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## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-PERCEIVED AND TEACHER-PERCEIVED PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLE**

This paper presents the results obtained on a sample of 467 teachers and 25 principals from elementary schools in the wider city area of Tuzla. The subject of the research was the relation between self-perceived principal leadership styles and principal leadership styles perceived by teachers. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used to collect data; one version for principals and a different version for employees. The results obtained from the sample of respondents show no statistically significant difference between self-perceived and teacher-perceived principal leadership styles, and that the average scale values on the subscales of transformational and transactional leadership obtained on subsamples of teachers led by more transformational and less transformational principals statistically significantly vary. Correlation analysis showed that the dimensions of transformational leadership and *laissez-faire* leadership have a predictor value of teacher perception for principal (self) perception, with the *laissez-faire* style having a negative value. The probable reason for such results lies in the fact that principals with more pronounced transformational leadership characteristics have a greater ability for empathy and self-awareness, and are better at assessing their managerial strengths and weaknesses.

**Keywords:** leadership style; school principals; teachers; transformational, transactional, *laissez-faire* leadership.

## INTRODUCTION

The first successful attempt to scientifically identify and describe leadership, which in practice probably occurred with the first social groups, dates to 1939 and American social psychologists K. Lewin, R. Lippit and R. K. White. They pointed to three fundamental types of leader attitudes toward group members: *autocratic*, *democratic*, and *laissez faire* (Lewin, Lippit & White 1939). Depending on the type of leader, the group's performance differs in terms of achieving common work goals. All three authors conclude that, in the medium and long term, the best results are achieved by the democratic behavior of the leaders. Autocracy is most effective in the short term, while laissez faire leadership in most cases leads to the lowest achievement (Krech, Crutchfield, Ballachey 1969).

During the 20th century, other authors also studied the topic of leadership, mainly starting from the pioneering theories of Lewin, Lippit and White, and supplementing and modifying their findings. Despite possible differences in the understanding of leadership styles, researchers studying this phenomenon still put their main focus on the differences detected in the very beginning which relate to interpersonal relationships (manager-employee and employee-employee relations), emotional, social and work climate, and work performance in groups with different leaders (Bojanović 2004).

Applying general knowledge on leadership to work organizations, Bass (1985) identifies *transformational*, *transactional*, and *laissez faire* leadership. The first contains elements of democratic and the second contains elements of autocratic leadership style. According to Bass and Reggio (2006), a particularly significant aspect of transformational leadership is that it leads to changes in employees themselves; raises the level of motivation and shapes them morally. *Laissez faire* style is often described as free-rein leadership, with minimal engagement of a leader (Bass & Reggio 2006).

Taking into account the results of previous research, which illustrates the importance of leadership style in the context of school climate (Allen, Grigsby & Peters 2015; Britton 2018; Ghunu 2019; Gümüş, Bulut and Bellibas 2013; DuPont 2009; Silva, Amante & Morgado 2017) and teacher motivation (Alasad 2017; Eyal & Roth 2011; Shepherd-Jones & Salisbury-Glennon 2017; Wasserman, Ben-eli, Yehoshua & Gal 2016; Williams 2018), school-efficacy (Even & BenDavid-Hadar 2021; Martin 2021) and results that indicate possible differences in how managers see themselves and how their employees see them (Becker, Ayman & Korabik 2002; Jacobsen & Anderson 2015), the aim of this research was to dive deeper into the re-

relationship between the self-perceived and teacher-perceived leadership style of school principals.

### ***The leadership role of the school principal***

The leadership role of the school principal is determined by the functions and areas of work that need to be covered, the competencies he must have, the training he needs to gain the appropriate competencies and to provide professional guidance of staff efforts, and responsibilities for resources.

Since the school is a non-profit organization with a unique goal and function, it should be viewed as a specific unit, in which both general and specific organizational rules apply. In that sense, Staničić (2011) cites two basic functions of the school: *administrative-technical* and *developmental-pedagogical*. The purpose of administrative-technical tasks is optimal functioning of the school, which, unlike other organizations, performs educational work. The professional-pedagogical area is tied to the main feature of the school as a specific organization. Compared to the administrative-technical function, it is much more complex, and the participation of the principal is expected to be more pronounced. It involves developmental and pedagogical tasks related to: planning and programming, organizing, introducing innovations, monitoring and improving teaching, working with children with disabilities, professional orientation, professional development, analysis of educational results of the school, etc.

Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004) divide the tasks of the school principal into three large groups: 1. *people management* (which includes employee motivation, decision making, conflict management, candidate selection and recruitment, employee promotion), 2. *organization management* (which includes school goals, creating teams, planning and programming, curriculum adaptation, quality management, resource management) and 3. *change management* (defining goals, deciding on strategies, gaining trust, monitoring and evaluating changes).

Referring to the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development) annual analysis of educational parameters from 2007 (OECD 2007b) and the Analysis of performance in the 2006 PISA tests (OECD 2007a), Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008) point to an indirect responsibility of school principals to improve educational outcomes. In order to achieve optimal results, principals should conceptualize their leadership into four tasks: 1. providing conditions and support for professional development of teachers, and their evaluation; 2. goal setting, assessment

and accountability; 3. financial and human resource management; 4. creating conditions for improving school practice.

There is no doubt that the role of the principal in an elementary school is complex and multidimensional. As a manager, the principal acts as an intermediary between the (educational) authorities, partially represented through the school board, and the teachers, or, indirectly, the students. The principal is responsible for creating material, technical and staffing conditions for the functioning of the school, creating a vision and mission of the school and its progress.

### ***Transactional, transformational and laissez faire school management***

The theoretical framework in this paper is comprised of the three leadership styles described by Bass (1985 according to Avolio and Bass 2010): *transformational*, *transactional*, and *laissez faire leadership*. Transformational leadership is, according to Avolio and Bass (2002), a type of leadership that leads to changes within individuals and social systems in terms of motivation, moral shaping, and work performance. This is accomplished through the following mechanisms: *creating a common identity between group members and in the group as a whole; the leader is a role model personal identification for employees; the leader understands the needs, strengths and weaknesses of employees, according to which he gives them appropriate tasks.*

The dimensions of transformational leadership (Bass 1990) are: 1. *individualized consideration* (refers to the attention the manager pays to the employee and his understanding of the employee's needs); 2. *intellectual stimulation* (the degree to which the manager accepts employee ideas and encourages his creative thinking); 3. *inspirational motivation* (manager's ability to articulate goals and get the employees to achieve them); 4. *model of identification – attributed and behavior* (the degree to which the manager represents a moral ideal for the employee, gains his respect and trust).

*Transactional leadership* is based on the *take-give* principle. In this case, the leader gives employees guidance, recognition and a value system, and in return he takes/receives respect and obedience. It consists of: 1. *contingent reward*, 2. *active management by exception* and 3. *passive management by exception*. Transactional management is most obvious in cases when the leader relies on passive management mechanisms, i.e. intervenes only when the work procedure has been violated or the set goal has not been achieved. He then threatens or punishes (Bass 1990). According to Burns (1978), transactional leadership is the most common style, but also a style

that provides neither the manager nor the employee a high level of motivation or intellectual stimulation.

Laissez faire (*let it be*) leadership style, as described by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) implies minimal involvement of the leader. Decisions are made by group members, taking responsibility for their outcomes. Avolio and Bass (2011) paid the least attention to this leadership style. In their instrument, they described it through only one leadership component – *passive/avoidant leadership* (this is also another name that Avolio and Bass use for this leadership style). This is perhaps because in most cases where conscious, deliberate and planned activity is expected from the leader, this leadership style is not desirable.

In practice, we almost never encounter pure leadership styles. Usually, a leader will show elements of two, or even three leadership styles, with one of them being the dominant one. This is why we commonly hear the phrase '*dominant leadership style*'.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research aim***

The aim of this paper is to explore the relation between self-perceived and teacher-perceived principal leadership styles.

### ***Research hypothesis***

It is assumed that there is no statistically significant difference between self-perceived and teacher-perceived principal leadership styles.

### ***Respondents***

The sample, characterized as convenient (probabilistically), consisted of 467 teachers and 25 principals from 25 elementary schools in the wider city area of Tuzla. According to the data collected in schools, the total number of teachers, at the time when the survey was conducted, was 744, which corresponds to the number of printed and distributed sets of instruments. However, it should be emphasized that the actual number of teachers was less than 744 (it was impossible to obtain accurate information by looking at individual school databases), because, in order to accumulate work hours for their job to be considered full-time, some individuals were employed in more than one school. In such cases, teachers were advised to fill in the questionnaires in the school in which they have the largest number of working hours. The return of

valid questionnaires was slightly less than 63%. The gender distribution of respondents in the sample was asymmetric, which is a reflection of a population imbalance: 307 (65.7%) female teachers and 89 (19.1%) male teachers, while 71 (15.2%) respondents did not state their gender in the questionnaire. In the subsample of principals 19 (76%) were male and 6 (24%) were female. The age of the teachers ranged from 24 to 64 years ( $M=43.12$ ;  $Mdn=43$ ,  $s=9.15$ ;  $Sk=0.18$ ;  $K=-0.55$ ). No differences were found in the age of teaching staff ( $M_F=43.10$ ;  $M_M=43.01$ ;  $t=0.07$ ;  $df=370$ ;  $p=0.937$ ;  $F_L=2.23$ ;  $p_L=0.136$ ), and neither were they found in the length of service ( $M_F=17.78$ ;  $M_M=17.11$ ;  $t=0.55$ ;  $df=370$ ;  $p=0.578$ ;  $F_L=0.54$ ;  $p_L=0.462$ ). The average chronological age of principals differs marginally from the age of the teaching staff ( $M=44.88$ ;  $Mdn=42$ ) and the length of service ( $M=20.83$ ;  $Mdn=20$ ). Differences in age and length of service of principals are not statistically significant (age:  $M_F=45.80$ ;  $M_M=44.63$ ;  $t=0.24$ ;  $df=22$ ;  $p=0.808$ ;  $F_L=1.19$ ;  $p_L=0.287$ ); (length of service:  $M_F=22.40$ ;  $M_M=20.42$ ;  $t=0.42$ ;  $df=22$ ;  $p=0.681$ ;  $F_L=1.54$ ;  $p_L=0.228$ ).

### ***Research methods and procedures***

The method of theoretical analysis was applied in this research to compose the theoretical part of the paper. Elements of analytical-descriptive method were used in order to show the specifics of management and leadership in elementary school. The main pillar of the empirical part of the paper is the survey method, represented through survey and scaling techniques. In addition to descriptive statistics procedures, discriminant and correlation analysis were also applied. IBM SPSS is used for the analysis of the statistical data.

### ***Instruments***

The *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)* – version for managers and version for employees – was used to collect data in the research.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio and Bass, 2010) consists of 36 statements arranged in eight subscales (*idealized influence – attributed, idealized influence – behavioral, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management by exception and laissez-faire*). Respondents completed their assessment of the frequency of forms of leader behavior expressed through statements on a five-point scale, where the answers range from 0 = *not at all*, over 1 = *rarely*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often* to 4 = *almost always*.

An evaluation of the used scale was conducted after a review of the relevant literature showed that no major study on a sample of teachers using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was conducted in our country. After checking the factor validity through confirmatory factor analysis and a detailed review of other relevant measurement properties, it was determined that the utilized instruments have satisfactory measurement properties. Indicators of reliability, representativeness and homogeneity for the leadership style scale are shown in Table 1. As it was not possible to obtain a convergent solution for the entire instrument, the original model was corrected. One item (mlq 6: *Talk about your most important values and beliefs*) was removed from the *idealized influence* subscale, and the *passive leadership* subscale consisting of 4 items (mlq3, mlq12, mlq17 and mlq20) was removed altogether.

**Table 1.** Indicators of reliability, representativeness and homogeneity for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Subscales	$\alpha$	$\beta$	$\lambda_1$	$\lambda_6$	MSA	H2	N
<b>Idealized influence (attributed) (IA)</b>	.77	.78	.58	.74	.75	.92	4
<b>Idealized influence (behavior) (IB)</b>	.88	.88	.59	.83	.74	.94	3
<b>Inspirational motivation (IM)</b>	.91	.91	.68	.85	.85	.97	4
<b>Intellectual stimulation (IS)</b>	.85	.85	.64	.82	.79	.95	4
<b>Individualized consideration (IC)</b>	.88	.88	.65	.84	.82	.96	4
<b>Contingent reward (CR)</b>	.84	.84	.63	.80	.80	.94	4
<b>Active management by exception (AME)</b>	.80	.80	.60	.76	.78	.93	4
<b>Laissez faire (LF)</b>	.83	.80	.63	.80	.80	.93	4

Note.  $\alpha$  - Cronbach - reliability coefficient;  $\beta$  - Lord - Kaiser - Caffrey reliability coefficient of the first principal component;  $\lambda_1$  - Gutman - absolute lower limit of reliability,  $\lambda_6$  - Gutman - absolute upper limit of reliability; MSA - normalized Kaiser - Meyer - Olkin representativeness coefficient; H2 - Momirović - relative size of the variance of the first principle image component; N - number of scale items.

As stated in the sample description, 744 sets of questionnaires were printed and distributed. The questionnaires were delivered to schools in open envelopes in a number that corresponded to the number of engaged teachers, after which they were handed to the teachers by expert associates pedagogues-psychologists. After filling in the questionnaires, the teachers returned them to the pedagogues-psychologists in closed envelopes. The process took an average of five working days in each school.

## Results

The school is a complex work organization, so employees, including principals and teachers, have different roles and tasks. Principals and teachers differ not only in their function but also in the amount of influence they exert. Principals have the role of managers and are at the very top of the school organization, and it is clear that their influence exceeds the influence of other employees. It is reasonable to assume that the main school agents – teachers and principals, actors with different degrees of influence and power, may have different perceptions of leadership and management within the school. This is why it seemed interesting to compare the *views* of teachers and principals on managing a school. As the survey included only 25 principals (one respondent was removed from the analysis due to a large number of missing values), a *direct* comparison of teachers and principals wasn't justified. Accordingly, the congruence of the teacher and principal perception of leadership was tested *indirectly*. A comparative overview of centroids and scatter measurements for teachers and principals is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Average values and standard deviations for the subscales of the Leadership style questionnaire for teachers and principles

Subscales	Teachers				Principals			
	M		σ		M		σ	
	jlk	asv	jlk	asv	jlk	asv	jlk	asv
<b>Idealized influence (attributed)</b>	10.77	2.69	4.10	1.02	11.40	2.85	2.47	0.62
<b>Idealized influence (behavior)</b>	9.01	2.73	3.07	0.81	10.64	3.16	1.08	0.38
<b>Inspirational motivation</b>	11.99	2.99	3.97	0.99	13.55	3.39	1.76	0.44
<b>Intellectual stimulation</b>	11.40	2.85	3.90	0.97	13.84	3.46	1.62	0.41
<b>Individualized consideration</b>	11.92	2.98	4.02	1.05	14.04	3.51	1.49	0.37
<b>Contingent reward</b>	11.31	2.82	4.01	1.00	13.80	3.45	1.32	0.33
<b>Active management</b>	11.38	2.84	3.64	0.91	12.60	3.15	1.98	0.49
<b>Laissez faire style</b>	4.06	1.01	4.22	1.05	2.52	0.63	2.96	0.74

Note. *M* - arithmetic mean; *σ* - standard deviation; *jlk* - summative score created as a simple summation; *asv* - average scale value.

On reviewing the values of the average and standard deviation, it is not possible to notice significant differences in the 'pattern' of responses of respondents from the two groups. It is interesting to note that on all five scales of *transformational leader-*

ship, and on two scales of *transactional leadership*, principals showed higher average scale values compared to teachers, but it should be noted that the magnitude of these differences is relatively moderate and in no case does it exceed the value of 0.65 scale units. Variability in self-perception of leadership in the group of principals is somewhat smaller, but a relatively small number of principals relativize the importance of obtained results. These findings are in line with expectations, as it is reasonable to assume that the group of teachers is more diverse, and thus some teachers establish closer relationships with school management, unlike other teachers who do not. In some cases of school organization, the function they perform might influence some teachers to form closer relationship with the principal. This is the case with teachers who have more authority and who have the tasks of assisting in the organization and supervision of teaching (head teacher, deputy headmaster). Since no such functions exist in the schools where this research was conducted (presidents of subject teachers' expert body do not share managerial powers with the school principal), the possibility of some teachers having a closer relationship with the principal compared to others is probably the result of personal preferences.

As previously noted, there was no basis for making direct comparisons between teacher and principal scores, so the congruence of perceptions was checked indirectly through discriminant analysis. Due to its significant importance, special attention is paid to the *transformational leadership style*, so, based on the scores on the scale of *transformational leadership*, the principals are divided into two groups based on the group median ( $M_{dn}=64$ ). The principals who had a score below the median value were marked as a group that was *less transformational-oriented*, while principals with scores above the median value were identified as a group that was *more transformational-oriented*. By doing this, the principals were '*artificially dichotomized*' into two groups. In accordance with this division, schools were also divided into *more* and *less transformational-oriented* ones, congruently with the categorization of principals. Thus, a theoretical model was formed where teachers are classified into two different fields as well: the *field of higher transformational influence* and the *field of lower transformational influence*.

The question that was posed in the further analysis and which required an answer is: *Are there any differences in the perception of leadership between the two 'populations' of teachers - teachers who are influenced by principals more focused on transformational leadership and teachers who are influenced by principals who are less characterized by transformational leadership? In other words: Do the teachers from the two groups have different patterns or profiles in the perception of school leadership?*

As the introductory pre-analysis found that the covariance homogeneity condition was compromised (Box's M test=157.14,  $F=4.28$ ;  $p < .001$ ), a direct quadratic discriminant analysis was used. This analysis is robust to covariance heterogeneity as the model estimate is based on individual covariance matrices of groups, so, in the given circumstances, it posed as a more optimal solution (Smith 1947). Seven leadership subscales are included in the discrimination model: five subscales that make up transformational leadership style: *Idealized Influence (Attributed) (IA)*, *Idealized Influence (Behavior) (IB)*, *Inspirational Motivation (IM)*, *Intellectual Stimulation (IS)*, and *Individualized Consideration (IC)*; two subscales of transactional leadership: *Contingent Reward (CR)*, *Active Management by Exceptions (AME)*, and a separate dimension of *Laissez-faire (LFR) leadership style*.

Descriptive indicators for leadership styles as a system of predictor variables are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Average values and standard deviations for the subscales of the Leadership style questionnaire for teachers in relation to the school type

Subscales	Transformational school		Less transformational school	
	M	$\sigma$	M	$\sigma$
<b>Idealized influence (attributed)</b>	12.33	3.17	9.63	4.34
<b>Idealized influence (behavior)</b>	10.19	1.92	8.14	3.46
<b>Inspirational motivation</b>	13.53	2.58	10.88	4.42
<b>Intellectual stimulation</b>	12.83	2.59	10.32	4.36
<b>Individualized consideration</b>	13.44	2.78	10.82	4.42
<b>Contingent reward</b>	12.61	2.77	10.35	4.48
<b>Active management</b>	12.68	2.56	10.47	4.04
<b>Laissez faire style</b>	2.38	2.89	5.21	4.63

*Note.* *M* - arithmetic mean;  $\sigma$  - standard deviation

Teachers who work in schools where the principal has rated himself as more focused on transformational leadership have somewhat higher average scores than schools where this is not the case. The only exception is the dimension of *laissez faire style*, where teachers from a less transformational environment achieved higher average values. Although the differences do not seem striking in a general sense, all differences are statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), and according to the magnitude of Cohen *d* the statistical effect size of the differences is medium (0.60-0.73).

Discriminant analysis resulted in the isolation of a statistically significant discriminant function ( $F(8, 448)=9.85$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2=0.06$ , (95% IP from 0.01 to 0.09,

p < 0.001)), which implies that teachers' perception of leadership statistically significantly differs in relation to the school type, i.e. in relation to the principal's preference for a transformational leadership style.

The discriminant function explained about 15% ( $\eta^2 = 0.15$ ;  $r_c = 0.39$ , 95% IP for canonical R2 from 0.08 to 0.20 p < 0.001) of the total variance. Partial contributions of leadership dimensions in the forecast of 'school management typology' as well as simple correlations between leadership dimensions and discriminant functions are shown in Table 4. According to the consensus of statisticians (Tabachnik and Fidell 2012) it is reasonable to interpret only structure coefficients which explain at least 10% of the variance, i.e. coefficients equaling to .30 or greater. The following dimensions are most strongly associated with the isolated discriminant function: *Laissez faire style*, *Idealized influence (behavior)*, *Inspirational motivation*, *Idealized influence (attributed)*, i.e. dimensions that make up the *transformational leadership style*, with the exception of the *laissez faire style* which has a high negative correlation.

The partial contribution of variables to discriminant functions is far more modest. Two dimensions of transformational leadership, *Idealized Influence (Attributed)* and *Inspirational Motivation*, as well as *Contingent Reward* (transactional leadership) and *Laissez faire style* significantly contribute to the isolated discriminant function.

**Table 4.** Correlations of leadership dimensions with discriminant functions (structure matrix) and standardized

Predictor variables	Structure coefficients	Stand. discriminant coefficients
<b>Idealized influence (attributed)</b>	0.81	<b>0.48</b>
<b>Idealized influence (behavior)</b>	0.83	0.12
<b>Inspirational motivation</b>	0.83	<b>0.39</b>
<b>Intellectual stimulation</b>	0.79	0.01
<b>Individualized consideration</b>	0.80	0.02
<b>Contingent reward</b>	0.69	<b>-0.47</b>
<b>Active management</b>	0.75	0.03
<b>Laissez faire style</b>	-0.84	<b>-0.56</b>

Based on the values of group centroids, it can be concluded that teachers from *transactional schools* have higher average values (M=.50) on the isolated function, compared to teachers from schools that are less oriented towards transactional leadership (M=-.35), which is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Classification analysis based on school types

	N	less transformational		transformational	
		n	%	n	%
<b>Less transformational</b>	268	<b>143</b>	53.36	125	46.64
<b>Transformational</b>	189	40	21.16	<b>149</b>	78.84
<b>Total</b>	457	183	40.04	274	59.96

Based on the discriminant analysis, about 64.1% of respondents were successfully allocated according to the type of school management. The allocation of respondents was the most successful for the group of teachers from more transactional schools, where about 79% of teachers were accurately categorized, while the group of less transformational leadership (53%) has seen a less successful allocation. A complete overview of the categorization of respondents is given in Table x. The success of the categorization of the respondents was assessed through the kappa correlation coefficient. The obtained value of the coefficient  $\kappa = .30$ ; IP: 0.22-0.38, as well as classification analysis, indicate a relatively moderate accuracy in school type prediction based on a set of leadership dimensions assessed by teachers.

In summary, it can be concluded that a set of predictor variables composed of leadership dimensions is useful in differentiating teachers according to type of school based on the principal's leadership style. The matrix of discriminant coefficients suggests that the best predictors for distinguishing the type of leadership in schools are the following dimensions: *Idealized Influence (attributed)*, *Contingent Reward*, and *Laissez faire* style. Using the quadratic classification procedure with the total number of teachers (457), 292 of them (64%) were correctly allocated. The group of transformational leadership style is more likely to be correctly categorized (79% of correct categorization cases).

As previously noted, the intention was to explore the relationship between principal and teacher perception of a school principal's leadership style. The task formulated in this way lead to an assumption that there is a connection between the self-perceived leadership style of primary school principals and the leadership style that teachers perceive in principals as their superiors.

*The analysis of the obtained data confirmed the research sub-hypothesis. Thus, there is no statistically significant difference in the self-perceived and teacher-perceived leadership style of school principals. Although the average scale value (on a five-point scale; maximum score = 4.00) on the five dimensions of transformational and two dimensions of transactional leadership of principals is slightly higher (not*

exceeding 0.65 though), this difference is not statistically significant, and it can be said that the self-perceived image of principals does not significantly deviate from the image teachers have formed about them. This conclusion is further supported by the result of a direct quadratic discriminant analysis, conducted between two groups of teachers – those whose principals were rated above and those whose principals were rated below the group median on the transformational leadership scale. Namely, teachers who work in schools where the principal has rated himself as more focused on transformational management have somewhat higher average scores compared to schools where this is not the case. The only exception is the dimension of *laissez faire* style, where teachers from a less transformational environment have achieved higher average values.

## DISCUSSION

Although the image an individual has about himself, in the context of any of his roles, does not necessarily and completely match the image others have about him, the results obtained here show that the deviation in the case of primary school principals' leadership role is insignificant. In a statistically negligible framework, principals tended to rate themselves higher than teachers in all dimensions of *transformational* and *transactional leadership*. If we compare the average scale values, this difference is the smallest in the case of *Idealized Influence (attributed)*, amounting to 0.16, and the largest in the case of *Contingent Reward*, which amounts to 0.63. This means that principals overestimated themselves the least in the case of their own belief in the respect and pride they evoke in teachers, teachers' belief that the interest they have for the benefit of the group outweighs their personal interests, and teachers' impression that principals are powerful and confident. On the other hand, looking at the image that teachers have of principals as school leaders, principals have overestimated themselves the most in the case of providing assistance in exchange for teachers' work, precisely determining who is responsible for achieving the set work goals, clearly communicating what someone will get if they achieve the set goals, and expressing satisfaction when teachers meet the goals. This result may indicate that principals were cautious in assessing the characteristics they own but which are not easy to measure, and the feelings these characteristics evoke in teachers, which also might be a sign of excessive complacency, and as such would be socially unacceptable. When assessing actions which are easier to measure and which are socially acceptable, they were less reserved. This interpretation is also supported by the results on

other subscales, which in turn referred to how principals see their actions, and not to what emotions these actions provoke in teachers, where principals still tended to overestimate themselves somewhat more. (By all means, these differences are still, statistically speaking, not deserving of much attention.) Thus, the difference in the average scale value of principal self-assessment and teacher evaluation on the *Intellectual Stimulation* subscale is 0.61. This dimension is described through the principal's review of key parameters to see if they are appropriate, seeking different perspectives when problem solving, encouraging employees to view problems from multiple different angles and proposing new viewpoints on how to solve problems. This is followed by devoting time to mentoring and guiding teachers, treating teachers as individuals and not just group members, awareness that each individual has different needs, abilities and aspirations, and helping each teacher develop their strengths (*Individualized Consideration* = 0.53). The difference in the assessment of *Idealized Influence (behavior)*, which is reflected in the principal talking about his most important beliefs, clarifies the importance of having a strong sense of meaning and purpose, considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions and emphasizes the importance of common goals, is 0.53. *Inspirational motivation*, reflected in the principal's optimistic views of the future, talking with a lot of zeal and enthusiasm about what needs to be achieved, a clear expression of an appealing vision of the future and confidence in achieving goals, showed a difference in an average scale value of 0.40. The smallest differences, after the aforementioned *Idealized Influence (attributed)*, principals show in the case of *Active Management by Exceptions* - 0.31, probably because they determined that focusing on irregularities, errors, exceptions and deviations from the rules, paying full attention to resolving errors, complaints and failures, and being familiar with all mistakes and focusing on mistakes in order to achieve the set standards, represent the principle of negative orientation and are not always desirable actions and characteristics of leaders, so they were rated slightly lower. It is also interesting to note that principals without a difference had a slight tendency to overrate the characteristics and actions tied to both transformational and transactional leadership, clearly thinking that external motivation and corrective measures are as welcome as internal motivation and acting in a manner to prevent mistakes, which can be partly explained by cultural conditioning. It seems that the *laissez faire* leadership style was initially recognized as undesirable though, and they tended to minimize its presence in their leadership style in comparison with the teachers' assessment (average scale value is -0.43). These are the characteristics and actions school principals are less self-aware of: they avoid getting involved when important issues arise,

they are absent when needed, they avoid making decisions and delay responding to urgent issues. Of course, it should be noted that the overall teacher assessment is taken here as a reference framework for the principals' actual behavior, but this does not mean only principals made wrong assessments, and that deviation is the result of only their *mistake*. Teachers could have certainly been subjective as well, especially when it comes to assessing the principals' beliefs and feelings, as opposed to assessing their actions. In addition, Jones and Nisbett (1972) point out that, when assessing their own actions, an individual with a significant role in the group takes greater account of the social context. In the case of school principals, this context is even more defined by legislation and the school having a lower degree of autonomy compared to many other organizations, while observers are more focused on their hidden traits (personalities) when assessing their behavior.

Given that, in a broader study, transformational leadership proved to be the most desirable (Pinkas 2020; Pinkas 2021), it was worth to further explore the differences within the transformational style - from the perspective of principals (self-perceived) and perspective of teachers (perceived). For this purpose, the teachers were divided into two groups – those whose principals rated themselves as *less* and those whose principals rated themselves as *more* transformational. Standard discriminant coefficients showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the perception of principal's leadership style between the two groups. 15% of the variance in teacher perception is explained exactly by the principal's perception of his own leadership style. In other words, the more principals perceive themselves as transformational, the more it can be predicted that teachers will perceive them as transformational as well. Therefore, it can be stated that principals with a more dominant transformational leadership style have a more realistic image of themselves compared to principals with less pronounced transformational leadership characteristics, seen from the teacher's point of view. This result is not surprising, knowing that the better people are at recognizing other people's emotions and needs, the better they notice and understand them in themselves (Goleman 1997). GIBLAR (2014) also notes that the self-perceived image of school leaders and the image of how teachers see them are more likely to match in transformational and transactional principals than in the case of laissez faire school leaders. In addition to not likely matching, laissez faire principals in all 13 schools in Virginia, where GIBLAR conducted the research, tended to minimize the traits they had of a laissez faire leader. It is also interesting that the author found a connection between the degree of compatibility of the self-perceived image and the teacher-perceived image of principals, and the motivation of teachers. Namely, the

more the images matched, the more motivated the teachers were. Those school principals who had a less realistic vision of themselves contributed less to teachers' greater eagerness to work.

Jacobsen and Anderson (2015) also pointed out the consequences of the compatibility of self-perceived and perceived leadership style. In a study conducted in Danish secondary schools, on a sample of 79 principals and 1,621 teachers, they studied the compatibility of the principals' self-perceived image of their leadership style and the style perceived by teachers, and the impact either of them have on organizational performance. The authors came to the realization that there is a statistically significant difference between the self-perceived image principals have as managers and the image formed by teachers. This is especially pronounced in the case of transformational leadership, where principals overrated themselves in relation to teachers, so the summative scale value for this leadership style in the case of principal assessment is 80.1 (on a scale of up to 100), and 50.4 in the case of teacher assessment. Pearson's correlation coefficient derived from the individual results of each teacher in relation to the result of the corresponding principal even proved to be statistically insignificant, while a weak correlation was found when comparing the teacher's *summarized/resultant image* with the principal's image. The authors explain this by the relatively large differences in the individual statements of teachers. A higher degree of compatibility, but still with the tendency of principals to rate themselves higher on subscales, was found in the case of transactional leadership. Therefore, Jacobsen and Anderson (2015) conclude that the self-perceived and teacher-perceived principal leadership style are correlated, but this correlation is not enough to be able to talk about *one and the same phenomenon*, or *one reality*. As expected, the teacher-perceived image proved to be a more significant predictor of organizational performance, compared to the principal-perceived image. In fact, the image that principals had of themselves as leaders, whether their dominant style was transformational or transactional, did not significantly contribute to the teachers' performance, while the predictor value of the teacher-perceived image was confirmed.

The findings of Jacobsen and Anderson (2015) that principals tend to overrate themselves more on the subscales of transformational leadership than on the subscales of the transactional leadership style at first glance may seem contrary to the results of this research and the corresponding interpretation, as this research concludes that principals with more pronounced transformational leadership characteristics have a more realistic vision of themselves due to having more empathy and self-awareness. Therefore, it is important to note that this conclusion is based on a division of prin-

cipals into two groups by the criterion of *transformational leadership*, while Jacobsen and Anderson observed all principals as one group. Therefore, such an analysis could not conclude whether the inconsistencies in the images equally stemmed from principals with more pronounced transformational characteristics and those with less pronounced characteristics, or whether they, in fact, primarily stemmed from the latter. If an additional analysis was to be conducted and it confirmed the difference between the results of this research and the results of the two Danish researchers, perhaps an explanation could be found in the preferred image of the school principal. Namely, it is very possible that, in fact, Danish principals tended to see themselves as more transformational, because a more systematic education allowed them to understand the importance of transformational leadership (although they clearly failed to fully apply it), while principals in this sample still viewed the *give-take* relationship, and all the associated personal traits, as relatively positive.

Becker, Ayman and Korabik (2002) also found statistically significant difference between the self-perceived and perceived leadership style of female respondents, but only in the case of managers in banking and industry sectors, while there were no differences in the sector of education. On the other hand, no statistically significant difference was found in the self-perceived and employee-perceived leadership style in any of the three sectors among male managers.

## CONCLUSION

The hypothesis set at the beginning of the research was confirmed. It was found that there is no statistically significant difference in the self-perceived and teacher-perceived principal leadership style and that the average scale values on the subscales of transformational and transactional leadership obtained on subsamples of teachers led by more transformational and less transformational principals statistically significantly differ. Teacher perception can explain 15% of the variance in the principal's perception of his own leadership style, with the following dimensions of transformational leadership having a predictor value: *Idealized Influence (behavior)*, *Inspirational Motivation*, *Idealized Influence (attributed)*, and *transactional leadership*, which has a negative value. The probable reason for such results lies in the fact that principals with more pronounced transformational leadership characteristics have greater ability for empathy and self-awareness, and are better at assessing their managerial strengths and weaknesses.

The limitations of the research are reflected in the territorial determination of the sample of respondents, which includes the wider urban area of Tuzla, and the fact that it was conducted exclusively in primary schools. The results obtained on a larger sample, which would also include secondary school teachers and principals, could contribute to creating a broader picture of leadership in education.

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## ODNOS SAMOPERCIPIRANOG I OD STRANE NASTAVNIKA PERCIPIRANOG STILA RUKOVOĐENJA ŠKOLSKIH DIREKTORA

### Sažetak

U radu su predstavljeni rezultati istraživanja provedenog na 467 nastavnika/ica i 25 direktora/ica osnovnih škola sa šireg gradskog područja Tuzle. Predmet istraživanja bio je odnos rukovoditeljskog stila direktora/ica, kako ga percipiraju oni/one sami/e, i stila rukovođenja kako ga kod njih percipiraju nastavnici/ice. Za prikupljanje podataka korišten je Višefaktorski upitnik rukovođenja (MLQ), verzija za rukovoditelje/ice i verzija za zapsoljenike/ice. Rezultati dobijeni na ukupnom uzorku ispitanika/ica ukazuju da ne postoji statistički značajna razlika između samopercipiranog i od strane nastavnika/ica percipiranog stila rukovođenja školskih direktora/ica, te da se prosječne skalne vrijednosti na subskalama transformacijskog i transakcijskog rukovođenja dobijene na poduzorcima nastavnika koje su predvodili više transformacijski/e i manje transformacijski/e direktori/ce statistički značajno razlikuju. Korelacijska je analiza pokazala da prediktorsku vrijednost nastavničke percepcije za direktorsku (samo)percepciju imaju dimenzije transformacijskog rukovođenja i *laissez faire* rukovođenje, s tim da posljednje ima negativan predznak. Vjerovatni razlog ovakvih rezultata leži u tome što direktori/ce sa izraženijim transformacijskim osobinama raspolazu sa više sposobnosti za empatiju i samospoznaju, te bolje procjenjuju svoje rukovoditeljske snage i slabosti.

**Ključne riječi:** nastavnici; stil rukovođenja; školski direktori; transformacijsko, transakcijsko, *laissez faire* rukovođenje

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