Study concerning the dominant type of leadership in students regarding the field of completed studies

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Abstract

This paper aims at highlighting the crucial role of leadership styles in the academic environment by identifying differences between the averages of two groups of students: one group, domain of economic studies, and a second group of studies pertaining to the social-human studies.

Method: in elaborating the research, 87 participants were involved, 76 women and 11 men, aged 20-26 years (77 participants) and 26-30 years (10 participants). The instrument used was the questionnaire "Profile of the 21st century leader ", containing the 6 leadership factors: orientation towards reflection, society, diversity, ingenuity, people and business.

Results: analyzing the data obtained, it was found that students in the economical field are statistically significant more oriented towards "the business leadership zone" rather than students from social-human studies. Regarding leadership oriented towards reflection, diversity, ingenuity and people, it were not reported statistically significant differences between the averages of two groups.

Keywords: leadership, practice, economical, social-human studies

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1. Theoretical framework

There is a general controversy in both the academic world and in organizations on acquisition of leadership competency in formal or informal educational environment. Academic institutions claim that they have a thriving context for the creation and formation of authentic leaders, while students are of an opinion, at least contrary. Organizations and large companies identify their need to retain and educate potential leaders of the labor market, and go in so far as they are willing to provide training programs, courses, simulators for effective leadership and management programs, all to grind "small diamonds ".

In the academic environment there is less risk assumed, meaning that a misstep will often lead to the disappearance of the organization, while in business, a simple human error could lead to disaster. So that business people tend be more acknowledgeable of leadership than those in the academic field.

Leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action, each with its own features and functions. The intersection of the two areas of interest can become a major prerequisite to success in a business environment increasingly complex and changing (Kotter, 1998). Although there is no ideal formula for combining two elements, however, one fact is indisputable - the real challenge is to combine strong practice leadership with strong management and their mutual balance (ibid., p 39).

Abraham Zaleznik considers that a managerial culture emphasizes on rationality and control. Whether its energies are directed to achieve objectives, to resources for organization structures or the people, the manager is the one who actually solves problems as efficiently as possible (Abraham, 1998,). A manager does not have to be brilliant, he has to prove toughness, consistency, strength of character, intelligence, analytical skills, tolerance and goodwill (ibid. p. 64). Although Abraham Zaleznik perceives leaders and managers as complementary entities, they are distinguished by their motivation, thinking and action.

Bass (1990) believes that the legitimacy of a leader depends on his / her acceptance by subordinates. Eden and Levitan (1975) concluded that leadership is found in the minds of followers. Yukle (1989) emphasizes that leadership is very often defined in ways that include perceptions of followers. Since it plays an important role in the equation of leadership / management, understanding these terms and their conceptualization is extremely important for research results.

In present times, academic leaders will have to face the realities of a world in which the generation of wealth and well-being is on a course of destruction. They will have to formulate visions of the future that is rooted in a world decreased of energy. The entire world is in a continuous change and the new reality poses new challenges for academic leaders, or those who could be leaders. Of course, what we will see will be a greater emphasis on fiscal limitations, and the competition will be the general rule of operating.

At the end of university, graduates acquire academic skills, which enable them to engage in activities whose results are difficult to estimate a priori, allowing them to start work as assistants of specialists, some of them devoted to junior research for that the certificate obtained is only a theoretical performance guarantee. Full competence comes with practice, with training and holistic understanding of the industry. It is difficult to find an appropriate response to the question asked to candidates, recent graduates, at their first selection interview: what do you know? For the universities to achieve its objectives, it is necessary that the academic skills assessment grid overlap on the grid of professional skills that the employer uses. Universities are the ones who must answer the current needs of market employment - in general, and they still need to pioneer new knowledge; here is a dual difficult task. Anitei & Chraif, (2012) used a validation method using BARS method, Aniței & Chraif (2011) accomplished a longitudinal study regarding the vocational guidance and the psychologist profession in Romania, Aniței & Chraif (2012) proposed a model for the core competences validation using BARS for employment as changing organization, Aniței, Chraif & Minea (2013) accomplished a study regarding the performance motivation and frustration tolerance at youngsters, Alexe, Chraif, Burtavede & Mihailă (2012) evidenced possible correlations between life satisfaction, teamwork and life ideals in a car producer company from Romania.

Chiriac (2012) was underlining g the role of “leadership and performance in managing work teams”, Popa (2010) highlighted the role of personality dimensions inside organizations, Vlăsceanu (2012) Related the leadership with emotional intelligence in organizations, Chraif & Danciu (2011) accomplished a correlative study on perceived emotions and communication in tourism agency from Romania starting from the central point of communication with leadership and management, Ciocalcu (2012) was underlining the “role of human resources management in

2. Objectives and hypotheses

2.1. The objectives of the research

O.1: highlighting the fact that students need to benefit from specialized academic background and adequate training process of acquiring multiple leadership abilities.

O.2: highlighting the crucial role of leadership styles in organizations and in society, and usability of the study in selecting future leaders or employees.

2.2. The hypotheses of the research

There is a difference between the means of groups of subjects, depending on the field of study (economic or social-human) and by scores on leadership practices.

I.1. Students from social-human universities are oriented statistically significant towards "leadership by reflection" than those who come from academics oriented towards economical studies.

I.2. Students who graduate from economical backgrounds are oriented statistically significant towards "leadership by ingenuity" to those who come from academics oriented to social-human studies.

I.3. Students from social-human academics are oriented statistically significant towards "leadership by people" than those who come from academics oriented towards economical studies.

I.4. Students who graduate from economical backgrounds are oriented statistically significant towards "leadership by business" to those who come from academics oriented to social-human studies.

I.5. Students who graduate from economical backgrounds are not oriented statistically significant towards "leadership by diversity” to those who come from academics oriented to social-human studies.

I.6. Students who graduate from economical backgrounds are not oriented statistically significant towards "leadership by society” to those who come from academics oriented to social-human studies.

3. The method

3.1. The participants

The study has 87 participants, 76 women and 11 men, aged 20-26 years (77 participants) and 26-30 years (10 participants). They are enrolled in three main areas of study: 46 participants from the financial area (Academy of Economic Studies), 41 in the social and human sciences (Faculty of Psychology, Department of Sociology).

3.2. The instruments

The instrument used for teaching purposes, without adding amendments and without commercial use, is the questionnaire "Profile of the leader in the 21st century" developed by Achieve Global with the following factors: orientation towards reflection, society, diversity, ingenuity, people and business (Alpha Cronbach on full scale 0.983, Likert scale of use, 42 items in total, 7 items for each factor, 6 types of individual scores with values between
1-35). These scores indicate the dominant trend towards leadership practices that are highlighted by the questionnaire.

3.3. The procedure

The research was conducted at the Academy of Economic Studies, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences and the Department of Sociology, Bucharest. Administration of questionnaire was conducted in an optimal range of time and the subjects were tested in groups of 15 students. The questionnaire used is "Profile of the leader in the 21st century".

4. The results

Collected data was computed using program SPSS vs. 20. The results can be observed in the following tables.

Results achieved by testing distribution factors (Shapiro-Wilk test) reflection, society, diversity, ingenuity, and people, showed that the distribution is not normal for factors: society and diversity (p value > 0.05). Distribution of scores for the factors reflection, ingenuity, people and business is recorded in terms of the Gauss normal distribution (p < 0.05).

Table 1. Indicators for T test, independent samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>0.905</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.368*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingenuity</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.078**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.151***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.011****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* (economic: m=30,65; social: m=30,02)  
** (economic: m=29,26; social: m=27,76)  
*** (economic: m=28,93; social: m=27,68)  
****(economic: m=28,41; social: m=25,76)

Applying the T test for independent samples, it follows that for factors reflection, ingenuity and people, the value of Sig. > p, resulting that it cannot be identifies a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of leadership practice of reflection, ingenuity and people .These data do not confirm hypothesis I.1, I.2, I.3. For the factor of leadership business, results indicate that Sig. < p (p< 0.05, confidence interval of 95 % ); there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of leadership practice of business, concluding that hypothesis I.4 is confirmed.

Table 2. Indicators for Mann-Whitney test, independent samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Sig</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>0.946 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>0.514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p > 0.05 , 95 % interval of confidence

Concerning factors society and diversity, it is necessary to apply the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test for two independent samples, since the distribution is not normal.

For the diversity factor, Sig = 0.946; the hypothesis that states that there are no differences between the two groups of subjects in terms of diversity-oriented leadership, is accepted. Hypothesis I.5 is confirmed.
For the society factor, $\text{Sig} = 0.514$; the hypothesis that states that there are no differences between the two groups of subjects in terms of society-oriented leadership, is accepted. Hypothesis I.6 is confirmed.

5. Conclusions

The objectives of this research were to identify the need for a specialized academic context so that students would receive adequate training in order to acquire leadership skills, highlighting the crucial role of leadership styles in organizations and academia, and usability of the study in selecting future leaders or employees.

Assumptions based on this study were built around the difference between the means of groups of subjects, depending on field of study (economic or social-human) and by scores on leadership practices.

Results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the two groups in terms of business oriented leadership practices. In the sample concerning leadership practices oriented towards reflection, society, diversity, ingenuity and people, they did not differ significantly between means.

As a proposal for development of the study, research objectives can be implemented to measure aspects of leadership in several areas of study, linking academics environment with a formal one from an organization. Also, if leadership practices can be purchased by students in the formal learning environment, many leadership skills are acquired through practice or by attending a job. What type of leadership positions in academia and what type of models can guide the younger generation? These are the main aspects of leadership that are needed to be put under research.

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