TRAIT LEADERS, A CONTEMPORARY PHENOMENON IN MODERN EDUCATION

MAGDALINI VAMPA
Teaching Faculty, Department of Social Sciences
"Fan S. Noli" University
ALBANIA
magdagaqollari@yahoo.com

SUELA MANGELLI
Teaching Faculty, Department of Foreign Languages
"Fan S. Noli" University
ALBANIA
suelamangelli@hotmail.com

Abstarct: Albanian education in its reforming process requires *effective leadership* to manifest success in knowledge acquirement. Albanian schools as ideal institutions prepare well-educated individuals to face actively the world and time challenges.
This article represents some reflections based on the *theory of leadership*, related to *traits of the leader* in education.

Studies and research work of the beginning of 20th century resulted in the theory of "great man", being focused on the identification of born traits and qualities of the leader, while the middle of 20th century emphasized the incorporation of *trait leaders* with the *context of situation* and his *didactic staff* (his subordinates).

In most of continuous studies and research is identified a set of traits and specifics which accompany leader's personality and bring him effective in education, such as: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, sociability, etc. In its practical level, *the trait approach* is concerned with such traits, which the leader exhibits in his leading process of education.

Today's system education is going forward by manifesting qualities, which time and society are looking for. The decisive and responsible institutions are requested to use evaluating instruments to identify the proper set of traits, which school leaders should possess to fit the school situation and the staff themselves.

Another reason, the trait approach can be used for, is the *personal awareness*. It aims to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership on one side and to gain a clearer understanding of how to change or enhance their leadership, on the other side.

Key words: trait leader, leading school, intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, sociability

LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION, TRAIT LEADER

This article tends to bring under close attention both conceptual and theoretical aspects of leadership in different bodies and especially in educational ones. What has grossly characterized the countries of Eastern Europe and, inter alia even Albania before the 90s, has been a wide range of various philosophies and ideological denotations. The span of changes towards democracy and the rapid pace of these changes do therefore require headship of society and of individuals' leadership for challenging the future and the progress.

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

Positively, it remains the duty of education and all its institutions to play the visionary role, the one of the farsighted leader who develops the capacities of leadership in the accomplishment of his mission vis-à-vis societies which are eager for change and which desire to seize not only time but even the overall global development and evolution.
There do heretofore exist a lot of ways to complete the definition: "Leadership is…"
According to the scholar of leadership theories, Stogdill (page 7, 1974) there do therefore exist many definitions to the concept (term) *leadership* and also many other scholars who try to give it a definition. In the 60s, various scholars managed to define the dimensions of leadership. One of those systems which we will refer to in our article (our discourse) is the proposed scheme from Bass[i], who suggests some definitions of leadership initiating from the focus of the group leadership process, in viewing the leader in the centre of the group activity materializing so the will of the group he heads. Another definition set conceptualizes the term leadership being based on the personality perspective. It highlights the fact that the leader is a combination of some special traits and characteristics that these individuals should and actually possess. Another set of definitions views leadership as a behavior action; the entirety of the actions that the leaders undertakes under the group leadership and guidance.
Some other scholars define the term leadership by the relationship that does hereto exist between the leader and the followers.
Based on this point of view, the leaders possess the potential to effectuate the change inside the group. From another perspective, leadership is like a transformation process which directs the pursuers in fulfilling their expectances and some other scholars view leadership from the abilities' perspective, as a set of masteries. This last point of view highlights the cognitive and applicative capacities which make a leader, thus, effective.

DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP AND ITS COMPONENTS

We may identify the following fundamental components of the leadership as a phenomenon through the diversification of the conceptualization[ii] manners:

(a) Leadership is a process;
(b) Leadership includes influences;
(c) Leadership emerges in groups;
(d) Leadership involves mutual targets.

Based on these components, we may propound the following definition of leadership in this article:
Leadership is a process during which an individual influences the group in achieving the mutual target.
This definition is important because it treats the term as a process, which implies the leader and his influence towards the group and consequently the influence of the group towards him as a linear but interactive event. But, the influence of the leader towards the group is very important and the leadership as process cannot evolve if the former does not exist. So, this concept highlights the fact that the individual characteristics and traits are prominent in the group influence and in his leadership.
The groups are the contexts where the leadership emerges and the sole leader orientates the energies and potentials of the group towards the achievement of mutual targets. The scholars[iii] do opinionate that despite the tight connection between the leader and his

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

pursuers, the leaders are the ones who mostly initiate the relationships, create the communication lines and behold the burden of relationship perseverance.
By means of this article we shall thereby accentuate the role and impact of personality traits as leader's characteristics in school organizations. Even regarding other scholars and authors the traits perspective suggests that a defined group of individuals have innate characteristics or qualities that exist within them and which make them disparate and distinctive from the ones that do not lead.
We have been trying to view the traits and characteristics as innate attributes or as developed ones in relation to the environment and conditions, as talents of the leading individuals within the leadership process, in the context of intercommunion with the other part of the group. While leadership is a process, it is even an observable behavior of the leader and as such it can be acquired.
In the beginning of the XX century, the leader traits were studied in order to define the things which make some people "great" leaders. The theories were named theories of the "great man", because they were focused on the identification of the innate qualities and peculiarities possessed by the leaders of the different social groups. It was, thus, believed that people were born with the traits of the leader and they are possessed only by those who are "great" people. During those years the researches have been focused in defining the specific traits which do plainly discern the leaders by the pursuers, subordinates[iv]. In the middle of the XX century the studies and researches in this domain were questioning the universality of the leader traits and characteristics. An individual with leadership traits who is a leader in a particular situation, may not therefore be such one in another situation.
Leadership was re-conceptualized as a relationship between people in a social situation, more than being a quality which the individuals shall be possessed with. But, again, personal factors which are related to the leader continue to remain important, while the scholars of this time highlight that these factors must be considered as relative depending on the situation.
While the researches upon leadership traits were expanded during the XX century, the historic of this domain has assessed and evaluated two studies of Stogdill (scholar) in 1947 and 1974. In his first study, Stogdill identified a group of important traits which nevertheless did not convert the person who possessed them into a leader. It resulted that leadership is neither a continuance, nor a passive state, but it is the pure consequence of a cooperative relationship between the leader and the members' group. In his second study, published in 1974, there was manifested a balance between the role of leader traits and leadership. Arguing in a more moderate manner on how not only the personality but even the situational factors were altogether strongly decisive aspects of leadership, and moreover, this second study evaluated the original idea upon the traits. They are precisely an important part of leadership and an important part of the leader[v].
These two studies of Stogdill identified ten most prominent traits and characteristics which are positively related to the leadership[vi].

1. Heads by responsibility and duty fulfillment;
2. Strength and persistence in target achievement;
3. Risk intake and originality in problem resolution;
4. Inciting of initiative exercise in a social situation;
5. Self-confidence and a sense of personal identity;
6. Willpower in accepting the consequences of decisions;
7. Promptitude in facing stress;

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

8. Volition to tolerate failure or delays;
9. Capability to influence the subordinates' behavior, and
10. Capacity in constituting social intervention systems for the target.

Mann[vii] in the mid 50s, heads a study over the factors of the personality and gives a weak emphasis in relation to the situational factors. In his studies he suggests that the personality traits are the ones that differentiate the leaders from the non-leaders. The results of his study did therefore identify 6 traits of a strong leader:

Intelligence, masculinity, adoption, dominance, extraversion, conservatism.

Lord[viii] reevaluated the recoveries of Mann's study and utilized much more sophisticated procedures of meta-analyses. It did result that intelligence, masculinity and dominance are deeply related to the fact of how the individuals scents and perceives the leaders. This author strongly argues that the personality traits may be used to make the difference and continuous detachment during the situations between the leaders and non-leaders.

These studies have been performed in America during the historical periods where it was witnessed the prevalence of the male leaders in business and even in educational systems or in the whole society. Recently, other scholars observe that the dominance and masculinity tendencies are confirmed still as important factors in the discerning or distinction of the leaders from the non-leaders.

Another study argues over the importance of the leadership traits, accomplished by Kirkpatrick and Locke[ix]. It is expressively highlighted that: *"It is entirely clear that leaders are unlike other people"*. These scholars observe that the leaders differentiate from the non-leaders by the following six features: leadership, motivation, integrity, confidence, cognitive capacities and duty consciousness. According to them, the leaders may either be born with these traits or they can acquire them or it may be both of them, but it is very important that the six traits be a very prominent part of the leadership process.

In the years 1990, the research over leadership traits was observed as tightly related to the "social intelligence", which characterizes the ability of understanding the feelings, behaviors and opinions of the others in reacting the right way. Zaccaro[x] defines the social intelligence with the possession of such capacities as: social consciousness, social judgment, self-monitoring and the ability to select and declare the best answer even in casual situations occurred in the social environment. Even in the following years a considerable number of empiric studies showed that these social capacities are key traits in differentiating the leader and in the leadership process.

Table 1.1 will provide a summary of the leader traits and characteristics as identified by the researches and studies from the beginning of the years 1940 and up to the year 2004.

This table clearly indicates the considerable number of traits related to the leader. It also indicates the difficulty in the selection of some peculiarities in order to define the leader traits. Some of these traits have emerged in the results of some scholars, some others have appeared only in one or two studies.

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

Table 1.1

Stogdill (1948)	Mann (1959)	Stogdill (1974)	Lord, De Vader & Alliger (1986)	Kirkpatrik & Locke (1991)	Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader (2004)
➢ Intelligence ➢ Promptitude ➢ Acuity ➢ Amenability ➢ Initiative ➢ Persistence (stability) ➢ Self-confidence ➢ Socialization	➢ Intelligence ➢ Masculinity ➢ Conformity ➢ Dominance ➢ Extraversion ➢ Conservatism	➢ Achievement ➢ Stability ➢ Sharpness ➢ Initiative ➢ Self-confidence ➢ Responsibility ➢ Intercommunion ➢ Tolerance ➢ Influence ➢ Socialization	➢ Intelligence ➢ Masculinity ➢ Dominance	➢ Leadership ➢ Motivation ➢ Integrity ➢ Confidence ➢ Cognitive capacity ➢ Consciousness over duty	➢ Cognitive capacity ➢ Extraversion ➢ Consciousness ➢ Emotional stability ➢ Open ➢ Congenial ➢ Motivation ➢ Social intelligence ➢ Self-monitoring ➢ Emotional intelligence ➢ Problems resolution

PRIME TRAITS OF LEADER'S PERSONALITY

We do therefore observe that in those years of research over leader traits there has been constituted a long list of the traits that a leader shall possess or even try to cultivate if he wishes to be perceived and accepted by the others as a leader.
Consequently, there do result the following central leader traits:
Intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and socialization.

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence or intellectual capacity is related positively to the leadership. According to the Zuccaro study in 2004, after the analyses of his study, he supports the idea that the highest intelligence is evident to the leaders as distinguished by the non-leaders. What makes a better leader are the verbal, perceptive and reasoning capacities. But, meanwhile, the scholars have analyzed the fact that the intelligence indicators shall not be much higher or they shall not evince sharp differences related to the pursuers, this might have a counterproductive impact, because the communication between them may not be accomplished because of the advanced ideas insomuch as the other part of the group may not follow and understand.

The leader's intelligence is identified from the scholars as a peculiarity which in a very significant manner contributes to the capabilities of problems' resolution, to the judgment capabilities in different situations presented by the headed group. So, intelligence is described with all its positive impact to the intellectual capacities of the effective leaders.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is another trait which helps the individual to be a leader. Self-confidence is the capacity to be confident in ones competences and capacities with a wide sense of self-evaluation and self-security. The leaders are continuously involved in the process of influencing the others and thus, self-confidence gives the leader the opportunity to feel safe in that his efforts in influencing the others are proper and just.

DETERMINATION

Most of the leaders announce the determination as a trait during the leadership process. Determination is the desire to terminate a duty and it involves characteristics such as initiative, stability, dominance and leadership. Determined individuals are self-demanding, active and they have the capacity to insist during obstacle confrontation. To be determined means to show determination in the proper time and situation when your subordinates feel the necessity to be headed.

INTEGRITY

Integrity is another prominent trait of the leader. Integrity may be expressed as a quality of honesty and plausibility. The individuals who depend on a number of principles and take responsibilities for their own actions are presenting the integrity as a trait of their personality during the leadership process.

Leaders with integrity inspire security in others because they are trustworthy in what they are projecting and, moreover, sure in its accomplishment. They are loyal, conceivable and not disappointing. Conclusively, integrity makes the leaders more credible and dignified for the credit of his pursuers and followers.

BEING SOCIABLE

Another final trait which is thus important for the leaders is sociability. Sociability is an under-quest-tendency of the leader for congenial social relationships. The leaders who show socialization are sociable, elaborated, polite, tactful and diplomats. They are sensitive to the others' necessities and therefore show interest for their welfare and progress. Sociable leaders have interpersonal capacities and they do create cooperative relationships with the pursuers and subordinates.

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

Our discourse around leadership centered its focus to these five very important traits of the leader, being thus confident that this list in not all-inclusive. We do think that they are indicative traits related to an effective leader contributing in a very significant way to the capacities of the individual who plays the role of the leader.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The recent studies and researches often utilize a manner which is the evaluation of the emotional intelligence impact to the leaders. After the years 1990 the concept of emotional intelligence to the leaders has been widely studied and it has therefore drawn the interest and attention of many scholars[xi]. (Caruso & Wolfe, 2004; Goleman, 1995, 1998; Mayer & Salovey & Caruso, 2000).

As these two words solely suggest, emotional intelligence has to do with emotions (affective domain), thinking (cognitive domain) and even with the relationship between them.

While intelligence is interested in our capacity to acquire information and to apply it to the daily duty resolution, emotional intelligence is interested in our capacity to understand the emotions and the concentration of this apprehension in life situations. More specifically the emotional intelligence may be defined as an ability to discern, differentiate, perceive and express emotions, to utilize the emotions which relieve thinking and to rationalize with emotions and effective manner of emotion management within self and in relation to the others[xii].

Different scholars have defined different manners and indicators as for the measurement of the emotional intelligence. More concretely, Mayer, Caruso & Salovey in their study in 2000 measured the emotional intelligence with a set of mental capacities including the perceptive capacity, relieve, apprehension and emotions' management.

Another scholar, Goleman (1995, 1998) treated emotional intelligence in a more expanded manner in suggesting that it does therefore consist in a set of personal and social competences.

Personal competences do consist in: consciousness (self-information), confidence, self-regulation, awareness and motivation. The social competences do consist in the empathy and social capabilities such as communication and conflict management.

Mayer, Caruso & Salovey in 2000, highlight as a result of their study over personality traits in leadership even the significance of social intelligence in the confrontation to the challenges of school, family and work life. As a trait of leader personality, emotional intelligence appears as an important element. The above mentioned premises suggest that the individuals, who are more sensitive with their emotions and with their emotive impact and who effectuate this to the others, shall become much more effective leaders than the others. The scholar and author of "Leadership" highlights the fact that the research in emotional intelligence domain is still inflicting a lot of hypothesis and thesis which correlate the social intelligence to the leader. This observation allows new rooms and expectances in the role of this trait in the leadership process and more specifically, in the leader himself.

HOW DOES IT WORK THE THEORY OF LEADER TRAITS IN THE LEADERSHIP PROCESS?

The theory of leader traits is focused exclusively in the leader and not in relation to the leadership situations or to the pursuers (subordinates). Fundamentally it is interested with what the leader traits present and who possesses these traits.

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

The research over the leaders' personality traits does not aim at placing a number of hypothesis or general principles: what is the model of the leader who is necessitated in certain situations or what shall do a leader in different situations.
What most studies tend to design and conclude is the idea that a leader with a peculiar number of traits is quite fundamental in the effective leadership of the situation. The leader and his personality are placed in the center of the leadership process.
The recent studies over this domain suggest that the organizations shall perform better if the leader position shall have a designed profile. In order to find congruous persons it is indispensable the utilization of the instruments as for the assessment of the individual's personality characteristics. We thus speaks of those individuals who will take the headship. This assessment will assist the procedures for selecting the right persons and for increasing the organization effectiveness. The organizations themselves are trying to specify the required profile of a leader personalizing it in accordance to the situation and to the sole profile of the organization and its necessities.
The leadership traits may be evaluated even on the grounds of their utilization in the personal consciousness of every leader and in their attempts to develop them. The analyses of leader traits brings important ideas over his weaknesses and antecedences and it does also bring a viewpoint from the followers side and from the part of the organization itself in general as for the performance of the leader, up to the genesis of plain chances for the position in his role and even in his resituating.
The theories of leader traits enunciate some pre-eminences.
Firstly, we may distinguish precisely their intuitively charming character. The term leader and his image pertain to an individual who stands on top and who heads the community in general as a very discernable kind of individual equipped with unusual talents, traits and characteristics. The approaches over personality traits do therefore consist in this perception because they upheave their ideas over the premise that leaders are different and the differentiation stands precisely in a set of peculiar traits that they do possess. People necessitate observing their leaders as talented people and this theory fully accomplishes and satisfies their need.
Secondly, over more than one century researchers are looking and retesting their hypotheses and paradigms in relation to the leader's traits. Stability, time and geographical expansion endow this theory with credibility as compared to other researches.
Another precedence of the theory in question is the fact that during the leadership process, by a possible definition we did therefore define three dimensions which are: the leader, his followers and the situation where the role of the leader is the first one and the most determined.

CONCLUSIONS

We shall hereto highlight what the scholars continuously utilize as a prologue of their surveys where, nevertheless the continuous research and the degree of its credibility indicated by their fulfillments and analysis, for all of the individuals and organizations levels, their nature and aim, still a correct definition of the set and packet of the leader's traits is not possible, but it shall provide a direction and orientation towards that packet aspired by the individual in accordance to his position, organization and community. The different tests and questionnaires of leadership personality allow for the individuals to acquire the suitable information and position in close compliance to the prominent requisitions according to the weaknesses and precessions possessed by them. The

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

information brought by the theories of personality traits gives every leader the opportunity to observe the zones in which the leader's personality characteristics are mostly suitable for their organizations and where they shall develop or train more as for the amelioration of the future expecting situation.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

1- Peter G.Northouse, *Leadership*, SAGE Publication, 2010
2- Bass B.M, Bass and Stogdill`s handbook of leadership: *A survey of theory and research*, 1990 New York
3- Mann, R.D. *A review of the relationship between personality and performance in small grups*. Psychological Bulletin, nr. 56
4- Lord, R.G., De Vader, C.L., Alliger, G.M. *A meta-analysis of the relation between personality traits and leadership perceptions*. Journal of Applied Psychology, nr.71
5- Kirkpatrick, S.A., Locke, E.A. *Leadership: Do traits matter?* The executive, 5, 1991
6- Zaccaro, S.J, *Organizational leadership and social intelligence*. In R.Riggio (Ed)*Multiple intelligence and leadership(*p. 29-54) 2002
7- Mayer, J.D, Salovey, P., Caruso,D.R , *Models of emotional intelligence*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 396-420
8- Jago, A.G. 1982 Leadership: *Perspectives in theory and research*, Management Science, 28 p. 315-336.
9- John, W.Gardner, *The nature of Leadership*, The Jossey-Bass reader on Educational Leadership, Second Edition, USA, 2007, p. 27-50
10- Kenneth A, Leithwood, *Transformation School Leadership in a Transactional Policy World*, The Jossey-Bass reader on Educational Leadership, Second Edition, USA, 2007, p. 183-196
11- Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, *Standards for School Leaders,* The Jossey-Bass reader on Educational Leadership, Second Edition, USA, 2007, p. 249-268.
12- Ann Lieberman, Ellen R, Saxl and Matthew B. Miles, *Teacher Leadership: Ideology and Practice*, The Jossey-Bass reader on Educational Leadership, Second Edition, USA, 2007, p. 403-420
13- Pendavinji, Gj. Dedo S; "*Ndikimi i tipareve të personalitetit të drejtuesit, në efikasitetin e drejtimit dhe administrimit të ndërmarrjes*" Buletini Shkencor, Universiteti "Fan S. Noli" Korçë, nr.9, 2004.
14- Pendavinji Gj. Jorgji S. *"Roli i aftësive politike në procesin e drejtimit"* Buletini Shkencor, UNIEL, 2006.
15- Administrimi & Menaxhimi i Arsimit, vëllimi I, Nr.1, dhjetor 2000
16- Revista Pedagogjike, Nr. 3, 2003. *Reflektime në fushën e drejtimit të shkollës*, Virxhil Nano & Aurela Zisi.

Refrences

[i] Bass, 1990; Bass & Stogdill`s handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research. New York: Free Press; p.11-20
[ii] Fq.2-3 Peter G. Northouse, Leadership, 2010
[iii] Idem fq 12, Burns, 1978; Heller & Van Til, 1983; Hollander, 1992

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)

[iv] Bass, 1990; Bass & Stogdill`s handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research. New York: Free Press;
Jago, A.G. 1982 Leadership: Perspectives in theory and research.
[v] Leadership theory and practice, fifth edition, Peter G. Northhouse, 2010, SAGE Publication
[vi] Idem p.17
[vii] Mann, R.D. A review of the relationship between personality and performance in small groups. Psychological Bulletin, nr. 56, 241-270
[viii] Lord, R.G., De Vader, C.L., Alliger, G.M. A meta-analysis of the relation between personality traits and leadership perceptions. Journal of Applied Psychology, 71, 402-410.
[ix] Kirkpatrick, S.A., Locke, E.A. Leadership: Do traits matter? The executive, 5, 48-60.
[x] Zaccaro, Organizational leadership and social intelligence. p. 29-54
[xi] Leadership theory and practice, fifth edition, Peter G. Northouse, 2010, SAGE Publication p. 23
[xii] Mayer, Solevey & Caruso, Models of emotional intelligence, Cambridge University Press, 2000, fq. 396-420

BDD-A20432 © 2011 Valahia University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-16 16:55:57 UTC)