

## Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση

Τόμ. 11, Αρ. 4Α (2022)



### The Leader-Member Exchange Theory and the Transformational Theory in Distance Higher Education: Bibliographical Review

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doi: [10.12681/icodl.3495](https://doi.org/10.12681/icodl.3495)

## The Leader-Member Exchange Theory and the Transformational Theory in Distance Higher Education: Literature Review

### Η Θεωρία Ανταλλαγής Ηγέτη-Μέλους και η Μετασχηματιστική Θεωρία στην Τριτοβάθμια Εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση: Βιβλιογραφική Έρευνα

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#### Abstract

This systematic review presents the Leader-Member Exchange – LMX and the Transformational Theory – TFL as complementary theories of leadership in Distance Education through studies and researches on the subject. The LMX theory is considered to be the only leadership theory that focuses on the quality of the relationships between the leader and his followers while the TFL and its inner characteristics render it as extremely adjustable in the Distant Education environment. The sustainability and success of Distance Learning depend on the effective leadership and the understanding of the way that the distant education leaders effectively behave can be found in the LMX theory. The changes that are done globally, as they have been recorded recently because of the global pandemic, also impose changes for the higher education. While moving from the old to the new, the leaders will have to acquire a new vision that will incorporate new technologies, create facilities and support sustainable programs for distant learning. As the present research demonstrates, the leadership theories are also relevant in teaching, because the tuition as well as the leadership of every organization are composed of an interactive system that is recommended for communication, control and coordination of activities.

**Keywords:** *Leader-Member Exchange, Transformational Theory.*

#### Περίληψη

Η παρούσα συστηματική ανασκόπηση παρουσιάζει μέσα από έρευνες και μελέτες τη θεωρία της Ανταλλαγής ηγέτη-μέλους (Leader – Member Exchange theory - LMX) και τη Μετασχηματιστική θεωρία (Transformational theory - TFL) ως αλληλοσυμπληρούμενες θεωρίες ηγεσίας στο πεδίο της εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευσης. Η θεωρία της Ανταλλαγής ηγέτη-μέλους θεωρείται ως η μόνη θεωρία ηγεσίας που επικεντρώνεται στην ποιότητα των σχέσεων μεταξύ ηγέτη και ακολούθων του ενώ η TFL και οι εγγενείς ιδιότητές της την καθιστούν ιδανικά εφαρμόσιμη στο περιβάλλον της εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευσης. Η βιωσιμότητα και επιτυχία της εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευσης εξαρτώνται από την αποτελεσματική ηγεσία και η κατανόηση του τρόπου με τον οποίο συμπεριφέρονται αποτελεσματικά οι ηγέτες της εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευσης μπορεί να βρεθεί στη θεωρία Ανταλλαγής ηγέτη-μέλους. Οι αλλαγές που επιτελούνται παγκόσμια, όπως καταγράφονται πρόσφατα και εξαιτίας της παγκόσμιας πανδημίας, επιβάλλουν αλλαγές και στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση.

Μεταβαίνοντας από το παλιό στο νέο, οι ηγέτες θα πρέπει να αποκτήσουν νέο όραμα που θα ενσωματώνει τις νέες τεχνολογίες, θα δημιουργεί δομές και θα υποστηρίζει βιώσιμα προγράμματα εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευσης. Όπως καταδεικνύει η παρούσα έρευνα, οι θεωρίες ηγεσίας ισχύουν και στη διδασκαλία, καθώς τόσο η διδασκαλία όσο και η ηγεσία κάθε οργανισμού συγκροτούνται από ένα σύστημα αλληλεπιδράσεων που συνίσταται στην επικοινωνία, τον έλεγχο και τον συντονισμό των δραστηριοτήτων.

*Λέξεις-κλειδιά:* θεωρία Ανταλλαγής ηγέτη-μέλους, Μετασχηματιστική θεωρία, εξ Αποστάσεως Τριτοβάθμια Εκπαίδευση.

## **Introduction**

In a wide field of organizing leadership, the Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) has proved to be one of the currently most interesting and useful approaches regarding the study of hypothetical relations among leading procedures and results (Gestner & Day, 1997). This theory is different from the others (Gestner & Day, 1997), as it does not focus on the specific characteristics of an effective leading carrier like others have done in the past. In contrast to that, the LMX theory focuses on the nature and the quality of the relationships among a leader and his subordinates (Power, 2013). According to it, the quality of the relations that have been developed between the leader and the member foreshadows the results (Gestner & Day, 1997). It has been announced as an important theory of leadership in higher and distant education frame because of the emphasis it gives to the promotion of autonomy and nationality, and also its ability to complete and mediate in forms of leadership transformation (Power, 2013).

Another one of the most comprehensive approaches of the leadership is the transformational leadership, which is based on the process of the way in what some leaders are able to influence their followers to achieve great things. This approach highlights that the leaders have to comprehend and adjust to the needs and the motives of their followers (Northouse, 2016). The transformational leaders are recognized to be responsible for the change and have a model role, who can create and visualize a specific vision for an organization, allow their followers to respond to high standards, act in ways that make others want to trust and give a meaning to the organized life (Northouse, 2016). The transformational leadership is the new trend among educational systems, after many years of concentration on the bureaucratic system (Vasiliadou & Dieronitou, 2014).

The changes in the socioeconomic web lead to the change for Higher Education also in order for institutions and organizations to adapt successfully in the new circumstances. This change focuses on the Distance Learning which managed to attain a prestigious position in Higher Education and is now regarded as an important initiative for profit and non-profit colleges and universities. As the higher educational institutions establish and staff leading positions in distance education, a developing meaning is found by the researchers and professionals, the one of distance leadership, while making it clear that it is different than the leadership in other higher education fields (Beaudoin, 2003· Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2006). In any case, the leaders that want to inspire others in order to participate in the transformation of higher education need to have a comprehensive understanding of the theory and its advantages (Power, 2013). In the same way, they need to know their critiques in order

to avoid what some call “possible imperfections” in the theory in order to be lead to effective leadership (Power, 2013).

This is the reason this preview is considered to be important, as the gathering of literature data regarding the LMX theory has not occurred to this day, let alone in the Greek language. As a result, this research, could possibly contribute to the organized record of researches and studies regarding the application of the exchange leader-member theory and the transformational theory (TFL) in Open and Distance Education, of the powerful but also weaker points and the proposals, as they are recorded by the researches and studies, but also in problem spotting that the research community has not to this day successfully resolved.

### **The Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX)**

The Leader-Member Exchange Theory is considered to be a theory with the quality assurance of organized effectiveness and productivity (Northouse, 2010· Mapolisa & Kurasha, 2013). Furthermore, the organizations that apply this theory in action are considered to succeed their goals in a high level (Harris et al., 2009). The main principle of the LMX is that the leaders develop different types of exchange relationships with their subordinates and that the quality of these relationships largely affects the stances and behavior of the leaders as well as of the members (Gerstner & Day, 1997· Sparrowe & Liden, 1997· Liden et al., 1997). In contrast to the traditional theories that attempt to interpret the leadership as a function of the leader’s personal traits, the characteristics of the situation, or of an interaction between the two, the exchange leader-member theory remains a unique one in the field of approaching the dual relationship as of the level of the analysis (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Thus, the leaders that form dual relationships of high quality, are closer together, friendlier, more communicative with some members of the team. In other words, the leaders manage to form relationships based on high quality and trust, that affect and are based on the respect for a subset of their team, while they tend to have limited low quality exchange with other supporters of theirs (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015). Even though the theory has been transformed and extended from the point it was originally proposed, this main analysis point has remained the same (Erdogan & Bauer, 2015).

The LMX theory has been judged for its ability to alienate some of its subordinates, while failing to comprehend the effects of teamwork and social identity and avoiding the production of specific advice on how the leaders can develop high quality relationships (Power, 2013). Among the judgments, the opinion that the initial formulation of the Leader-Member Exchange theory (VDL theory) is also added, as some believe that it is opposed to the principles of justice in the workplace, while implying that some members of the workplace receive more attention than others. The perceivable inequalities that are created through the use of in-out groups can have destructive effects in the feelings, opinions and overall behavior of the members of the out groups (Northouse, 2016). In addition to that, the LMX theory highlights the importance of exchange among leaders- members, but fails to explain the way one creates exchanges of high quality. Even though the model promotes the building of trust, respect and commitment in relationships, it does not fully explain how this could be established (Northouse, 2016). Furthermore, the researchers did not explain enough the relative factors that affect the exchange leader-member relationships. Finally, there are questions on whether the measuring procedures that are used in the LMX study, are enough in order to fully conceive the complexity of the exchange chief-member process (Northouse, 2016). However, despite the judgments, this theory remains in the limelight for the last forty years with undiminished research interest.

### **The Transformational Leadership Theory**

The transformational theory refers to the leader who motivates his supporter to offer advantages apart from the direct ones through the idealized influence (charisma), the mental stimulation, the individualized appreciation or the motivating inspiration. It increases the maturity level and the supporter's principles as well as his willingness to succeed, his self-appreciation but also the prosperity of others, the organization and the community (Bass, 1999).

The transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, as cited in Harrison, 2011, p. 92) is applied when one or many people interact with others, in such way that the leaders and the supports motivate each other on a higher level of motivation, performance and morality. Bass (1985, as cited in Harrison, 2011, p. 92) further extended Burns's theory. He formed the Multifactorial Model of Bass's Leadership (1985, as cited in Labrakis, 2016, p. 4), while inserting the meanings of Transformational, Transactional and Laissez-Faire Leadership. The Laissez-Faire Leadership leader refuses responsibility, delays decisions, does not provide feedback and makes very little effort to help his supporters satisfy their needs. There is no exchange with his supporters or effort to help them grow (Northouse, 2016).

The Transactional leadership refers to the biggest part of the leadership models, which focus on the transactions that take place between leaders and their supporters (Northouse, 2016). The employers who offer a bonus to the employees who surpass their goals are transactional. In the classroom, the teachers can be transactional when they give students a grade for the completion of their assignment. The replacing dimension of the transactional leadership is very common and can be examined on many levels in all types of organizations (Northouse, 2016).

In contrast to the Transactional leadership, the Transformational leadership is the process through which one interacts with others and creates a connection that elevates the level of motives and morality for the leader as well as for the supporter. This type of leader is attentive regarding the supporters' needs and motives and tries to help them reach their peak performance (Northouse, 2016).

The TFL theory distinguishes the varying behaviors of leadership into four categories: idealized influence, mental stimulation, personalized appreciation and inspiring motivation. What does each one of these categories mean?

Idealized influence: As idealized influence it is described the ability of a transformational leader to clearly state a vision to his supporters and the ability to motivate the supporters to join this vision (Bass, 1999).

Intellectual Stimulation: As intellectual stimulation is considered the motivation of the supporters to doubt the tried-out and real methods of problem solving, while encouraging them to improve these methods (Avolio et al., 1999). The mental stimulation encourages the supporters to doubt the decisions of the leader and the group procedures, while encouraging a new way of thinking (Harrison, 2012).

Individualized Consideration: through the process of transformational leadership, the leader takes the role of a mentor, while assigning responsibilities to the supporters as chances for development through a process of self-control (Avolio et al., 1999). The personalized behaviors of thought are described as support, encouragement and guidance of the supporters (Yukl, 2006).

Inspirational Motivation: As inspirational motivation is described the provision of challenges and meanings for the supporters, in order to achieve common goals (Bass, 1999). Other researchers (like Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999) further extended the



definition of inspiring motivation as the leader's ability to announce his vision in a way that inspires the supporters to take action in an attempt to make this vision real.

### **Leadership in Distance Learning**

According to Olcott (2020, p. 8) "*the scholarly literature to date that examines leadership issues, frameworks, and approaches in open and distance learning is relatively scarce. There is no formal theory of leadership for ODL*". However, in the first attempts to define the term leadership in distance learning Beaudoin (2002) determines it as a unit of stances and behaviors that create the circumstances for innovational changes, render people and organizations able to share a vision, to move towards the direction of its implementation and to contribute to the management and operational function of ideas.

Indeed, despite the fact that Distance Learning is an important parameter for higher education with an effective developing staff, few studies focus on the Distance Learning leadership (Beaudoin, 2002) in comparison to the general vast variety of literature on Distance Learning (Beaudoin, 2003 · Irlbeck, 2001, 2002 · Nworie, 2012). An extensive review of the literature that deals with the distance learning leadership contained major national and international distance education magazines, minutes of conferences as well as other publications, by Beaudoin (2003) depicts that close to 70% of the literature reviewed is associated with case studies of specific Distance Learning programs. Only a small part focused on its leadership. The same thing happens with the writing of the theoretical base on Distance Learning leadership, as it does not seem to be regarded of great importance by the researchers (Beaudoin, 2003· Marcus, 2004· Nworie, 2012). Beaudoin (2002) thinks that the lack of literature on Distance Learning leadership is due to the researchers' concern on other domains, like the concern for comparative studies, that depict how the distance learning technologies are compared to the traditional educational methods; the persistence on new technologies and their applications; the focus of researchers and writers, who have been academics for a long time, on pedagogical subjects rather than leadership ones; and the decline of further studying the Distance Learning Leadership from a share of researchers, who think that there is no need for further examination or analysis of this term as a distinct study domain (Beaudoin, 2002· Nworie, 2012).

As the technologically improved distance learning has gained bigger appreciation, it also gains the status as a special entity that resembles the high-quality education, while creating chances for teachers, no matter where they are based (Irlbeck, 2002).

The roles and responsibilities of a distance learning leader are of crucial importance, considering that higher education intervenes into multiple educational functionalities of lecturing. In many cases, most distance learning programs function with the traditional learning environments and the leadership of the two domains tend to vary in certain aspects (Nowrie, 2012). It is evident that the success and sustainability of distance learning in higher education are not based on creating complex programs or using the latest technology or raising funds. In contrast to that, it is based on the effective leadership that will guide the institutions to offer distance learning programs that correspond to the needs of different students and serve their goals (Irlbeck, 2002 · Beaudoin, 2003 · Marcus, 2004 · Nowrie, 2012).

### **The exchange leader-member theory (LMX) and the Transformational theory (TFL) in Higher Education**

In the last decade a discussion occurs regarding the judgment of higher education systems in many parts of the world due to their failure to transform in order to

correspond to the ever-changing needs of the society (Latchem & Hanna, 2001). This judgment focuses on the views on persistence in maintaining advanced corporate models, due to a lack of basic parts of the population and the incapability to adopt technological and pedagogical innovations that will serve the teachers' needs better (Power, 2013).

The Leader-Member Exchange theory is an important leadership theory in higher education as it is closely linked to the transformational theory, which according to the social demand, transforms higher education institutions (Power, 2012). It is associated with the leaders' empowerment as well as the members', and also with the accomplishment of the goals of the institutions (Harris et al., 2009). It is known for its ability to guide the leaders and their subordinates' attention regarding communication and leadership (Northouse, 2010). It is also associated with the positive organizing results (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) and it considers leadership to be a procedure based on interaction among leaders and members (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995).

Already since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century there is an intense and crucial conversation regarding the failure of higher education to be transformed in order to satisfy the social demands and needs (Latchem & Hanna, 2001· Power, 2013). This judgment focuses on the views on persistence in maintaining advanced corporate models, due to a lack of basic parts of the population and the incapability to adopt technological and pedagogical innovations that will serve the teachers' needs better (Power, 2013).

In order to face this situation, teachers- researchers and writers all over the world are focused on the transformational leadership (Power, 2013). The transformational leadership theory is a link between the old and new vision (Rost, 1991). The transformational leaders push their supporters to be a source of influence for each other, in order for them to become able to achieve advanced phases of "morality and motives", in which justice and equality are also added (Burns, 1978, as cited in Nworie, 2012, p. 4). That being said, while transformational leaders define new methods of problem solving, at the same time they manage to persuade others as well into following this new approach (Nworie, 2012). The moral of caring for those who are supervised is implemented in the TFL theory. This calls for leaders who are guided by high morals and moral ideals (Nworie, 2012).

## **Methodology**

The literature review that was conducted focused on the detailed research on similar sources in order for systematic or accidental errors to be minimized.

According to Karassa (2006) the formulation of a systematic review follows a series of steps like the determination of entry and block criteria, which in our case are stated based on:

- The content: Theoretical studies and research surveys needed to focus on the exchange leader-member theory (LMX) as well as on distance or higher education.
- Time period: the newest theoretical studies and research surveys needed to be found, from 2000 and on, because according to Day & Miscenko (2014), since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the research interest for the Exchange Leader-Member rose with new surveys that expand the theory. From 2000 to 2002 popular articles with over 100 references were published, while from 2006-2010 almost 50% of PsyInfo publications focused on the Exchange Leader-Member theory. This date as far as TFL theory goes, the era that research interest is increased, especially for the application of the TFL theory in higher education

(Balwant, 2016) while in the field of Distance Learning the discussion on its lack of effective leadership starts (Beaudoin, 2002· Nowrie, 2012).

- The organization: the sources had to refer to education, higher education institutions and distance learning ones.

Another important step in forming this study was the definition of indexing terms (Kassaras, 2006), in the context of which indexing words, phrases or combinations of words were used like and"/ "or" in order for the possibility of locating the most appropriate studies to increase. More particularly, the following terms were searched: Leader member exchange theory, Distance education leadership, Leadership in higher education, Effective leadership in distance education, Leader member exchange theory in distance education.

Another important point in systematic review is the use of sources. For this present research the Hellenic Open University (HOU) library was used with the data basis through the online gate Heal-Link to which the library of HOU has an access, the data basis the HOU has ensured like Education Collection (EDUCOLL) that offers access to ERIC, the top index for research in education, combined with the full text of Education Database. Like JStor: Journals - Archive Collections which includes the contents as well as full texts of scientific magazines; Project Muse, which touches upon subjects on humanitarian studies and is available through Heal Link; The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning magazine; Google Scholar; Library Genesis.

### **Review of literature**

The Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) has been in the spotlight for the last forty years. During these years it has been extensively studied, starting from its basic principle that the leaders develop dual relationships of different nature with their subordinates and the quality of these relationships crucially affects the stances and behaviors both of the leaders as well as of the other members (Gerstner & Day, 1997· Sparrowe & Liden, 1997· Liden et al., 1997). What is ascertained is that even after forty years of study, the main analysis point remains the same (Gestner & Day, 1997). According to the LMX theory, the relationships that are formed among people differ in quality, with the formation of weak relationships by the leader with some of his subordinates but also open relationships, based on trust, with others (Lunenburg, 2010). These relationships are formed in as well as out of the group (in-group & out-group). The in-group members are called to participate in decision making and assignment of added responsibilities. For the out-group members, the leader will provide support, respect and help, while being stressed by his own responsibilities but not surpassing them, thus maintaining a conventional exchange relationship. The out-group members will do whatever is predicted for them to do, and a little more than that (Lunenburg, 2010). In our personal opinion, these relationships are the ones formed by every educator, teacher or instructor in the daily life of educational practice of conventional or distance environment. However, the emphasis that the theory gives refers to the variety of these quality relationships, with the ideal point being their dominance on everyone, leader as well as all the members.

The study in the field of the LMX theory is continued with undiminished interest. Erdogan & Bauer (2013) note in their review that there are more than 700 references to the LMX theory in articles, as a title or as a key-word in the abstract. A percentage of 50% of these articles in the database of PsycInfo are published in the time period from 2006 to 2010, a fact that highlights the undiminished interest for the theory, which is continually reinforced. However, according to the above data, the question of



why this theory has not been applied to educational constitutions thus forming the ideal quality relationships, with the exclusive traits it offers like mutual trust, respect, influence and exchange of high quality data and feedback is raised (Luo & Cheng, 2014). At this point, a lack of theory can be ascertained. The one based on the process of forming these quality relationships. More specifically, how these relationships are formed.

With the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a critical discussion started regarding the higher education institutions and their failure to correspond to the needs of an ever-changing society (Latchem & Hanna, 2001). This critique focuses on the persistent maintenance of conservative business models, lack of access to basic parts of the public and weakness to adopt technological and pedagogical innovations that would better serve the students' needs (Power, 2013). In this discussion the LMX was also mentioned as an important leadership theory for higher Distance Education that focuses on the formation of quality relationships, is closely associated with the TFL theory that follows the popular demand and transforms higher education organizations (Power, 2013). Organizing facilities that surpass the traditional limits of education need the TFL theory. The effective transformational leaders who define and form a vision for the future themselves, regarding their institution, a vision that introduces a communicative context for the supporters, in order to establish motivation (Nworie, 2012). However, this research ascertains that these research fiends are from the last lustrum. Therefore, they have not been challenged in time or in comparison to adequate distance or traditional institutions and we do not have any evidence of how these two theories work in time. If time has a positive or negative effect on the quality relationships between leader and member and how will these relationships remain the same after the vision and the goals have been fulfilled.

### **The effects of the theories on Distance Education**

This study reveals that with Technology playing a major role in the change of how educational institutions function (Portugal, 2006), the institutions that have meaningful connections to Distance Education are considered to be the top ones when trying to adopt New Technologies (Taylor, 2001). Distance Education managed to obtain a high place in Higher Education. The competition of the university institutions regarding the new registrations, the New Technologies (Allen & Seaman, 2010), the change of priorities in higher education adjusted to the latest social needs and the demands of the times, the need for access to a population of students, like the adult one, the increased competition among the institutions in order to rate high on an international level, the need for personalized, differentiated teaching strategies and the unfortunate economic reality contributed in the reinforcement of Distance Education (Nworie, 2012· Berge, 2001).

In this context, a new meaning was showcased, one with development potential, the one of Distance Education leadership, which, however, is different from any other leadership that exists in other educational fields (Beaudoin, 2003· Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2006).

What is revealed through this present research is that, while all the above is mentioned regarding the Distance Education leadership, to this day and according to the review that has been estimated for the literature that included articles from international magazines, minutes of conferences and publications, 70% of this literature consisted of case studies of specific programs and only a small part focused on the Distance Education leadership (Beaudoin, 2003). This leadership does not seem to gain any interest as a research topic, at least up to 2010 (Beaudoin, 2003·

Marcus, 2004). A newer research (Davies a.o., 2010), as it has revealed during this literature survey, a fact that validates the researchers' concern in Distance Education regarding the lack of research that could create the theoretical base for the Distance Education leadership. However, the study showcased a small decrease in master's research programs (between 1998 and 2007) that pursued to define the value of Distance Education in comparison to the conventional learning environments. There is a chance that this rather small decrease implies the adoption of Distance Education by the research society as well as the general public, a kind of education that, as it is acknowledged today, is an important and sustainable educational experience by itself. Despite all this, we find that the formation of a theoretical base for the distance education leadership has to be forced, as this leadership has to face the 21<sup>st</sup> century changes with the effective collaboration of the tutors, adequate knowledge and experience in the use of the correct types of didactical technologies and the equivalent strategies that will reinforce the students' learning (Nworie, 2012), in order to correspond to the socio-economical needs of the times, including the multileveled crisis caused by the recent pandemic. At the same time, it demands the comprehension of adopting and sharing innovation supported by technology and the ability to manage change (Nworie, 2012).

This literature review shows that according to some researchers (Baba & Ace, 1989· Harrison, 2011), the leadership theories are valid, not only for organizations that provide distance education like open and distance universities, traditional universities that provide distance studies, public or private institutions (Keegan, 1993· Keegan, 2001· Lionarakis, 1998, 1999), but also for the tuition. More specifically, procedures like the communication, control and coordination of activities are a complex of interactions, applied in the leadership of an organization as well as in the tuition (Barnard, 1938, as cited in Harrison, 2011, p. 95· Kuchinke, 1999, as cited in Harrison, 2011, p. 95).

This occurs due to the fact that the teachers influence the students, form their future development, focus their attention on specific duties and enter them to the learning field in a similar way to the one of the leaders, who influence, take initiatives, focus their attention, define the direction and coordinate the activities towards a specific goal (House & Podsakoff, 1994). In addition to that, Darling et al. (1999) note in an empirical research that the leaders of learning organizations found themselves acting as mentors and teachers, while pushing the work and learning performance, as they would act if they were teachers in a classroom.

We found out that there are teachers who demonstrate the four ever-changing transformational leadership behaviors according to Bass, that is the idealized influence, the intellectual stimulation, the individualized consideration and the inspirational motivation. These specific behaviors positively affect the students' behaviors, their beliefs and their learning results while providing support, encouragement and building of trust (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009· Harrison, 2011). As it was revealed by this literature review, when the teacher creates the right circumstances for innovative changes, he lets his students share a vision, move towards the direction of fulfilling it and contributes to the creation of new changes, then their students believe them to be those who demonstrate the transformational leadership (Marcus, 2014).

Through the research it was concluded that the transformational teacher presents certain leadership behaviors as important in order to be regarded as successful transformational leader (Yuen & Cheng, 2000). These behaviors fall into three categories. The influenced ones, which refer to the formation of a vision and the

provision of motives. The socially supported behaviors that focus on the cultivation of a learning culture, the facilitation of support networks and the control of clashes. The behaviors that activate and focus on the knowledge and skills reinforcement, as well as provision of mental stimulation (Yuen & Cheng, 2000). Some empirical researches proved that each one of these behaviors increases the working motive and the satisfaction in an organizing environment, as well as improves the students' learning, sentimental and motivational results in classroom environments (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009, Hardy et al., 2010, Harrison, 2011). A transformational teacher focuses on single students, providing moral support and showing gratitude for their work and taking their opinion into consideration. He has respect for the interaction with his students, shows willingness to change when new opinions arise and creates a teaching structure that reinforces the participatory decision making and the willingness to represent (Mulford & Silins, 2003). In our opinion, all of the above have been revealed through its experience in higher distance education. Apart from the fact that they are basic principles in the way that adults learn (fifth principle: the interaction among teachers and students) (Kokkos, 1998, 1999), there are transformational Teachers Consultants in the Open University of Greece that show idealized influence, mental stimulation, personalized appreciation and influenced motivation. While investigating the benefits of a transformational tuition in learning results through this present literature review, it is revealed that the transformational behaviors of a teacher, like the idealized influence or charisma and the mental stimulation are the initial predictive indexes regarding the teacher's respect and his trust towards him (Harrison, 2011). The personalized appreciation and the mental stimulation are the main predictive factors regarding the students' participation (Harvey a.o., 2003· Harrison, 2011). The learning achievements, the sentimental learning process, the motives, the knowledge management and the students' evaluations for the teachers' trustworthiness are positively associated with the transformational teachers who showcase encouragement, motives, mental stimulation and have a charisma, according to the studies on measuring the transformational teachers' behaviors and the learning results (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009· Harrison, 2011).

Our research showed that Adams and Hambright (2005) stated that modern universities have to play the role of learning organizations that are guided by transformational leaders. According to the current literature that was studied in the context of this research, it is clear that the application of transformational leadership in the context of higher education leads to increased sentimental learning, motivation and the students' opinions on the trustworthiness of the teachers (Harrison, 2011).

## **Conclusions**

According to this present study we find out through researches and studies that the Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) is closely linked to the Transformational leadership theory (TFL). The LMX theory does not focus on the specific characteristics of an effective leading carrier. In contrast to that, it emphasizes on the nature and quality of the relationships between a leader and his individual supporters. The ideal case for a leader would be to develop as many quality relationships as possible. This will lead to an increase in the feeling of satisfaction from working as well as the individual responsibility of the subordinates and an increase in productivity and achievement of the organizational goals (Power, 2013).

Nevertheless, the results of our research highlight the importance of the Distance Education leaders being transformational leaders and innovative visionaries who have the ability to motivate, activate, influence and encourage their followers (Olcott,

2020), while they form a shared, competitive Distance Education program (Portugal, 2006). Besides, organizational structures that surpass the traditional educational boundaries demand transformational leadership and the effective transformational leaders work better in changing environments, where they define and form a vision for the future of their organization, that formulates a communicative context with their followers in order for motivation to exist (Nworie, 2012).

However, the TFL is not enough by itself to support the higher Distance Education (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1996). The understanding of the way in which the leaders of the specific educational level act effectively in comparison to its followers can be found in the LMX theory (Power, 2013). It is revealed that the LMX theory is complemented by the TFL theory, where both find their ideal application in Distance environments, especially in Higher Distance Education. What is also revealed, though, and needs to be further examined, is how dual quality relationships are formed and developed, while the study on the effect of time on quality relationships would also be interesting to research. Do the exchange leader-member relationships remain of quality in the passage of time or do they alter? This is also something that has not yet been examined, as this research has showcased. Besides, this definition of new research questions is considered as a desideratum in every systematic literature review, which is regarded as an irreplaceable method of rescuing the scientific knowledge.

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