Transformational Leadership in Higher Education in Panama

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Abstract

This article reviews the literature on transformational leadership, applies it to the unique context of higher education, and elaborates on an educational intervention in transformational leadership to faculty supervisors at higher education institutions in Panama. A mixed methods study evaluated the impact of the intervention on the perspectives and attitudes of the participants. The results demonstrate that the profesional development program was effective in generating reflections among faculty supervisors that reflected a deep understanding of the importance of transformational leadership as a tool to influence faculty and potentially generate higher levels of faculty engagement.

Keywords: transformational leadership, higher education, Panama, professional development, faculty, faculty supervisor.

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Resumen

Este artículo hace una revision de la literatura sobre liderazgo transformacional, lo aplica al contexto único de educación superior y detalla una intervencion educativa de liderazgo tranformacional dirigida a supervisores docentes en instituciones de educación superior en Panamá. El estudio de métodos mixtos evaluó el impacto de la intervención en las perspectivas y actitudes de los participantes. Los resultados demostraron que el programa de desarrollo professional fue efectivo en generar reflecciones entre los supervisores docentes, quienes reflejaron un entendimiento profundo de la importancia del liderazgo transformacional como herramienta para influir en el docente y potencialmente mejorar los niveles de *engagement* del docente.

Palabras clave: liderazgo transformacional, educación superior, Panamá, desarrollo professional, docente, supervisor docente.

Introduction

Higher education institutions are complex organizations with diverse needs in terms of management and leadership (Dunbar, 2014). Employees (including faculty) in higher education institutions usually face high workloads and constant changes, which make their management challenging for the leaders (Dunbar, 2014). A review of the literature of the problem of part-time faculty engagement, as well as the results of a needs assessment conducted among private universities in Panama confirmed the need to intervene and change the relationship that faculty have with their institutions of affiliation. This change will not come from faculty themselves, but can be a result of an improvement in the leadership skills employed by faculty supervisors, and the effect that these skills have on organizational climate and engagement.

The ASHE Higher Education Report (2010) calls for "more research that documents context-based solutions to address the concerns and issues of non-tenure-track faculty and studies that are formulated and framed with context as an important factor" (p. 68). The proposed intervention will address this gap in research literature, and provide the higher

education community with mixed methods research regarding specific recommendations to improve the relationship that universities have with part-time faculty. The proposed intervention involves the improvement of the leader-follower relationship between faculty supervisors and faculty in private universities in Panama, through a transformational leadership professional development intervention directed towards faculty supervisors, such as academic vice presidents, deans, and program coordinators. A transformational leadership intervention stems from findings of a needs assessment conducted by Leon (2020) with university presidents of private universities in Panama, suggesting that the relationship between faculty supervisors and faculty is transactional. While some of the earlier leadership literature tends to compare transactional leadership and transformational leadership as two separate and opposite styles of leadership (Burns, 1987), other proponents have suggested an augmentation effect for transformational and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985). Evidence points to transformational leadership as an intervention approach that has a positive effect on engagement (Avolio & Bass, 1999; Aryee, Walumbwa, Zhou, & Hartnell, 2012; Walumbwa, Lawler, Avolio, Wang, & Shi, 2005; Breevaart et al., 2014; Bayram & Dinç, 2015). Organizational environments that demonstrate a high level of transformational leadership tend to have highly engaged employees.

A professional development intervention in transformational leadership will have the objective of increasing the knowledge and self-awareness of higher education leaders regarding the benefits generated by adopting transformational leadership behaviors and attributes. This connection between leader self-awareness and leadership style is how transformational leaders achieve engagement from their followers (Aryee et al., 2012). "In essence, transformational leaders positively influence employee work engagement by raising followers to higher levels of potential, developing their skills, and expressing confidence in their followers' ability to perform beyond expectations" (Aryee et al., 2012).

In the short-term, the informative stages of the intervention should result in an increase in the self-awareness and knowledge that university leaders have regarding the problem of part-time faculty

engagement. They should also result in an increase in the self-awareness and knowledge regarding the influence that leadership styles and policy development and implementation have on organizational culture and engagement. At the beginning of the application of the intervention, university leaders will be receiving information regarding the problem and the content of the intervention. This result comes from the framework proposed by Shuck and Herd (2012) suggesting that "leadership starts with the self" (p. 173) and that leaders need to understand the importance of self-awareness in order to engage in a process of change towards becoming a transformational leader. This information should drive a change in the way that leaders envision the role of an engaged professor in their institution. An understanding of the problem and the importance of dedicating resources to the problem is a short-term outcome of the intervention that should lead the transition to the medium and long-term outcomes.

Smart (2005) suggests that the lack of theory-based research in higher education occurs as a result of a lack of theories of higher education, and highlights the value in drawing from theories of other disciplines to improve the quality of higher education research. Noting a reluctance among higher education researchers to draw upon other academic disciplines to ground research in the area, Smart (2005) states that theories in economics, psychology, sociology, and organizational theory and behavior can provide valuable contributions to the understanding of factors that influence phenomena in higher education. Following the approach suggested by Smart, and followed by the Association of Higher Education (ASHE) Report (2010), the review of literature of the problem of practice draws upon theories from studies in business, organizational psychology, economics, and sociology, to inform the proper formulation of an intervention and evaluation of its impact.

Conceptualizing Transactional and Transformational Leadership Theory

Transactional leaders are those who provide their workers with the essentials they need to complete their jobs: the expectation and description of the job they need to do and the resources they need to complete it (Robbins & Judge, 2011). Furthermore, Walumba, Cropanzano, and Goldman (2011) explain that a transactional relationship is a low quality, economic exchange between the leader and the employee, characterized by short-term interactions and a quid pro quo exchange.

Transformational leadership was initially developed by Burns (1978), who defined a "transforming" leader as one who "seeks to satisfy the higher needs and engages the full potential of the follower" (p. 4). Bass (1985) continued to elaborate on transformational leadership theory, stating that transformational leaders have the ability to influence the behavior of their followers' psychological state, through changing how they feel about themselves and their work. Transformational leadership is regarded as one of the most effective styles of leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

In 1985, Bernard Bass expanded on Burns' (1978) work regarding transformational leadership by developing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), an instrument that could measure transactional and transformational leadership. Bass (1985) also highlighted the impact of transformational leadership on follower motivation and performance, through the premise that the feelings of trust, admiration, and loyalty generated by a transformational leader among followers resulted in followers willing to dedicate more of themselves in their work roles. The transformational leader is able to transform the workplace environment into one that stimulates higher performance and success (Bass, 1985).

The four main elements of transformational leadership, according to Avolio and Bass (1999) are:

- Idealized influence for building trust;
- Inspirational motivation to inspire a sense of purpose;
- Intellectual stimulation to value creativity and involving employees in the decision-making process;
- Individualized consideration to attend to specific employees wishes.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire has evolved throughout the years to take into consideration the analyses, review, and critiques published by researchers who utilized the MLQ, and the instrument is known today as the MLQ 5X. Avolio and Bass' (1999) work constitutes the main source of transformational leadership research; their work is seminal and provides part of the conceptual framework for the proposed intervention. A website that sells the MLQ as one of its

services explains that the instrument has been used "in thousands of research programs, doctoral dissertations, and master's theses…" ("Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire – Mind Garden", n.d.). The fact that the MLQ is still relevant – 31 years after its original introduction – demonstrates the possibility for replicability in the context of Panamanian private higher education.

While Burns' (1978) earlier theories of transformational leadership compared transactional leadership and transformational leadership as two separate and opposite styles of leadership, Bass (1985) suggested that effective leaders could display attributes of both transactional and transformational leaders. This "augmentation effect" proposed that transformational and transactional leadership are not opposites or substitute of each other; rather, the transactional leader could build up on existing attributes to also become a transformational leader, and achieve an increase in performance of its followers (Bass, 1985). Bass (1985) stated that the best leaders had both transactional and transformational leadership characteristics. Shuck and Herd (2012) build up this theory by suggesting that transactional leadership allows leaders to meet the "lower level" needs of their followers, and transformational leadership moves them to another level, through the use of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (p. 172).

Leadership in the Context of Engagement

Engagement is "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances (Kahn, 1990, p. 694). Employee engagement is "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes" (Shuck & Wollard, 2010, p. 103). The objective of using a transformational leadership intervention is to create a positive work environment, and to develop and increase the level of skill and potential of employees (Aryee, Walumbwa, Zhou, & Hartnell, 2012).

Shuck & Herd (2012) find a connection between transformational leadership theory and Kahn's (1990) perspective regarding engagement. The combination of both theoretical frameworks creates a leadership process that is possible to achieve for everyone, not just for leaders who possess certain traits or characteristics (Shuck & Herd, 2012). This merging of theoretical frameworks can potentially lead to the development of a new conceptual framework for employee engagement as an outcome of leadership behaviors (Shuck & Herd, 2012), which is what the proposed intervention seeks to explore.

Transformational Leadership in Education Environments

Several studies conducted in education contexts demonstrate that transformational leadership has a positive effect on teacher engagement. Choochom (2016) conducted a study that demonstrated that support from supervisors positively affects employee engagement in an education context. The author surveyed 417 teachers in Bangkok to demonstrate a causal relationship model of teachers' engagement. Through the use of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM), the model tested the influence that job resources (such as job control, access to information, supervisory support, school climate, and social climate) had on teacher engagement.

Sayadi (2016) used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to conduct a comparative leadership study that examined the effect of transformational, transactional, and non-leadership on job satisfaction and commitment among 387 teachers in the province of Kermanshah in Iran. The study found that charismatic leadership, a characteristic that identifies transformational leaders, was the strongest positive predictor of satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, the results for the three factors of transformational leadership measured in the study were high and implied that teachers had a strong association with their school of affiliation (Sayadi, 2016). Similarly, in Texas, McCarley, Peters, and Decman (2016) used the MLQ as one of the instruments to conduct an analysis of transformational leadership related to school climate. The authors analyzed the data gathered from 399 teachers trough hierarchical linear modeling, and concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between all of the factors of transformational leadership and three characteristics that define school climate: support (positive), engagement (positive), and

frustration (negative) (McCarley et al., 2016). Bayram and Dinç (2015) studied the role of transformational leadership in job satisfaction in private universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This study provided an idea of how the intervention's effectiveness is quantitatively measurable. The authors used factor analysis, means, standard deviations, correlation, and regression analysis to measure the relationship between the presence of transformational leadership in the workplace and employee satisfaction. This article is relevant because it studies data for private universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and helps understand how to approach the study and measurement of transformational leadership for the context of private universities in Panama.

Methods

The hypotheses tested in this study separately measure the factors that make up transformational leadership, so the authors test for the impact of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration on overall job satisfaction. The authors use the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Avolio and Bass (1999). The literature review structure of this study, as well as its research design and methodology, provide a framework that is applicable in measuring the impact of the proposed intervention. The article quotes Avolio and Bass (1999) on the importance of measuring leadership in higher education: "Knowledge work will dominate the 21st century. It requires more envisioning, enabling, and empowering leadership, all of which are central to transformational leadership" (p. 131). Bass and Avolio (1999) highlight the relevance and timeliness of a leadership intervention in the context of education.

Most of the studies evaluated in the literature review use the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, developed by Avolio and Bass (1999) as the main instrument, and it will be the proposed instrument for this study as well. The theoretical framework for transformational leadership guides the research questions for this study. The research questions are:

1. What are the leadership behaviors and attributes that distinguish faculty supervisors in private higher education institutions in Panama, according to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire?

2. What change, if any, does a professional development program in transformational leadership generate among faculty supervisors in private higher education institutions in Panama?

The design for the study is a one-group study with a quantitative diagnostic evaluation at the beginning and a qualitative outcomes analysis as the post evaluation. A mixed methods approach

towards designing an intervention for the problem of part-time faculty engagement in private higher universities in Panama is justified because one data source for the intervention may be insufficient, and because the research questions may be more appropriately addressed through the use of a variety of stages or projects (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The first research question is related to the leadership behaviors and attributes that characterize faculty supervisors. This question is answered through the data provided by the initial application of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire among the participants.

The second research question seeks to evaluate the outcomes of a professional development program in transformational leadership applied to faculty supervisors. The question is answered qualitatively, through a coding analysis of the reflections generated by faculty supervisors as part of their participation in the intervention.

Participants

The participant population for the study are professionals with the role of faculty supervision at private, accredited universities in Panama. Participants were recruited through formal invitations to university presidents of the 18 private, accredited universities in Panama, who, in turn, provided the contact information of the faculty supervisors of their institutions, for them to be individually contacted and invited to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument of this study was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), in its most recent version, Form 5X. Bass and Avolio (2004) state that "MLQ scores before and after training can be the basis for evaluative research" (p. 17). The MLQ is available in Spanish, and participants were able to select to fill out the questionnaire in the language they feel most comfortable with (Spanish or English). The MLQ measures a full range of leadership styles through transactional and transformational leadership factors. The instrument has two questionnaire forms: the Self-Rating Form, a questionnaire that leaders fill out themselves, and the Rater Form, a questionnaire where the employees rate their leader (Bass & Avolio, 2004). For this intervention, the ratees were faculty supervisors, and the raters were faculty. The MLQ Manual establishes a minimum of three raters per participant and recommend a maximum of 10 (variability of leader ratings tends to increase as the number of raters increases). The distribution of the instrument was web-based.

The MLQ focused on finding those individual behaviors and attributes exhibited by faculty supervisors that are observed by their faculty in terms of leadership characteristics. At one end of the spectrum, the MLQ will be able to find perceptions that faculty may hold of faculty supervisors that are related to the avoidance of responsibility and action (laissez faire leadership). At the other end of the spectrum, the MLQ will also be able to identify behaviors that have a positive effect on performance (transformational leadership). The creators of the MLQ believe that this range between ineffective and effective leadership behavior is broader than that of other existing leadership surveys (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The MLQ contains 45 items across six leadership factors; 32 of these items are specific behaviors, and the remaining items are attributes. A five-point scale is used to rate the frequency or degree of behaviors and attributes of the leader, where 0 is "not at all" and 4 is "frequently, if not always."

Intervention

The intervention was comprised of a professional development program in transformational leadership, directed towards faculty supervisors in private accredited universities in Panama.

The professional development program contained six sessions, each with a duration of two weeks, for a total of 12 weeks in the program. The program sessions were delivered via online format. Each session introduced a topic related to transformational leadership, and required participants to engaged in online discussions, as well as write posts related to the topic of the session, and to engage in online dialogue with their peers.

Data analysis

Data gathered from the MLQ responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations. An analysis of the MLQ pre-test data provided information regarding the starting leadership behaviors and attributes of faculty supervisors in private higher education institutions in Panama. This analysis is aligned with the first research question of the study, and will also answer related questions, such as: Did the responses provided by the faculty supervisors show similarity in certain answers to show that as a group, higher education supervisors have similar leadership behaviors and attributes? According to the MLQ, what is the most common leadership style employed by faculty supervisors, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, or laissez-faire leadership?

Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis, through the following process: a) data are grouped into small units, b) a descriptor, or code is assigned to each unit, c) each code is placed into similar groupings and counted. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) recommend that researchers present both information regarding frequency of themes or codes (quantitative information) and thorough descriptions of each code (qualitative information) to create a mixed methods content analysis from the focus group data.

The content analysis helped answer the second research question, related to the effectiveness of the intervention. This allowed the researcher to determine whether the perceptions of faculty supervisors regarding the effect that they, as leaders, have on organizational climate and faculty engagement, have changed as a result of the professional development program.

Results and Analysis

Initially, 18 participants manifested interest and complied with the selection criteria for the study. The participant recruitment and selection process complied with the process that was established as part of the proyect, despite setbacks due to delays in responses from the institutions and the participants.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire has a self-evaluation form and a rater form. All participants were required to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) self-evaluation form. All participants were also asked to provide the researcher with a list of names and e-mail addresses of people who would complete the MLQ rater form. After these e-mails were sent, one participant in the treatment group withdrew from the study, leaving eight participants in the treatment group, and 17 participants total.

11 participants – 6 from the treatment group and 5 from the control group – provided names and e-mails of raters. Participants were asked to select a minimum of three raters, who could be working above, below, and directly at the same organizational level as the participant, as recommended by the MLQ Manual. The Rater Form was distributed to the raters by the researcher through e-mail. Bass and Avolio (2018) explain: "if the leader distributes the MLQ to associates, they may feel an obligation to rate the leader more favorably" (p. 37). Further, the authors favorably recommend efforts be taken to ensure that rater's responses remain anonymous. In the MLQ Manual, a warning is provided against allowing leaders to select and contact their raters. In this case, raters were selected by the leaders, but were contacted by an independent authority. This procedure implicates a possible degree of inflation in the ratings (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

The instruments were administered through an online survey development cloud-based software called SurveyMonkey. The account that was used to administer the surveys had access to survey application features, which allowed the researchers to send personalized notifications and notes to the participants, and keep track of the responses that were generated. 17 study participants

completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and 42 raters completed the MLQ rater form for 11 of those participants. The professional development program in transformational leadership was delivered to the participants through Schoology, a learning management system (LMS) that allowed for delivery and management the content of the program, as well as to facilitate interactions among the participants.

The content for the program was obtained from the MLQ Trainer's Guide by Bass and Avolio (2018), a proprietary resource that is available for online purchase through the company, Mindgarden (www.mindgarden.com). "The Leadership Challenge Trainer's Guide", by Kouzes and Posner (n.d.) was also used for content for the program. The Leadership Challenge is based on five "exemplary practices of leadership" (Kouzes & Posner, n.d.), some of which closely resemble leadership dimensions of transformational leadership.

Each module contained a discussion board with questions with the objective to help the participant reflect on certain behaviors and aspects of the dimension. The reflection exercises also provided an opportunity for participants to think about leadership within the context of higher education. The reflections that were generated by the participants were coded and analyzed. Only five participants participated in the professional development program, and only three completed a minimum of 80% of the assigned reflections. The other two participants completed some of the reflections, but stopped participating in the modules. All of the participants – those who completed the program and those who did not – cited work commitments and little or no time availability to participate in the program. This also indicates a low level of support from the supervisors of the participants, who did not take into account their participation in the program and adopt measures to ensure that participants had enough time to engage in the program.

Engagement in online sessions was one of the process outcome indicators. There was low engagement from the participants in the online sessions. Responses were usually shorter tan required, so participant reflections were – on some occasions – lacking in depth and substantive content. High attrition in the intervention, coupled with low engagement from

the participants, means that most of the quantitative data will not have statistical power. However, the descriptive analysis of the data looks into some of the noteworthy findings generated by the pre and post application of the MLQ.

General Group Characteristics

17 participants across 5 private universities voluntarily consented to participate in the study. 11 participants were female and 6 were male. 11 participants had positions at a coordination level and 6 participants had positions at a higher level, with positions such as manager, director, or dean.

The data generated through the instrument applied before the intervention began were used to test for homogeneity of the group. A Mann-Whitney U test was used in SPSS, and applied to the 45 items of the instrument. The null hypothesis for this test was that the distribution of each of the 45 items of the instrument would be the same across different groups. All 45 tests resulted in a decision to retain the null hypothesis. The MLQ data were also used to test for potential differences between gender groups and position in the institution. A Mann-Whitney U test was applied to the 45 items of the instrument, where the null hypothesis for the test was that the distribution of each item would be the same across categories of male and female. All of the 45 items retained the null hypothesis. In terms of position (coordinator or director), a Mann-Whitney U test was applied to all of the items in the instrument, and the test found that the group had the same distribution across each item, with a rejection of the null hypothesis for that test.

In general, the group was homogeneous throughout, with no differences found among coordinators/directors and males/females. Although the study participants were employed in different levels throughout different organizations, no significant differences were found in the distribution of the data. The Mann-Whitney U tests for homogeneity of the sample were only applied on data produced by the participant self-evaluations prior to the beginning the treatment. Tests could not be applied for the rater responses because not all participants provided raters.

Passive-Avoidant Leadership Results. Items in the MLQ measure two dimensions for passive-avoidant leadership – laissez-faire and passive management-by-exception. The self-evaluation grand mean results for the passive avoidant leadership style were .53, and the rater grand mean results for the same style were .83.

Laissez-faire. The ideal rating for this dimension in the MLQ is below 1, where the perceived frequency of occurrence of laissez-faire behaviors should not exist, and, at most, occur "once in a while". The pre-test results for the laissez-faire dimension, through both participant self-evaluations and rater evaluations were characterized by means below 1. The item "I delay responding to urgent questions" received the mean score closest to 1 with a mean participant self-evaluation score of .82 and a rater score of .84. This score may be due to cultural characteristics of the surveyed population, where time and urgency does not have the same importance than in other cultures (see Table 1).

The grand mean of participant self-evaluations for the laissez faire dimension was .53, and the grand mean of rater evaluations for the same dimension was .68. Both means were within the ideal range of the laissez faire dimension. In this case, raters qualified the participants as having slightly higher laissez-faire tendencies than the participants did themselves.

Passive management-by-exception (MBEP). Similar to the laissez-faire dimension, the ideal range of presence of MBEP dimension in leaders is below 1. A sample question that measures MBEP is: "I fail to interfere until problems become serious". The pre-test results for the MBEP dimension, through both participant self-evaluations and rater evaluations were mostly characterized by means below 1. Rater means for the item "Fails to interfere until problems become serious" were 1.77, outside the ideal range. There was a considerable difference between the participant self-evaluation mean and the rater mean of .83, where the raters believed that the participants displayed this behavior more often than the participants themselves (see Table 2).

The grand mean of participant self-evaluations for the MBEP dimension was .53, and the

grand mean of rater evaluations for the same dimension was .97. Similar to the grand means in the laissez-faire dimension, the raters reported higher frequency of passive management-by- exception than the leaders themselves. Although both results were within the desired range, the rater grand mean was closer to 1, and therefore, relevant as a potential area of improvement.

Transactional Leadership

Items in the MLQ measure two dimensions for transactional leadership – active management-by-exception and contingent reward. The grand mean for transactional leadership was not computed because the desired ranges for the two dimensions of this style were different. The desired range for MBEA behaviors was 1 to 2 and the desired range for contingent reward behaviors was 2 to 3. Item means and grand means by dimension are described below.

Active management-by-exception (MBEA). The ideal range of MBEA is between 1 and 2, where 1 is "once in a while" and 2 is "sometimes". This means that is desirable for leaders employ MBEA behaviors with a certain frequency. Pre-test means for this dimension demonstrated that the group tends to practice MBEA more often than is desirable. For example, the item: "I keep track of all mistakes", had a mean of 3.00 among participants and a mean of 2.90 among raters, indicating that the frequency of this behavior was "fairly often" instead of the ideal range between "once in a while" and "sometimes".

Another item with means outside of the desired range was: "I direct my attention toward failures to meet standards", with a mean participant self-evaluation rating of 3.53 and a mean rater score of 2.73. The term "standards" may have been associated with accreditation, and participants and raters may have believed that it was positive to demonstrate a high frequency of behavior regar ding this item, because of its relationship to achieving accreditation goals for the institution. Furthermore, standard deviations for MBEA items, both among participant self-evaluations and raters were higher than standard deviations for other dimensions, indicating that there was a wide distribution in the

responses that characterized this dimensión (see Table 3). The grand mean of participant self-evaluations for the MBEA dimension were 2.41, and the grand mean of rater evaluations for the same dimension was 2.55.

Contingent reward. The ideal range of contingent reward is between 2 and 3, where 2 is "sometimes" and 3 is "fairly often". An example of an item that falls under contingent reward is: "I discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets".

The group displayed means higher than the desired ranges for contingent reward, with the four items of this dimension obtaining participant self-evaluation means of 3.39, 3.23, 3.41, and 3.88. Rater means for two items fell within the desired ranges, and the other two items displayed higher than desired means, similar to those displayed by the participant self-evaluations. Participants may have misconstrued contingent reward as a positive behavior best displayed as frequently as possible. However, the literature affirms that contingent reward should be displayed as little as sometimes and no more than fairly often (see Table 4).

The grand mean of participant self-evaluations for the contingent reward dimension was 3.48 and the grand mean of rater evaluations for this dimension was 3.06. Both of these dimensions, measured by participants and their raters, displayed results outside of the desired ranges, were the behaviors are displayed more frequently than is desired. This means that a high frequency of transactional leadership behaviors characterizes the group.

Transformational Leadership

Items in the MLQ measure two dimensions for transformational leadership – idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation. The grand mean for transformational leadership was 3.43 among participant self-evaluations and 3.28 among raters.

Idealized influence (attributes and behavior). The ideal rating for idealized influence in the MLQ is above a 3, with an ideal frequency of behavior where 3 is ¨fairly often¨ and 4 is ¨frequently, if not

often¨. The items that measured attributes for idealized influence were mostly in the ideal range of above 3.0. There was one item that obtained a participant self-evaluation mean below range (2.74), but the same item obtained a rater mean of 3.17, which is within the desired range. Three of the four items that measured behavior for idealized influence were within the desired ranges above 3, for both participant self-evaluation means and for rater means. The item: "I talk about my most important values and beliefs" obtained lower than desired mean scores from both participants and raters, with 2.65 and 2.57, respectively (see Table 5).

Two items that measured behavior for idealized influence were within the highest desirable ranges among all the items that measure transformational leadership. These items were: "I specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose", with a participant rating of 3.82 and "I consider the moral and ethical consequences of my decisions", also with a participant rating of 3.82. These two results demonstrate that the group placed a high importance on sense of purpose of what the team does, as well as the value of moral and ethical decision-making on their quality as leaders. These two items also obtained a low standard deviation (both .39), indicating little variation and no self-evaluations below 3 (see Table 6).

The grand mean for idealized influence was computed using the 8 items of attributes and behavior, with a result of 3.37 for participant self-evaluations and 3.25 for raters.

Inspirational Motivation. The desired range for the inspirational motivation dimension is above 3, with an ideal frequency of behavior where 3 is ¨fairly often¨ and 4 is ¨frequently, if not often". All of the self-evaluation means and rater means were above a 3.0, and in most items, were above 3.5. Standard deviation was low for the items in this dimension. Inspirational motivation seems to be an area of strength for the group. Sample items for inspirational motivation are: "I talk optimistically about the future," and "I express confidence that goals will be achieved". The grand mean results for inspirational motivation were 3.70 among participant self-evaluations and 3.58 among raters. Inspirational motivation is a leadership dimension that was rated the most favorably among the group, and is a strength that characterizes the participants (see Table 7).

Intellectual Stimulation. The desired range for the intellectual stimulation dimension is above 3, with an ideal frequency of behavior where 3 is ¨fairly often¨ and 4 is ¨frequently, if not often". Three out of four items that measure intellectual stimulation obtained the ideal range of above 3.

One item obtained a score below 3.0 for both participant self-evaluation mean and for rater mean, of 2.80 and 2.97, respectively. The item was: "I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate". A score below the desired range for this item indicates an area of opportunity of improvement for the group. The grand mean results for intellectual stimulation were 3.36 among participant self-evaluations and 3.17 among raters (see Table 8).

Individualized Consideration. The desired range for this dimension is above 3, with an ideal frequency of behavior where 3 is ¨fairly often¨ and 4 is ¨frequently, if not often". The pre-test results for this dimension exhibit some variability among items. Two of the four items were rated above 3, both for participant self-evaluation means and rater means. However, one of the items was ranked below the desired range, both by participants and raters. The item was: "I treat others as individuals rather than just as members of a group", and its participant mean was 2.62 and rater mean was 2.98.

Furthermore, another item of this dimension demonstrated a high difference in scores between participants and raters. The item was: "I consider an individual as having different, needs, abilities, and aspirations from others", and its participant mean was 3.82, which is a high, favorable ranking for this item, but raters evaluated the participants with a mean of 2.81, which falls below the desired range for this item. The self-perception that the group had regarding their ability to provide individualized consideration for their followers does not match the perception provided by the followers regarding the leader. The grand mean results for individualized consideration were 3.30 among participant self-evaluations and 3.13 among raters. Intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, although within desired ranges, displayed results, especially among raters that are close to falling out the desired range of 3 (see Table 9).

Qualitative Analysis

The professional development program instructed participants to write reflections regarding the different dimensions of transformational leadership from the lens of private higher education. These reflections produced rich data for qualitative analysis. A qualitative data analysis computer software called NVivo was used. The participant responses were exported from Schoology into

NVivo, and separated into three files. One file contained the reflections of the participants pertaining to the self-evaluation and rater results of the MLQ; another file contained the reflections of the four dimensions of transformational leadership applied to higher education; and the last file contained reflections regarding the professional development program itself.

Saldaña's (2009) "Coding Manual for Researchers" was used to guide the process of data coding and analysis. Descriptive coding was employed to summarize the primary topics and ideas that arose in the reflections. Initially, 33 codes were produced. These codes had descriptive names such as: empathy, inspire others, teamwork, positive work climate, and self-confidence. The codes reflected leadership behaviors and attributes, as well as leadership outcomes, benefits, and challenges.

After careful revision of the generated codes, 33 codes were reduced to 26, and the 26 codes were distributed among 10 categories. The first two categories are two styles of leadership – additional to transformational leadership – mentioned by the MLQ. The following four categories are the four dimensions of transformational leadership. These dimensions were disaggregated into separate categories because the professional development program's objective was to improve transformational leadership attributes and behaviors in the participants. Therefore, much of the content produced by the participants' reflections are based on the different dimensions that make up transformational leadership. The final categories – communication, teamwork leadership outcomes, and limitations and challenges – are categories that emerged due to the frequency of recurrence as codes during the coding process. These were topics that emerged throughout the participant reflections, and merited separate categories to further reflect and analyze their meaning.

Passive-Avoidant and Transactional Leadership

Reflections regarding passive-avoidant leadership behaviors and transactional leadership were infrequent, because the professional development program focused on transformational

leadership. Some reflections regarding these two leadership styles arose through the revision of the results from the self-evaluations and rater forms. These results were sent to the participants individually so they could see their score separated by dimensions, and reflect on certain behaviors that are assigned to the different leadership styles. The passive-avoidant category had two codes, and each code generated one mention each. In one mention the participant recognized attention to failure as an unexpected weakness the raters pointed out in their evaluation. In another mention, a participant expressed the belief that it was acceptable to practice "it if isn't broken, don't fix it" mentality.

Three codes were generated for the transactional leadership category. Problem-solving was mentioned on five occasions by two participants. This behavior is aligned with both passive and active management-by-exception. A sample response under this code was: "…must be able to solve the problems that are within their reach" referring to a leader's responsibility.

Idealized Influence

Idealized influence was a category and transformational leadership dimension that generated reflection in participants. Within this dimension, participants reflected on clarity of vision, employee's sense of belonging and loyalty, relationship with employees, values, and leading by example. Lead by example, as a code, included participant reflections such as:

"Leadership behaviors can be maximized through setting an example."

"The strongest transformational leadership behavior I possess is the sense of mission, respect, integrity, and trust, which serves as an example to employees, so that these become behavioral changes towards the institution or organization."

"A leader influences faculty in such as way that he/she becomes a role model, fostering respect, admiration, and recognition at all times, which for me is key in leadership."

"A leader must inspire trust, be an example, know to listen opinions and suggestions, which

must be taken into consideration if they are useful to solve problems and facilitate work flow."

Individualized Consideration

The category and dimension of individualized consideration generated 5 codes, with noteworthy references. The codes that were generated through participant reflections were: active listening, coaching and mentoring, empathy, professional development, and advice and support. Active listening was the code that generated the most references within the category of individualized consideration, with statements such as:

> "The transformational, inspirational, and intellectual leader has an influence in the organizational environment by being a person who works as part of a team, and asks questions to not make mistakes because the persona asks and listens before making decisions."

> "I love to say what I think and listen to others even through I don't consider they are not right, but it is good to share ideas and reach agreements".

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation as a category encompasses three codes, each with few references. Few reflections merited a code in the category of intellectual stimulation. Only one code was produced for "innovative thinking", which is one of the main ideas of intellectual stimulation. This code states: "A leader requires intellectual stimulation. This facilitates alternating different thoughts and being innovative and entrepreneurial".

It seems that participants mistake employee development with intellectual stimulation, when employee development falls under individual consideration. Participants believe that intellectual stimulation occurs when they provide opportunities for professional development to their employees. However, Bass and Avolio (2004, 2018) contend that professional development is related to individualized consideration, which is the dimension of transformational leadership that identifies, attends, and elevates to the developmental needs of the employee, in an effort to help said employee reach their maximum potential. The MLQ results also demonstrate that intellectual stimulation is a transformational leadership dimension with room for improvement.

Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation also merited three codes with few references each. One participant referred to the importance of inspirational motivation by stating: "We need to consistently transmit motivation, vocation, and passion for what we like". Furthermore, a participant discovered strength in the rater scores of the MLQ through "trying to inspire others".

Communication and Teamwork

The categories of communication and teamwork were created as separate categories because of two reasons:

- Both areas had a high frequency of recurrence during the coding process;
- Neither area is a clear part of one transformational leadership dimension; rather, good communication skills, and teamwork abilities are embedded within all four transformational leadership dimensions and are necessary attributes and behaviors that a transformational leader must possess.

Teamwork generated 12 references throughout the coding process and communication skills generated 6 references. The communication category encompassed topics such as the importance of institutional communications, as well as the role of participant communication skills in leadership. Examples of reflections provided by participants were:

"To improve the actual state of the organization it is necessary to have better communication among departments".

"Good communication is a tool that must prevail in every institution".

Teamwork was mentioned repeatedly throughout the reflections, and it was mentioned in diverse modules. None of the reflection questions in the professional development program asked participants to discuss teamwork. Rather, the topic emerged as part of the reflections as an important area of focus, both for transformational leaders and employees. Some examples of coded references in this category were:

"Teamwork or collaborative work is the best, because it requires to have an imaginary rope to understand that, being at the same level, we must all pull in the same direction to achieve goals."

"A good leader injects positivism in the staff and achieves better results from the perspective that we all work or steer the boat in the same direction".

Participants reflected about how leadership influences the ability to reach certain outcomes. For this category, two codes were created: positive work climate and institutional goals. Positive work climate aligns with the research literature that confirms that a positive work climate is an outcome of leadership that precedes engagement. Therefore, when an institution has transformational leaders, it is more likely that there will be a positive organizational climate, and that the positive climate will lead to employee engagement. One participant reflected:

"It is important to create a work climate that is favorable to conduct the functions that have been assigned to each of the employees, which means that there will be interpersonal relations based on collaboration, solidarity, support, and teamwork."

Institutional Goals

The code for institutional goals includes participant references about the different goals that will be accomplished through transformational leadership. Some of the goals that would be achieved, according to the participants were: "good education", "good quality of customer service", "joint strategies of great value for the institution", and "optimal attention to students on behalf of faculty". These reflections are relevant because they indicate that participants are aware of a variety of institutional goals, and are relating the knowledge they have gained about transformational leadership dimensions to its applicability, not just for managing people, but also for achieving the greater goals of the institution.

Limitations and Challenges

Participants described certain limitations throughout their reflections. These reflections were added to a category called limitations, to allow for better analysis. All of the references in this category mention institutional limitations, which become challenges in their ability to reach desired institutional outcomes. Most of these references are directed toward faculty situations regarding part-time status, engagement, and research. Some of the comments made by the participants include:

"I consider that I can do more, but often times the system does not allow for it".

"We constantly have to motivate faculty because they feel unmotivated even for the

payment they receive and the work that implies to do research, prepare a class, spend many hours preparing and reading to face the day to day challenges".

"I think that in every job there are highs and lows, because people on occasion feel very motivated and want to accomplish a lot, but the administration at times does not understand that more could be accomplished with sufficient support."

"Institutions often times are not prepared to advance. They want to continue doing more of the same".

Through these comments regarding different challenges and limitations, participants displayed ample knowledge of the situation of faculty in their context, and some of the limitations that are present because of the local context. However, some of the final reflections showed that participants were able to understand the importance of their role as transformational leaders, and the potential that their leadership has in transforming the o culture of the organization, and therefore the engagement of faculty.

Conclusion

The group of faculty supervisors that participated in the study was characterized by having low levels of passive-avoidant behavior, where the two dimensions of this behavior were within desired ranges in self-evaluation and rater scores of the MLQ. The two dimensions that measure transactional leadership displayed frequency of behavior outside of the desired ranges of occurrence. Faculty supervisors in Panama engage in transactional leadership behaviors more often than is ideal. Finally, the participants displayed transformational leadership behaviors within ideal ranges, with some exceptions that were found within specific items of the instrument. The exceptions were found in one item below the desired range in intellectual stimulation, one item below the desired range for individualized consideration, and one item with significant discrepancies between self-evaluations and rater evaluations for individualized consideration.

A qualitative analysis of the reflections produced by the participants during the professional development program permitted a deeper understanding of the meaning behind some of the scores.

For example, the items in intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration may have scored lower than expected because of participant misconceptions over what behaviors encompass intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Furthermore, qualitative analysis unveiled certain traits – teamwork and communication – that do not belong to a particular dimension of transformational leadership, but are relevant in its consideration.

Because of the small sample size, the quantitative data cannot be used to determine the impact of the professional development program. However, the qualitative data suggest that the program did produce a positive impact in the treatment group´s knowledge and awareness regarding the importance of transformational leadership in their context of higher education.

The data and analysis produced in this article is new knowledge that will allow university decision-makers and leaders to better understand some of the specific challenges of the leadership attributes and behaviors of their faculty supervisors. Furthermore, this study opens the path for future opportunities in studies of engagement and transformational leadership within the context of higher education in Latin America.

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Table 1

Sample Means by Item for Laissez-Faire

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Avoids getting involved when important issues arise.	.65	.84	.19	1.17	.61	.56
Is absent when needed.	.12	.47	.35	.33	.57	.24
Avoids making decisions.	.53	.57	.04	.80	.53	.27
Delays responding to urgent questions.	.82	.84	.02	1.13	.60	.53

Table 2

Sample Means by Item for Passive Management-by-exception

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Fails to interfere until problems become serious.	.94	1.77	.83	1.30	.99	.31
Waits for things to go wrong before taking action.	.18	.55	.37	.53	.53	0
Shows that he/she is a firm believer in "If it isn't broke, don't fix it".	.94	.92	.02	1.43	.64	.79
Demonstrates that problems must become chronic before taking action.	.06	.65	.59	.24	.65	.41

Table 3

Sample Means by Item for Active Management-by-exception

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Focuses attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards.	1.59	2.55	.96	1.54	.72	.82
Concentrates his/her full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures.	1.53	2.03	.50	1.46	.94	.52
Keeps track of all mistakes.	3.00	2.90	.10	1.06	.69	.37
Directs my attention towards failures to meet standards.	3.53	2.73	.80	.51	.79	.28

Table 4

Sample Means by Item for Contingent Reward

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts.	3.39	2.45	.94	.65	1.15	.50
Discusses in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets.	3.23	2.82	.41	.83	.57	.26
Makes clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved.	3.41	3.37	.04	.87	.72	.15
Expresses satisfaction when others meet expectations.	3.88	3.81	.07	.33	.41	.08

Table 5

Sample Means by Item for Idealized Influence - Attributes

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her.	2.74	3.17	.43	1.30	.68	.62
Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group.	3.35	3.07	.28	1.00	.64	.36
Acts in ways that builds my respect.	3.59	3.61	.02	.51	.57	.06
Displays a sense of power and confidence.	3.53	3.19	.34	.62	.53	.09

Table 6

Sample Means by Item for Idealized Influence - Behavior

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Talks about his/her most important values and beliefs.	2.65	2.57	.08	1.27	.75	.52
Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose.	3.82	3.57	.25	.39	.32	.07
Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.	3.82	3.34	.48	.39	.53	.14
Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission.	3.47	3.51	.04	1.01	.51	.50

Table 7

Sample Means by Item for Inspirational Motivation

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Talks optimistically about the future.	3.76	3.65	.11	.48	.35	.13
Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished.	3.69	3.66	.03	.48	.37	.11
Articulates a compelling vision of the future.	3.65	3.46	.19	.49	.57	.08
Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved.	3.70	3.53	.17	.47	.55	.08

Table 8

Sample Means by Item for Intellectual Stimulation

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.	2.80	2.97	.17	1.01	.76	.25
Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems.	3.65	3.31	.34	.61	.65	.04
Gets me to look at problems from many different angles.	3.35	3.18	.17	.61	.98	.37
Suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.	3.65	3.23	.42	.49	.81	.32

Table 9

Sample Means by Item for Individualized Consideration

Item Description	Self-eval. Mean	Rater Mean	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (Mean)	Self-eval. SD	Rater SD	Difference between Self-eval. and Rater (SD)
Spends time teaching and coaching.	3.23	3.43	.20	1.15	.77	.38
Treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of a group.	2.62	2.98	.36	1.86	.85	1.01
Considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.	3.82	2.81	1.01	.40	.72	.32
Helps me develop my strengths.	3.53	3.30	.23	.51	.74	.23