EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BUILDING LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

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Abstract: Education serves as the cornerstone of society, facilitating its growth and prosperity. Consequently, understanding how leadership perspectives are shaped becomes crucial. Scholars have long been fascinated by uncovering the interconnections among leadership, organizational culture, and emotional intelligence, a discussion spearheaded by Goleman. However, the persistence of traditional educational paradigms poses an additional challenge. Thus, the focus of this manuscript shifts towards leveraging empirical data to explore specific leadership styles in relation to emotional intelligence within a distinct context. Drawing insights from 110 respondents, this research utilizes a questionnaire designed with validated research instruments. Findings reveal a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership styles, particularly highlighting a pronounced inclination towards transformational leadership. Notably, within the educational sector, commanding leadership emerges as the most prevalent style, followed by visionary leadership. Empathy, a key emotional intelligence competence, exhibits the lowest correlation with commanding style but the highest with affiliative leadership. Additionally, the research reveals that emotional self-control is the least developed emotional intelligence skill among educational professionals in the Republic of North Macedonia, indicating a vital area requiring enhancement and growth. This study reaffirms the interdependent relationship between leadership and emotional intelligence within organizational settings.
Keywords: leadership, style, emotional intelligence, practice, organization

1. INTRODUCTION
From the earliest researches in the field of leadership, such as Stogdill (1948, 1974) who has laid the groundwork for research on leadership traits initiating numerous studies investigating the characteristics associated with effective leadership. Bass introduced the concept of transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiring and motivating followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. Nowadays, researches such as the ones by Walumbwa et al. (2008) have contributed to the growing interest in authentic leadership, proposing a measurement tool to assess leaders' authenticity and its effects on follower outcomes. Goleman's work highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in effective leadership, popularizing the idea that leaders' ability to understand and manage emotions influences their effectiveness.

Emotional intelligence, in addition to other leadership qualities, is perceived as a component of effective leadership (Rosete, Ciarrochi, 2005) (Yukl, 2010), even as a measure for the recognition of potentially effective leaders and as a tool for the development of effective leadership skills in various businesses (Palmer, Burgess & Stough, 2001). In addition, research on emotional intelligence indicates that successful leaders were those who had higher levels of emotional intelligence - coped with workplace pressure, were calm, confident and predictable in moments of crisis (McCall & Lombardo, 1983a) (Yukl, 2010).

Placing this in the context of the leadership-organizational culture relationship, the research question "How do the elements of emotional intelligence influence the leadership styles practiced by leaders in an organizational context?" would be defined. To answer this research question, this paper investigates the mechanisms and ways of transmitting organizational culture, leadership theories and leadership styles that emerge from them, perceives what the elements of emotional intelligence mean for leaders, and empirically explores the relationship between them. and different leadership styles. More specifically, it examines the influence of elements of emotional intelligence on leadership styles, in the context of the educational sector of Republic of North Macedonia. To this end, one main and three additional hypotheses were set up for testing as described in the following three sections, which also provide a brief

overview of the theoretical foundations relevant to the study, the relationship between leadership, emotional intelligence and organizational culture.

Schools are in constant need of practicing leadership, since they are directly responsible for building future leaders, through the process of upbringing and educating young people. Considering this, it is very interesting to observe and analyze the leadership competencies at education professionals and in organizational cultures found in the educational facilities. This is why, this paper presents results from research done exactly in the education sector in Republic of North Macedonia, on educational professionals both appointed on leadership positions and regular employees. The conclusions drawn from the descriptive analysis point out that emotional intelligence competences are strongly connected to the leadership styles that are practiced. The commanding leadership style is one of the most practiced in the educational sector, followed by the visionary style.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research focuses specifically on the relationship leadership styles - emotional intelligence and aims to check which leadership style(s) are the most dominant in the educational sector in the Republic of North Macedonia, to see at what level each of the elements are of emotional intelligence among leaders in this sector and to find the correlation between these two variables. Because of this, a descriptive and correlative analysis of the results was made. The data for this research was collected in the period from December 18, 2023 to February 18, 2024. The data was classified and analyzed with the computer software IBM SPSS 26, during which various descriptive analyzes were performed. Bivariate correlation was conducted to test for correlations between variables. All Pearson's assumptions (linearity, normality, homoscedasticity and independence) were checked before the analysis. Based on the research question, in order to empirically examine the phenomena related to this, the following hypotheses are defined: **Main hypothesis:** *Emotional intelligence is strongly related to all leadership styles.*

Additional hypotheses: *H1: Empathy as an element of emotional intelligence is most weakly related to commanding leadership style; H2: Democratic leadership style is the least represented in the educational sector in Republic of North Macedonia; H3: Emotional self-control is the weakest ability of emotional intelligence in leaders.*
Measurement and instruments. Two questionnaires were used to measure these variables: 1) To measure the variable "leadership styles" – Leadership and management – a communication styles questionnaire, designed according to the example of George Litwin and Richard Stringer, based on the study of Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee (2003); 2) To measure the variable "emotional intelligence" - Emotional competence inventory 2.0, by Steven B. Wolff from HayGroup, McClelland Center of Research and innovation (Wolf, 2005). Questions on both questionnaires are answered od na 5-point Likert scale. (1- do not agree at all, 2- partially disagree, 3- cannot decide, 4- partially agree and 5- completely agree).

In order to check the validity of the results and their consistency within the framework of the used questionnaires, the value for Chronbach Alpha was first examined, which for the questions of this research is ChA=0.980. Given the fact that the value of Chronbach Alpha is said to be closer to 1, the more reliable the results, it can be noted that the validity of the questions is high, as well as the consistency of the answers

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

At the end of the survey, the sample consisted of 110 participants (n = 28 male, n = 82 female). Regarding education, 73.6% have completed undergraduate studies, 21.8% have completed postgraduate studies (second cycle - master's), 3.6% have completed postgraduate studies (third cycle - doctoral studies), and 0.9 % has completed secondary education. The age of the respondents is from 18 to 64 years (M = 33.65, SD = 9.95), divided into five age groups. 15.5% stated that they are in a leadership (management) position, while 84.5% are not appointed on a leadership position. Of the respondents, 86.4% work in state educational institutions, while 13.6% work in private educational institutions.

Noting the results of the average values of the leadership styles of the leaders in the education sector in the Republic of North Macedonia, it is noted that all leadership styles are present, with the highest value and therefore the most represented commanding leadership style (M=3.5491) , and right after it, the second most represented is the visionary leadership style (M=3.5145) (table 1). The least represented leadership style is the pace setter style (M=3.3127), instead of the democratic one (M=3.4545). This statement forms a basis to conclude that the second hypothesis: *H2: The democratic leadership style is the least represented in the educational sector in Republic of North Macedonia,* which may be reject.

Table 1 Representation of leadership styles according to their average values

Leadership style	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Commanding leadership style	110	1	5	3,5491	0,77788
Visionary leadership style	110	1	5	3,5145	1,00547
Democratic leadership style	110	1	5	3,4545	1,18117
Affiliative leadership style	110	1	5	3,4327	1,08823
Coaching leadership style	110	1	5	3,3164	1,1227
Pace-setting leadership style	110	1	5	3,3127	0,89955
Valid N (listwise)	110				

Source: Authors' empirical research

This phenomenon is particularly interesting to analyze, because according to the theory of transactional and transformational leadership, the commanding leadership style is at the extreme of transactional leadership, while the visionary is at the extreme of transformational leadership. This means that leaders in the education sector in Republic of North Macedonia, at the same time convey a clear vision and standards that are expected in achieving the goal, leave room for imagination and initiative on the part of the followers, but require quick decisive action, thus tending to reduce the flexibility of the organization and the motivation of the employees. What both dominant leadership styles have in common is that they are associated with the concept of autonomy. Namely, leaders who practice the commanding leadership style fully exploit personal autonomy by demanding that things be done as they said (ordered), while leaders who practice the visionary leadership style even leave autonomy to employees to achieve and advance the leadership vision in their own way.

The results of the research on the elements of emotional intelligence (table 2) indicate that, in general, leaders possess either low or medium values of the elements of emotional intelligence, with the exception of the ability to manage conflicts, for which they scored on average higher than the reference values. Namely, the elements of accurate self-assessment, emotional self-control, adaptability, empathy and development of others were evaluated with low grades. This means that leaders first have a weakness to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, then they cannot or do not succeed in keeping unpleasant emotions and impulses under control, hence the challenge is the lack of flexibility to deal with change, as well as understanding of the feelings and perception of the perspectives of others. These deficiencies seem to build on each other, each setting preconditions for the next, and hence the weak abilities to perceive the developmental needs of others and strengthen their abilities. The results of the research show that as medium-developed abilities of emotional intelligence among the leaders of the educational sector in Republic of North Macedonia's abilities for emotional self-awareness, transparency and influencing others stand out. This means that leaders are generally good at recognizing their emotions and their effects, showing solid results in maintaining their own integrity, and mastering effective methods of persuasion.

Table 2 Review of mean values for the EI competences

Emotional intelligence capability	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean values (ECI 2.0)	Overall competence grade
Empathy	110	1,00	5,00	3,4909	1,07084	3,10-3,54	Medium
Emotional self-awarenes	110	1,00	5,00	3,5159	,97107	3,60-3,92	Low
Accurate self-assessment	110	1,75	5,00	3,2545	,66186	3,78-4,07	Low
Emotional self-control	110	1,00	5,00	3,6045	1,03293	3,72-3,98	Low
Addaptability	110	1,00	5,00	3,5409	1,11779	3,50-3,84	Medium
Transparency	110	1,00	5,00	3,6068	1,17868	3,92-4,21	Low
Development of others	110	1,00	5,00	3,5386	1,21732	3,66-4,08	Low
Influence	110	1,00	5,00	3,6409	,91467	3,55-3,88	Medium
Conflict Management	110	1,00	5,00	3,4182	1,00178	2,95-3,26	High
Valid N (listwise)	110						

Source: Result mean values from authors' empirical research. Referent mean values from Wolff, S. B. (2005). Emotional competence inventory 2.0. HayGroup. McClelland Center of Research and innovation. 0511-9889-HAYG.

The analysis of the correlations between the results obtained from the elements of emotional intelligence and from the leadership styles is given in table 3. From this analysis, it can be noted that all the elements of emotional intelligence have a strong connection (correlation) with all the leadership styles, which directly indicates the

connection of emotional intelligence with leadership and confirms the main hypothesis of this paper that: ***H: Emotional intelligence is strongly related to all leadership styles.*** When analyzing the correlations of these elements in more detail, it may be observed that the **affiliative leadership style** has the strongest correlations with the elements of emotional intelligence. Namely, this style is mostly associated with empathy (r=0.870, n=110, p=0.01) and the development of others (r=0.860, n=110, p=0.01), while the weakest correlation is with emotional self-control (r=0.435, n=110, p=0.01). The **commanding leadership style** has by far the weakest correlation values for all the elements of emotional intelligence, although, it is observed that all these elements have a significant correlation, regardless of their values being weaker than those of the affiliative or democratic style. The commanding style has the highest correlation values for accurate self-assessment (r=0.479, n=110, p=0.01), and the weakest for empathy (r=0.369, n=110, p=0.01), which is expected and corresponds to the essence of this leadership style and the characteristics and manner of its practice. Such results form a basis to conclude that the first hypothesis may be confirmed: ***H1: Empathy as an element of emotional intelligence is the weakest related to commanding leadership style.*** In addition, in comparing the reference average values of the elements of emotional intelligence with their reference values, it is noted that even here emotional self-control has low values (3.2545) and in relation to the reference (3.78-4.07) (table 6), and in relation to other elements. Based on these findings it may concluded that the fourth hypothesis of this paper: ***H3: Emotional self-control is the weakest ability of emotional intelligence in leaders,*** may be confirmed.

Table 3 Correlation analysis between leadership styles and elements of emotional intelligence

Leadership style	Empathy	Emotional self-awareness	Accurate self-assessment	Emotional self-control	Adaptability	Transparency	Development of others	Influence	Conflict Management
Affiliative LS	,870**	,743**	,814**	,435**	,808**	,834**	,860**	,682**	,767**
Democratic LS	,837**	,774**	,763**	,419**	,790**	,788**	,830**	,657**	,726**
Visionary LS	,814**	,754**	,772**	,502**	,795**	,807**	,844**	,672**	,733**
Commanding LS	,369**	,444**	,479**	,447**	,397**	,431**	,437**	,445**	,440**
Pace-setting LS	,564**	,598**	,656**	,472**	,594**	,596**	,626**	,513**	,545**
Coaching LS	,811**	,737**	,802**	,468**	,757**	,786**	,892**	,639**	,711**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' empirical research

The results of this study suggest that emotional intelligence is strongly related to leadership styles, that is, leadership in general, which undoubtedly confirm Goleman's theory (2000) (Goleman, Boyatzis, Rhee, 1999), and the most commonly practiced leadership style is still the commanding style, which is certain that it will remain so in the future. What is positive is that the visionary leadership style is second in use, which can serve as a counterweight to the commanding leadership style. Namely, the positive relationship between the visionary and the commanding style of leadership is the vision as an ideal image of the future and leading towards a higher goal.

An additional conclusion that is worth pointing out, which is covered by the rejection of the second hypothesis - that the democratic leadership style is the least represented in the educational sector; is that this leadership style (together with the affiliative one) is next in representation after the commanding and the visionary, which indicates the backup leadership style for leaders, which has been put in charge. Namely, when one feels the lack of satisfaction or reduced effectiveness or human relations with issuing tasks, setting goals and pushing towards achieving that goal, one resorts to increasing participation in decision-making and likability to employees.

Findings from testing emotional intelligence capabilities indicated generally poor results in mastering them, given the fact that out of nine abilities examined, five scored low (accurate self-assessment, emotional self-control, adaptability, empathy, development of others), three with medium values (emotional awareness, transparency and influence) and one with high values (conflict management). Such findings indicate the need for training to develop these skills in leaders, to increase the effectiveness of their leadership, as indicated by Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005), Yukl (2010), (McCall & Lombardo, 1983a). In addition, the absence of the will to be proactive and improve this lack among leadership staff, can contribute to increasing workplace stress, work tensions, deterioration of interpersonal relationships (Olawoyin, 2018)(Bin Sayeed, Shanker, 2009) and weak effectiveness in the practice of leadership (McCall & Lombardo, 1983a).

The results of this study also showed that the affiliative leadership style has the strongest correlations with the elements of emotional intelligence. When considering what are the characteristics of affiliative leadership style –

that affiliative leaders focus on the needs of both individuals and teams, building relationships and creating a close relationship with followers, thereby building team harmony Goleman (2000) (British MOD, 2021); and that the research showed that it has the highest correlation values with empathy (0.870), but also generally records the highest values with the other elements of emotional intelligence, compared to other leadership styles, it can be concluded that the emphasized use of emotional intelligence abilities in the practice of leadership, especially empathy, leads to the practice of an affiliative leadership style. Also, that the nature of the affiliative leadership style is mostly related to emotional intelligence.

The research findings highlighted Conflict Management as a unique ability of emotional intelligence with high values, that is, that leaders in the education sector are very capable of managing conflicts in the workplace. Although this is in principle a positive feature for leadership in the education sector in Republic of North Macedonia, however, should be taken with reserve due to the nature of the leadership styles that stood out as the most dominant - commanding and visionary. The nature of these two leadership styles indicate a focus on goals and a focus on getting the job done, not on resolving conflicts, gaining consensus, finding common ground, and satisfying the parties to the conflict. Simply put, visionary leaders are focused on achieving goals and not on resolving conflicts. Similar to the commanding leadership style, he has a traditional approach to conflicts and aims to make them non-existent (which is not realistic and possible). Precisely because of that and this discussion - it is necessary to check in addition and in detail whether the respondents have a traditional or a modern approach to conflicts; is the high score of conflict management ability given because of the perception that when a conflict arises, commanding leaders squelch it and resolve it "short-cut", only to have it gone, and visionary leaders dismiss it or put it on the back burner , because it defocuses them from their intended purpose. In both cases, an image is created that the conflict is "solved" and that leaders have a high ability to resolve conflicts. This additionally opens the opportunity to examine and research the way conflicts are resolved, either through anonymous questionnaires, or through direct interviews. This would open the opportunity to clarify this phenomenon, where the emotional self-control is the least mastered EI-skill, though the conflict-management has fairly high results.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Organizational culture primarily reflects the leaders, When it comes to leadership, even the earliest research have noted that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in leadership practice, just to be perceived as leadership effectiveness determinator in the years to come (Rosete, Ciarrochi, 2005) (Yukl, 2010). Schools are the forgers of future leaders, and in a constant need of quality leadership practices. This has been the motive to explore the leadership competencies in education professionals and in organizational cultures found in the educational facilities in the Republic of North Macedonia, and find a link to emotional intelligence. Results have shown that Emotional intelligence is strongly corelated with leadership styles, thus confirming the traditional approach from previous studies, but also notes higher values to the transformational leadership styles (affiliative, democratic, visionary), than to the transactional (commanding, pace-setting). Also, the study has shown that commanding leadership style is one of the mostly practiced in the educational sector, followed by the visionary style. Empathy as a specific emotional intelligence competence has lowest correlational values for the commanding style, and highest for the affiliative. This research yet again confirmed that leadership and emotional intelligence go hand in hand in the organizational context. The combination of leadership styles and the level of emotional intelligence competence, reflect a meaning perceived by the employees and followers, thus creating pattern of behavior called organizational culture.

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