However, its practical implications are even more prominent. We could say it meets the vision and policy of the rector of UDG Veselin Vukotić, who represents a model of truly transformational leader, tirelessly seeking to improve education on this university, primarily by encouraging innovations which, as he says, "make life more beautiful and meaningful" (Vukotić, 2020a). He asks employees to constantly improve the quality of knowledge, which increases the "quality of student and professor beings." As the authentic transformational leader, he does not want UDG to be dominated by "provincial spirit," but the spirit of innovation, elimination of inertia and status quo, activation and arousing intention of students and professors, to become "*infected with the virus of innovation.*" This could be achieved only by the educators infected with the same virus and prone to innovations, different, more creative, and more challenging style. Rector Vukotić is not satisfied with the classical model of studies, considers the classical university to be in crisis, and invites all of his employees to the seminar "Where is the university going: dusk or dawn" which will help to promote a new model of studies at UDG based on the formula $S=ZxI^2$ (student = knowledge x experience²), according to which developing a propensity for innovation represents a platform for students and research (Vukotić, 2020b).

CONCLUSION

The study included 210 students of both genders (89 male and 121 female) with an average age of 21.3 +/- 4.4 years. The main goal was to establish the characteristics of their leadership profile measured by the MLQ assessing the full scope of multidimensional transformational leadership, and to test its possible conditionality and correlation with demographic variables, such as gender and playing sports. The results of descriptive, correlational, and comparative statistical analysis show the following:

The leadership profile of the students of both genders is dominated by transformational leadership, followed by desirable transactional leadership factors, while passive-avoiding leadership forms (passive management by exception and laissez-faire leadership) are the least prominent. These findings fully confirm the initial expectations, showing that UDG students have good potential to become successful transformational leaders in the future.

No statistically significant differences were found in the leadership profile of male and female students. Thus, the assumption of expected differences in accordance with some findings of past foreign studies was not confirmed. As a matter of fact, some tendencies were registered regarding the higher propensity of female students to transformational leadership, especially in taking into account,

i.e., considering individualized needs and use of contingent rewards, and somewhat more prominent use of intellectual stimulation by male students. These findings require further testing on more extensive samples. However, they are also encouraging, indicating the readiness of young Montenegrin women to deal with the requirements of a complex leadership role with equal success as men.

Playing sports is positively connected to transformational leadership in general, particularly with factors of charisma and taking into account/considering individual needs, motives, and interests. It confirmed the syllogism that the exposure to different types of leadership behavior during sports career makes athletes more sensitive and more receptive to leadership as a function of recognizing and respecting the needs of subordinates, their development, creativity, self-respect, self-confidence, strong sports character with high moral values and standards, achievement of high goals, both personal and team. That is precisely transformative leadership behavior.

The value of vision and policy of UDG managers, and especially its rector Vukotić, was confirmed, observed through “elimination of inertia and status quo,” initiation of innovations, creativity, changes, solid and applicable knowledge that drives, awakens, and polishes the human being - professor and student. Such vision and politics are fully compatible with essential characteristics and values of transformational leadership, which UDG managers and educators should pass to their students, transforming them into future transformational leaders. They will not be satisfied with the existing and acquired and will always want more and search for changes, innovations, and creative ideas.

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