

International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research
Vol. 21, No. 5, pp. 143-165, May 2022
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.5.8>
Received Mar 21, 2022; Revised May 18, 2022; Accepted May 23, 2022

The Development of Albanian School Principals: A Challenge to Avoid Old Concepts and Value the Importance of Development

Magdalini Vampa 

Fan S. Noli University, Korçë, Albania

Abstract. The school principal is the driving force behind the culture and performance of a school and directly influences the teachers and students. However, the development of school leaders remains problematic even after 30 years of education system reforms in Albania. This paper primarily seeks to demonstrate the importance of forming a generation of effective school administrators and universities' critical role in accomplishing this goal. Particular attention should be paid to overcoming the lingering mentalities of the communist system, which are unresponsive to the demand for professionals who can lead in challenging and uncertain times. Using deductive thematic analysis and the categories that resulted from the coding process, such as "leader characteristics" and "leader's formation models," to interpret Albanian official education documents from during and after its communist dictatorship, results were obtained that support the importance of universities in meeting school leaders' training needs and providing them with professional qualifications. The results show that the cultural influences of communism affect the current leadership model in Albania and leadership training policies should utilize higher education, as the best and most efficient means to overcome the lingering influences of communism.

Keywords: leadership; school leadership; school principal's formation; university role; communist leadership philosophy

1. Introduction

Modern schools face multifaceted challenges, and as institutions of paramount importance, they must respond to these challenges vigorously to fulfill their purpose. Schools must change their pedagogical approaches, methods, and techniques as planned and regulated by legislation. School administrators must motivate their staff to find new and suitable ways to prepare students for an uncertain future, especially in light of the global pandemic and growing dependence on technology.

©Author

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

In this environment, the development of school leadership is undoubtedly of pressing importance, as principals play a critical role in their schools' response to dynamic global pressures.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report *Education Policy Outlook 2019: Working Together to Help Students to Achieve their Potential* provides an overview of education policy priorities in OECD countries from 2008–2019. It states:

“The majority of policies collected for this report for school leadership were first implemented in 2008–14. This suggests relative continuity and stability in this policy area. Nevertheless, the small number of recent policies, and the lower prominence of school leadership as a priority should be noted.” (OECD, 2019, p. 37)

The report also highlights that

“The most frequently observed trends in policy developments related to school improvement from 2008 to 2019 were on: improving education systems' learning environments (through general strategies for schools, policies aimed at improving learning conditions to support all students, and policies on digitalization of schools); developing high-quality teachers (through measures such as professional frameworks and career pathways, recruitment and registration, incentives and stimuli, initial teacher education, induction processes and professional development); and supporting school leaders (mainly through professional frameworks and competence development).” (OECD, 2019, p. 56)

The document *Strategy for the Development of Pre-University Education 2014–2020* drafted by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MASR) not only provides a framework for implementing the organizational requirements guiding Albania's integration into Europe but also enumerates the requirements of a pre-university education for the policymaking and implementing bodies in Albania in a section titled “Improving Governance, Leadership and Human Capacity Management.” It states, “Training mechanisms are established and programs are developed for the preparation of leaders and managers in education (school of leaders, etc.), to improve the performance of Educational Institutions” (MASR, 2014, p. 30).

Educational institutions are struggling in the environment created by the global pandemic. This suggests that schools should reframe their missions and pedagogical methods to focus on educating and equipping students with the necessary knowledge to become skilled citizens who are prepared to enter an unknown future landscape.

Albanian school leaders are approaching challenges and demands that are qualitatively different from those they faced in the past with an outdated mentality, style, and toolkit of authoritative methods (models that they have experienced and inherited), compounded by a lack of theoretical knowledge and necessary skills. Factors such as the frequent transfer of principals, politically-motivated appointments, and the lack of qualification requirements (e.g., that

candidates should have a degree in management and administration) affect the quality and effectiveness of school leadership in Albania.

Meanwhile, Albanian school leadership, even after 30 years of a democratic governance structure, continues to be burdened by mentalities retained from the communist era, such as appointment methods and leadership development models. The appointment of leaders in the communist system was controlled and approved by the state party. Today, school principals are still appointed and controlled by instructions provided by the MASR (AQSH F-511-1970-152-152.1; MASR, 2020; Instruction No. 2 PROT. 762).

A half-century of communist influence is evident in the typical principal's approach to duty, discipline, and the climate of the school environment. This, in addition to a lack of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, prevents the development of a leadership model that would foster a climate of motivation, achievement, and continuous learning among staff and the school community (Vampa, 2013, 2018).

The appointment of leaders by their superiors cultivates another significant cultural dimension in Eastern cultures called "proximity to power" (House et al., 2004, as cited in Northouse, 2010). Proximity to power reduces the leader's autonomy, as appointments by top executives (rather than elections) make school principals more vulnerable to executive control and impede their ability to make disinterested decisions.

In addition to obligatory seminars and training sessions organized by the Ministry of Education, other leadership development methods should be considered. More specifically, higher education institutions should create courses on both formal and informal leadership models that meet the requirements laid out by MASR, cultivating leaders who can exercise autonomy, take global economic development trends into consideration, and motivate their staff and students to develop to their maximum potential (Vampa, 2018).

The principal's leadership and management style directly affects their school's performance and quality and indirectly affects the "hidden curricula" (Pai et al., 2006, p. 132) instilled in students, the future generation. Specifically, leadership style, achievement orientation, power dynamics, conflict resolution between administration and staff, the adoption of an education model that prioritizes critical thinking in future citizens, and independence from power, particularly regarding values, are elements of the whole panorama of school leadership, which I will present and analyze in this paper.

2. Literature Review

2.1 A Short Historical Profile of School Principals in Neighboring Balkan Countries

The Soviet communist regime was established in the Western Balkan countries after World War II, where the ideology found fertile ground due to the readiness of the newly formed communist governments of these countries and the demands of their educational systems. These countries emerged from World War II with high illiteracy rates compared to the countries of Central Europe.

Yugoslavia had an illiteracy rate of over 40%; Romania had a rate of 25%; Bulgaria, 31%; and Albania, 80% (Grant, 1969). "They could have faced a clear and pressing need for reform of some kind" (Grant, 1969, p. 73). The need for infrastructure, study programs, curricula, textbooks, and, of course, teachers and school administrators, constituted a kind of vacuum that communist governments sought to fill according to the Soviet model. In the implementation of the "red" model, even the smallest "resistance" of tradition and culture, such as the influence exerted by the Catholic Church, was suppressed. "The position of the (Catholic) Church has, in some areas, modified the regime.... Unlike Catholicism and similar to Orthodoxy, Islam gave few direct problems to communist governments in Eastern Europe" (Grant, 1969, p. 40).

"Totalitarian regimes understood that control of schools and the minds of young people is essential to controlling the population" (Meredith & Steele, 2000, p. 29). The communist control of schools for 45 years in Eastern European countries "reached into the heart of education, affecting daily practice and the relationship between teachers and students" (Meredith & Steele, 2000, p. 29).

The management of each educational institution in this period sought, first and foremost, party loyalty. That "was always more important than formal educational attainment, skills, knowledge or a successful track record" (Cakrt, 1993, p. 64). The responsible manager was an "ideological worker, even one of the most important" (Counts, 1961, p. 13). In attempting to describe the profile of a school principal in Balkan countries under communist regimes and the application of the Soviet model of education, it is important to note that

"[t]he Communist regime hated and feared management. Even the word itself – difficult to translate into Eastern European native languages – was seen as having a negative connotation and its use was discouraged by the Party. Instead, native equivalents of words such as 'control,' 'steering' and others were part of the lexicon management." (Cakrt, 1993, p. 63)

The function and work of school principals were "to translate the policy of the central authority into practice, to administer rather than initiate" (Grant, 1996, p. 150). "Heads of schools often regarded, as one of their chief duties, acting as a link between the teachers and the education authorities" (Grant, 1996, p. 153).

Every school leader's character under the communist regime, according to Nelson (1984), was to be built through charisma, control, and coercion.

"A charismatic appeal, which links a ruler's sanctity, personal morality, and heroism to his knowledge of ideology, makes for a great power orientation, control, and coercion, which may be the strategies of choice for some... which produce rewards and punishments, [with] the latter stressing the legitimacy of order and discipline... or 'ideology of compulsion.'" (Nelson, 1984, p. 5)

One of a school principal's duties, after their function of observing the party line, was "to visit teachers in their classes, discuss lessons with them, and give them advice – although, since there are no prescribed methods, the teachers are

under no compulsion to accept it" (Grant, 1969, p. 329). These visits were a means of exerting continuous control over the teachers. They also allowed the school principal to question the teachers' professional pedagogical performance.

Revolutionary "iron discipline" and careful oversight of its implementation were also among principals' main functions:

"Though reliance on punishment is discouraged, therefore, teachers will have a battery of penalties at their command for dealing with the lazy or badly-behaved child. These are carefully graded from mild reproofs by the teacher to severe reprimands by the principal of the school, which are reported to be highly effective." (Grant, 1969, p. 100)

The school principal was primarily responsible for establishing a culture of school discipline among students and teachers: "Discipline, to be worth anything, must not only affect what a person does, but what he is" (Grant, 1969, p. 103). This was necessary to integrate children into the proletarian order that the communist leadership in Eastern European society during these years intended to create. "In any case, it is expected that the whole curriculum, and the extra-curricular activities, will be put to appropriate use in creating 'a new type of person' (Grant, 1969, p. 104).

As for how school directors were appointed: "First, party loyalty was always more important than formal educational attainment, skills, knowledge or a successful track record" (Cakrt, 1993, p. 64). Second, it was sufficient for a school leader to successfully complete "short-term courses or state-run schools" with abridged programs "that awarded diplomas equal to a university degree to working-class cadres; these schools, were also controlled, staffed, and financed by the Party" (Cakrt, 1993, p. 64).

2.2 Some Notes on the Philosophy of Albanian School Management During the Communist Regime

In the early Albanian school tradition, several visionary figures of Albanian culture, science, and society made civic contributions during the upheaval of the nation's formation at the end of the 19th century by building the model of Albanian education (Aliçkaj, 1995). The mid-19th century was characterized by

"the lack of formal education which has always been the biggest obstacle to the progress of Albanian culture. Three different cultural levels in which the country was divided had brought different primary school systems. The [Muslim] majority... could only go to madrassas that spoke the Turkish language.... The Catholic minority in the mountainous north of the country was led mainly by Franciscans and Jesuits... while the Orthodox population in the south could attend Greek language schools." (Elsie, 1997, p. 143)

Under these conditions, the ideologues of the national Renaissance movement at the end of the 19th century devoted their energies to the war and to establishing Albanian as the language used in schools (Elsie, 1997).

Islami (2002) emphasizes that those who became school principals from 1912–1926 were also highly experienced teachers. Article 41 of the 1926 school legislation *The Law of Education Staff* states, “Directors... are appointed [from] those teachers who have... graduated [from the] Teachers professional school or lyceum, have successfully passed the profession exam and who have worked for at least 5 years as teachers.”

Under the 45-year communist regime following World War II, however, the direction and management of schools were based on party ideology.

In his 1969 report, the Minister of Education and Culture, Thoma Deliana, appealed to the entire hierarchy of education directors, ministry staff, executive committees, and school leaders to strengthen the communist party’s political and ideological presence in education and culture (AQSH, 1969).

“There is no doubt that the ideological content in school [assignments] and work is fundamental.... For the solution of every pedagogical task in the field of teaching and education, we should be guided by the political and ideological aspect; pedagogy should serve... politics and we must not rely on a narrow pedagogical and didactic professionalism.” (AQSH, 1969, p. 151)

In other words, “intellectualism had to be fought and every subject had to be treated under the ideological view” (AQSH, 1969, p. 155).

School administration and teachers received continuous training on how to apply Marxist-Leninist ideology to the task of education (AQSH, 1969, p. 157). Specifically, leaders’ qualifications were developed through seminars organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture on such topics as the “education system, to destroy the old bourgeois school concepts, to elaborate new socialist concepts based on ideological axis, [and] student self-action in school and outside it” (AQSH, 1969, F. 11, p. 21). Most of these training sessions had a poor scientific and theoretical basis, with leadership examples and models that oriented work and schooling toward government ideologies and policies. The training conclusions that the ministry forwarded to the Central Committee underlined the purpose of these seminars: “Our basic task is to analyze, understand and implement the Central Committee decisions of the 8th plenum” (p. 28) because the Minister of Education and the Prime Minister would communicate to the nation (through the party press) that “we consider the employees (i.e., our leaders) as political commissars fighting on the most delicate ideological front” (AQSH, 1967, F. 10, p. 8).

Schools in 1960–1970 were characterized by a tradition of order, discipline, student hygiene, and school facilities maintenance (AQSH, 1969, F. 11). In general, these were the responsibilities of school leaders, which meant that there was careful surveillance not only of the learning process, but also of more personal student issues and, above all, their political education: “First of all the school should prepare young people as revolutionaries, red commissars and then specialists in their profession...” (AQSH, 1967, F.10, p. 9). Such discipline was not intended to impart knowledge to students or facilitate their individual

growth but to create model indoctrinated ideological citizens from both teachers and students. At this time, a tradition of control and planning in which the school leader played the main role was established, with party representatives required to be present at every reported problem. Additionally, the “art of leadership” was developed according to ideological and political perspectives, without regard for technocratic and bureaucratic aspects (AQSH, 1967, F.10).

3. Research Methodology

As examined in previous empirical studies (see Aliçkaj, 1995 and Vampa, 2013; 2018), current Albanian and various international institutions have expressed the need to improve school leadership, allowing this study to evaluate institutional reports’ emphasis on the need for leadership development and to predict the future demand for it.

Previous studies have also pointed out that the philosophy of the models being used for leaders’ development and selection today is similar to that of models used before 1990. Political influences in the appointment and “circulation” of leaders (Nathanaili, 2015, p. 206), as well as the organization of institutional training under the Education Ministry’s superintendence, without consulting the needs of actual leaders, testify to a lack of professionalism and orientation toward a new leadership philosophy (Vampa, 2018).

Consideration of these variables drives this study’s aim to identify the factors preserving this philosophy and argue that universities’ roles in establishing appropriate models for the development of school leaders cannot be underestimated.

This qualitative research was conducted in 2020–2021 using deductive thematic analysis, which was selected as the most appropriate approach to identify the factors that affect school operations and analyze the need for training school leaders. As Braun and Clarke (2012) state, “Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset” (p. 2).

3.1 Document Collection

To draw a clear picture of the revolutionary communist philosophy of school management in Albania, the Central State Archive provides online archival documents to scholars and researchers.

Specifically, Group Fund I was studied: Central State Institutions, Fund 511 Ministry of Education and Culture, the files of which spanned 1967–1971. These years were selected because, according to previous scholars who have surveyed the history of education and school management in Albania, such as Islami (2000; 2002), Aliçkaj (1995), and Kraja (1993), they are when the revolution’s mandates regarding the army, economy, and schools were issued, and when every school was required to teach and raise the “new man,” the party commissars. According to the orders, instructions, and written communications filed in the Central State Archive, institutional bureaucratic leaders were

required to adopt the leadership models of countries where they had studied, such as the Soviet Union, Poland, France, Greece, etc. These adopted models were to be replicated rapidly through the process of school revolution, the ideological orientation of which would be ordered by the state party and its leader.

This study also referred to the January 2021 report of the Institute for Educational Development, *On Identifying the Needs of Educational Staff for Professional Development*, which identified and addressed the need for vocational training for leaders (ASCAP, 2021).

For the elaboration of this paper, educational staff training modules provided by the curriculum directorate of Professional Development Institutes during 2011–2021 were examined, as well as modules offered by Albanian universities, organizations, and agencies. These ASCAP-certified training modules are offered throughout the academic year in the form of one- or several-day training sessions for on-duty teachers at agencies or continuing education centers.

In recent years, the Regional Education Directorate of Korça provided the appointment modalities of school principals and some implementation practices. Those documents are unique to all Education Directorates issued by the MASR (2020).

This paper has taken Aliçkaj's (1995), Elsie's (1997), and Islami's (2000; 2002) studies and Vampa's (2013) doctoral thesis, which was conducted in Albania in the field of education management and administration after the collapse of the totalitarian system in the 1990s, into consideration. These international experts' experiences and studies have provided a solid foundation for conducting this analysis and building arguments based on the hypothesis that Albanian school leaders need formal education.

3.2 Data Analysis

This study featured a deductive thematic data analysis to fulfill its aim.

1. The original documents from the archive were studied for several months as the online and electronic versions offered by the General Directorate of Archives of the Republic of Albania. These documents were carefully examined to avoid any subjective interpretation during the analysis.
2. Vampa's (2013) doctoral dissertation was used as quantitative research that "aimed to provide an overview of the Albanian school leadership profile" (Vampa, 2013). This empirical study served as a good basis for deepening both the knowledge of school leadership in Albania and the analysis of leadership development as essential elements of providing an effective education and overcoming unexpected crises.
3. The documents of the Ministry of Education and its subordinate institutions have served to support this paper's argument supporting the need for

leadership training and also provided information on some “old” practices in the appointment of leaders and professional education models.

According to Braun and Clarke (2012), the process of deductive coding and analysis “is a ‘top-down’ approach in which the researcher brings to the data a set of concepts, ideas, or arguments that they use to code and interpret the data” (p. 3). The author drew on some concepts from Vampa’s (2013; 2018) and Aličkaj’s (1995) previous quantitative research. “Essential to doing good thematic analysis is a clear understanding of where the researcher is in relation to these possible options, a rationale for making the choices they make, and the consistent application of those choices throughout the analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 5).

This study aims to identify, analyze, and classify the factors involved in school management and ultimately suggest the most effective ways to prepare Albanian school leaders as professionals. In the archives research during the first 7 months of 2020, and then in some field studies and the documentation of the Ministry of Education, the codes that were used to guide the documentary research represented the following themes: the direction of education under communist ideology and the profile, appointment, training, and functions of the ideological leader. In the second stage of coding, the following categories were defined: the characteristics of Albanian school leadership under communism, the need for reform, manager training, and the crucial role of the university in redesigning the leadership model. The problems in the process of training school leaders in Albania, the need for effective training, and the tradition of “training principals” are components of the major theme that guided the collection and analysis of data in this study.

Table 1: Coding framework of the thematic analysis

References	Documents	Publication dates	Codes	Categories	Theme
AQSH (Central State Archive), Fund 511, File 10	Archive documents, 514 pages (jpg)	1967	Communist ideology in leadership; School principals’ preparation; School principals’ training; Appointment of the school principals; Discipline of the director; Principal control; School Revolution	Characteristics of the leader of the communist period	The need for leadership training
AQSH (Central State Archive), Fund 511, File 11 & 9	Archive documents, 40 pages (jpg), 169 pages (jpg)	1969			
AQSH (Central State Archive), Fund 511, File 152	Archive documents, 222 pages (jpg)	1970			
Kraja, M	Book, 490 pages	1993	The need for a new philosophy		
Aličkaj, J.	Monograph,	1995	The school		

	188 pages		principal as a political medium; Educational traditions under the pressure of communist ideology	in leadership; Education reform requires a new direction	The role of universities is central to this important development.
Elsie, R.	Book, literary criticism, 291 pages	1997	Tradition - patriotism - school principal	Insufficient leadership training models;	
Islami, V.	Articles, pp. 10-32; pp. 7-25	2000, 2002	School discipline; communist ideology does away with some traditions in school management	Mandatory training (by law) for school principals on duty	
Vampa, M.	Doctoral dissertation; article	2013; 2018	Principals need for education; Formal education priority	Target coordinated training based on a national program;	
MASR (Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth)	Pre-University Education Development Strategy 2014-2020; Instruction, NR. 2	2014; 2020	Need for training of school principals; reform of school as new paradigm: Student-centered curricular reform; Controlled school principal appointments	Universities should create a study program for preparing school leaders	
Albanian Government	Amendment on Law No. 69/2012	2018	Mandatory School principal Certification Act (through training)		
ASCAL	Training module offering	2021	School principals' training		

These datasets have helped to answer the following key research questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of school management resulting from 45 years under the communist leadership model of a political and ideological leader?
2. What are the needs and reforming factors that influence the development and improvement in understanding the new philosophy?
3. Are the current management training approaches sufficient?
4. What is the role of universities in the development of school principals?

Efforts to answer these questions raised the issue of school principals' formal education and supported the argument that graduating from a higher education institution is a more successful and effective leadership model than that currently used in Albania.

4. Results

This section presents the factors influencing the preservation of the old philosophy in Albanian leadership in general and school leadership in particular, as well as the emphasis on the need for a new philosophy in leadership development and the role of universities in this regard, based on previous document studies.

4.1 Why the Impact of the 45-Year Period of the Communist Regime Was Considered Important for This Study

Smith et al. (1996) analyzed data on the personal values and behavioral intentions of 10,000 managers and employees from 43 nations. They concluded that there is a fundamental divide between Eastern and Western Europe and noted that the historical footprint that seems to have left the deepest imprint at the moment is not the legacy of the Roman Empire, but that of the Soviet Union (Smith et al., 1996, as cited in House et al., 2004). These "old" leadership patterns cannot be changed by the desire for societal progress alone. In the educational system, which has undergone continuous reform since the 1990s, studies have shown that approximately 70% of Albanian teachers were trained during the communist regime (Lama et al., 2011). School leaders are appointed by the governing bodies of the MASR after a minimum of 5 years of experience on the teaching staff, as the education document issued by MASR (2020) specifies.

The 45 years of communist power have had such an enormous influence on the Albanian school model and school leadership because the education system in Albania was established after an educational vacuum, high illiteracy rates, and religious divisions. As noted, this system was based on the Soviet communist model, and the leader ideally bore the characteristics of an "ideological worker."

4.2 The Communist Model of the School Leader

The influence of the communist leadership culture is still evident in school leadership.

(1) The appointment of school principals still includes the “intervention of politics, steadily, in the appointment and dismissal of school leadership, [and] lack of transparency in the selection of candidates” (Nathanaili, 2015, p. 206; MASR, 2020)

(2) Training sessions are centralized and not related to leaders’ needs, as in the old philosophy that did not serve the leaders’ professional development but rather that of communist morals. School leadership was established based on *On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania Law of 2012, as amended [in] 2018, article 55, point 2* (2018), and is obligatory for school principals. The law only offers training sessions directed by the Ministry of Education.

(3) The leadership model is traditional, which, for the reasons enumerated above, entails an authoritative style and requires limited professional knowledge.

4.3 The Role of Universities

Albanian universities are the most capable institutions for preparing school leaders. Not only do these institutions have the necessary human capacity and will to offer proper study programs but they are more independent than other institutions in terms of politics and the international scope they can offer.

“What is needed now in Central and Eastern Europe is to establish a public awareness of management as a profession.... We need to introduce a management culture, a way of thinking and doing things” (Cakrt, 1993, p. 66). Based on this argument, school leaders should learn about leadership theories and develop various skills and competencies to establish an effective work culture while appreciating the complexity of the responsibilities of schooling, a crucial institution.

5. Discussion

Based on the above analysis, this section discusses the results achieved.

5.1 Characteristics of School Leaders Under the Communist Regime

Based on the analysis of the results of predominantly archival documentation, several key characteristics of school leadership during the communist years were discovered.

1. Indoctrination and party political theories formed the basis of school development, resulting in low-performing schools and a distortion of the leadership figure. Even when school leaders were presented as scientific and professional personalities, they modified their opinions and activity according to political pressures, thereby self-censoring original and innovative ideas.

After the 1960s, the leaders focused on political discussions and analysis, “which stood before the pedagogical and scientific issues, [as] the party leading role in school was absolute leadership” (Aličkaj, 1995, p. 41), and

even the most talented and skillful leaders could not contest the pressure of such expectations. The researcher notes that party organization in schools caused fear, insecurity, and stress, which contributed only regression to school life and activity.

2. The practice of appointing a school principal required detailed consideration of party criteria, which resulted in the appointment of many leaders who were loyal to the party rather than those who were most professionally qualified and knowledgeable of pedagogical practices (AQSH, 1970, F. 9, p. 152/1). As a result, school management could not significantly improve performance levels.
3. Another factor that hampered school development and education leadership was the censorship of foreign literature and the lack of dialogue with foreign schools.

All this was justified by the slogan “with our forces,” and Albanian schools were oriented “toward the original ways,” in which empiricism, spontaneity, and indoctrination ruled. The imposition of communist ideology did not allow intellectuals to manifest their leadership skills or potential in the field of education, and instead emphasized the political commissar model as the preferred leadership of the time. The data obtained from the archive evinces that every decision a school leader made was controlled by and dependent on the party organization within the institution and at the district level.

The Albanian school leader during the communist era can be summarized as follows: They were individuals appointed by the party organizations, marked as ideological workers standing in the advanced line of fire, loyal to the party, and exercising their function through the control and coercion of their subordinates (Counts, 1961). “Control and administrative coercion may be the strategies chosen by some communist elites in their quest for the authority to lead...” (Nelson, 1994, p. 5).

5.2 Reformative Factors That Condition New Management Philosophies in Albanian Education

The dynamic changes that Albanian society has undergone in the past century have demanded various kinds of education reform, which have affected school leaders’ ability to face the many daily challenges they encounter. From the creation of the Albanian state to the 1960s, several dynamic achievements were made in the field of education: the massive expansion of education in Albania, secularity in schools, and the establishment of almost every phase of education from preschool to university (Aliçkaj, 1995). An overview of leadership traditions in Albania also highlights the school reform period of the totalitarian regime, which was based on party schema and ideology. This period featured a rigid curriculum in which scientific literature and contemporary methodologies were censored (p. 41). Curricula focused on the mastery of formal terms and not creating disciplined minds engaged in the pursuit of knowledge. Schools aimed to develop political and ideological individuals rather than civic and educated

ones (Islami, 2002). After the 1990s, these and other deviations in the organization and content of Albanian schools would ring alarm bells in society at large and initiate demands for contemporary reforms in response to the radical social changes that were occurring. The need for comprehensive education reform engaged institutions in the project of making significant improvements and trying to achieve and surpass European standards.

5.2.1 Reform Demands for Professional Development and Management Skills in Albanian School Leaders

Scholars in the education field agree on some conclusions about education reforms and their international orientation:

"The reforms currently being undertaken in different countries share these orientations and commonalities. Almost all of them, whether in the process of being developed or already validated and implemented, are based on four different cornerstones: (1) logic of competencies, (2) socioconstructivist perspective, (3) focus on learner, (4) strong emphasis placed on learning situations." (Jonnaert et al., 2006, p. 11)

These four principles can be found in almost all current educational system reforms the world over, often combined in different ways to elaborate the curriculum. According to this document, they form the constitutional elements of the education system.

The most important orientation document for education development in Albania is the *2014–2020 Pre-University Education Development Strategy*, which clearly presents the current school vision and strives for continuous education reform in response to the demands and perspectives of Albanian society (MASR, 2014). Specifically, this document defines a new curricular perspective in pre-college education that uses a competency-based approach. This new educational paradigm requires teachers and school leaders to restructure their style and method, placing the student at the center of their instruction. However, according to a study by Lama et al. (2011),

"As the Albanian educational system is implementing many reforms (curricula, baccalaureate exam, student evaluation, etc.), teachers' professional development still remains a problem.... There are the cases where teachers cannot keep up with the changes in school curricula and cannot adopt the new things." (p. 48)

Thus, this reform is not only a challenge for elementary and secondary teachers but also, and more importantly, for principals, who should have the conceptual and technical skills to understand and convey this new philosophy as well as evaluate its step-by-step implementation by faculty. The school leader should practice distributed leadership, network with other institutions, and, by transforming their leadership style, motivate and inspire their subordinates to create a culture of continuous growth.

According to Nathanaili's (2015) study,

"In some cases, leadership is a product of political circumstances. The key skills missing in these cases are technical, resulting in an inability to

adapt the teaching program to local needs and to engage in monitoring, evaluation, and professional development of teachers.” (p. 202)

The Institute of Education Development, under the purview of the Ministry of Education and Sports, has managed to assess teachers' demand and need for training and continuous professional development by measuring their skills in relation to curricula implementation, competencies and methodological skills, ethics, communication, and understanding of inclusive education concepts (ASCAP, 2021).

A national analysis indicates that “school leaders need professional training through training agencies and organizations, especially the Education Leadership Centre” (ASCAP, 2021, p. 77), as well as higher education institutions that “prepare teachers in curricular improvements related to technology use, student assessment” (ASCAP, 2021, p. 78), and so on.

5.2.2 The Insufficiency of Current School Management Approaches

The comprehensive education leadership literature describes several different leadership models. Many of them have been built appropriately for the environment in which they were written, as well as the subsequent few years. As Stoll et al. (2002) state, “It could be argued that different aspects of various models are relevant to the complex leadership challenge for... change at the start of the twenty-first century” (p. 46).

Stoll et al. (2002) underline that “school leaders typically demonstrate six styles of leadership: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pace-setting, and coaching. Significantly, however, leaders do not operate in only one particular style. Instead, they combine styles, depending on the occasion and need” (p. 46). It is difficult to clearly classify leaders by style due to the complexity and variety of challenges that a school principal faces daily with colleagues, students, parents, instructors, etc. Ultimately, a leadership model that fully possesses the breadth and complexity of skills required in contemporary education management cannot be established.

Albania inherited the “ideological leader,” not a professional or well-qualified model in education, from the totalitarian system. Despite the efforts of the past 30 years, explicit orientation towards an effective leadership model in schools remains a challenge.

After the 1990s, the necessary reform of curricula and textbooks to break with the ignorance and ideological burdens of the previous curriculum, which “was centrally controlled, mixing general content with Marxist ideology” (Meredith & Stele, 2000, p. 31), in addition to reform in teacher training, together affected the role of the leader. As Pont (2020) notes, “In many education systems, a shift is observed: from a more administrative and bureaucratic function to one that is more involved in working with teachers and staff to improve school outcomes” (Adams & Gaetane, 2011; Glatter, 2014; Roach et al., 2010; Spillane & Kenney, 2012, as cited in Pont, 2020, p. 156). In Albania, education leaders before World War II were “patriots and fighters of the Enlightenment” (Elsie, 1997, p. 143) and

were driven by this motive to establish Albanian education. After 1945, the “ideological leader of the party” held sway, and since the 1990s, school directors have been influenced by politics and the tradition of the communist leadership model, while also being subject to the pressure of reforms that must be implemented through new philosophies. Reforms in curriculum, teaching methods, and student assessment are influencing the emergence of various new developments and helping to change the school principal’s role, but the performance of Albanian school principals still does not meet the expected standards.

The evaluation of the *2014–2020 Pre-College Education Strategy* (UNICEF, 2019) states: “School administrators are seen as imperfect links in the system. The need is to strengthen and improve the education management system with a focus on building systems that include building monitoring and professional support services” (p. 4).

Moreover, studies show that

“legislation encourages the concept of distributed and collective leadership, as well as the cooperation of a large number of stakeholders to successfully implement this concept, but is limited to definitions only. The culture of individual leadership and the lack of conceptualization of distributed leadership practices are obstacles that need to be considered.”
(Nathanaili, 2015, p. 202)

According to the GLOBE study (House et al., 2004), communist culture is present in the dimensions of Eastern European leadership. Pont (2020) agrees, writing, “In traditional countries, administrators may have a more administrative and representative function of authority” (p. 157).

Leaders participated in professional teacher training sessions organized by MASR and other agencies, but “UNESCO’s education policy review summarizes findings from several studies that suggest that pre-service training programs in Albania are not adequately supporting the country’s efforts at educational reform” (UNESCO, 2017, as cited in UNICEF 2019, p. 34).

5.2.3 The Influence of Social Factors

Our society is comprehensively different from society 100 years ago and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, society 1 year ago. Changes can take many forms. They can manifest as revolutions, like megatrends, or change forces entirely, but they have one thing in common – their profound impact on education (Naisbitt, 1990; Fullan, 1993).

News spreads ceaselessly all around the world, immediately informing people of conflicts, natural disasters, and traumatic situations brought on by the pandemic. The World Bank 2020 Report presents new estimates of COVID-19’s impacts on global poverty and inequality: “Harnessing fresh data from frontline surveys and economic simulations, it shows that pandemic-related job losses and deprivation worldwide are affecting already-poor and vulnerable

people, by changing the global poverty profile and by creating millions of ‘new poor’” (p. 23).

Family structure is also changing; an increasing number of parents or grandparents are living apart from their children or grandchildren.

Technological development is making the world smaller and affecting employment by increasing opportunities for working from home in any country via online access.

The phenomenon of part-time employment has implications on the long-held belief that people will hold a job throughout their entire lives until retirement. Many individuals entering the job market can and should be prepared to change their job multiple times. All of these tendencies have implications for adults and the education they should receive. Because of this, the education system faces immense pressure to change.

“The drivers of educational change are not always found in governmental policy. Rather, it is rapid and continual change in the wider society that makes an impact on education. Government can help by reconceptualizing the role and professional identity of teachers and by providing conditions under which they can adapt successfully to these changes” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 10).

This paper has suggested how three particular forces for change influence education.

“First, the powerful industrial sector associated with new technologies views education as a market for its products.... Secondly, understanding about broader theories of intelligence... leads to an awareness of need for new approaches to learning... so school no longer controls an accepted canon of knowledge. Third, the child[‘s] power is identified as one of the most powerful ... forces for all.” (Stoll et al., 2002, pp. 42–43)

Similarly, David Hargreaves (1998) points out that

“young people learn most readily from those they want to be like.... The trouble with teachers is that their students do not want to be like them. So, teachers and schools must stop serving as role models of fading career structures and moribund communities and begin to model people who are team-playing, networking and community-supporting, with an ability to be continually creative in a world in which, by definition, fresh problems unfold but must be solved quickly and locally.” (p. 12)

All of these external forces pressure schools and their leaders to change.

5.3 The Need for New Models

School leader appointments fall under the authority of the Head of the Regional Education Directorate after the review of commission evaluations (MASR, 2020). While the decision ultimately rests on their judgment, the Head of the Regional Education Directorate is appointed by the Ministry of Education after every regime change in Albania. School leader candidate criteria, compared with those

of the years before 2020, have increased in one point following the amendment in the *Law on Education for the Pre-University Level System 60/2012*, with mandatory attendance of leadership training organized by the Leadership Training Centre. School principal appointments also pass through a panel of district principals (i.e., interviews represent a significant percentage of acceptance points compared with postgraduate qualifications).

The Leadership School is not a new approach. It offers a 27-credit training program implemented by a training agency in cooperation with MASR after the legal changes in 2018 gave it exclusive rights to leadership training in Albania. Seminars and training programs remain passive and traditional efforts that do not always meet the principals' needs.

In addition to this form of training, which is legally binding for incumbents and aspiring school leaders, other training sessions have also been conducted by training agencies and higher education institutions in Albania since 2011. These training sessions are accredited by the Ministry of Education and are organized in modules based on data collected by the Institute of Education Development in 2011. There are 465 accredited modules, 20 of which are directly related to educational leadership. Nine modules of these 20 belong to the Leadership Training Centre mentioned above (MASR, ASCAP, 2021). The higher education institutions' particular, long-held intention has been to provide this service to school leaders, and this is evident from the 18 accredited modules that have been available since 2011.

Referring to a study conducted in the Korça Region in 2017, school principals "agree that their knowledge and professional skills have been developed during their university studies at the Faculties of Education in Albania" (Vampa, 2018, p. 17).

The University of Korça conducted market research in the region, which has a population of 217,422 people, fifth among the 17 regions of the country (INSTAT, 2021). Both young and experienced school leaders in 217 pre-university education institutions in the region expressed their need for training, information, and assistance during the leadership training process (MASR, 2020). In 2018, the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Korça argued before the University Senate for the third cycle of a new study program, the "Executive Master in Education," with 60 credits. The Ministry of Education refused this program with a request for deeper market research to be conducted when every aspirant or school leader is required to attend the Leadership Training Centre.

On-the-job training should not be the only form of leadership development because the practices mentioned above are not leading to adequate results. According to Cakrt (1993), an educational system must be established in which professional development and further training are not merely obligations to fulfill the conditions necessary to be appointed director but a means of self-realization for existing leaders and those who aspire to this position. This will

build the concept of the school as a “learning organization” (Pont, 2020, p. 157) and promote a culture of continuous staff training.

Another obstacle that directly affects school functioning is “unstable school leadership; especially in large cities... school leaders are changed frequently” (Nathanaili, 2015, p. 206). This is a consequence of political intervention, as every political administration change is followed by changes in school leadership. These movements do not allow for continuity, development, or improvement in the leaders’ performances, nor do they motivate them to undergo training.

5.4 Why Higher Education Institutions Should Play a Key Role in School Principals’ Development

Researchers point out that “the United States provides us with the most extensive literature on the design and delivery of educational leadership preparation” (Grogan et al., 2009, p. 395), and “historically, the university has hosted school leadership preparation and has exerted important direct influence by defining the work of professors and the plan of study for professional degrees” (McCarthy, 2009, p. 106). Universities “organized around courses that prepare students for administrative licensure within a degree program... Commonly, programs are divided into two distinct components: instructional leadership coursework and internship” (Grogan et al., 2009, p. 396).

In a study conducted on the role of Albanian universities, “their willingness and needs in providing continuing education” (Vampa, 2014, p. 137) underline the role that these institutions can and should play in the study programs that society or other institutions require.

Universities are the most autonomous educational institutions in Albania, which is why they are uniquely positioned to develop contemporary curricula based on Western models to prepare effective future leaders. These institutions have expressed their willingness to assume responsibility for conducting continuing education training for current school leaders and teachers and have provided accredited training sessions from 2011 onwards. They also have a legal obligation to study the market professionally and create new study programs that meet market needs.

Offering degrees in management and administration in the field of education will promote the conception of school leadership as a profession and will encourage future leaders to become successful school leaders by providing them with theoretical knowledge and equipping them with practical competencies.

University graduates will also demonstrate effective leadership skills by establishing mechanisms to prevent the political instrumentalism of their responsibilities and the communities they lead. In addition to their specialization in education, graduates of management and administration will have greater opportunities for sustainable career development and will be more likely to avoid moves and reappointments after a change in government.

6. Conclusions

The methods used in the development of school leaders during the past 30 years have not given satisfactory results. This is partly because the model of the communist political leader is still influential in Albanian school leadership culture.

In particular, the political nature of the appointment, dismissal, and movement of principals, their inefficient training, and the lack of job specifications requiring an appropriate degree demonstrate the influence of the old philosophy on school leadership culture.

In post-communist countries, the autocratic use of power reduces efficiency and does not allow schools to function as institutions that uphold democratic and meritocratic values and shape citizens who actively participate in decision-making. Instead, schools are encouraged to train individuals who approve of every behavior and decision others take.

School leadership development is essential to meet the various challenges that society encounters nowadays, and new models of leadership are necessary to respond to these needs.

The universities' role should be evaluated in terms of school leadership development and certifying the profession. Universities are the most autonomous educational institutions in Albania, and they have the ability and the willingness to provide leadership training sessions beyond the reach of political influences.

7. Limitations and Further Research

Few Albanological studies on education leadership exist. The data provided by a greater number of studies would have been of significant help to deepen and verify the results of this study.

This study could pave the way for further qualitative research on culture and leadership. Future studies could build on the results of this study by defining desirable school principal traits based on the opinions and expectations of teachers and students, who need security, motivation, and personal and professional career development opportunities.

8. References

- Aliçkaj, J. (1995). *Për një Konceptim të ri të drejtimit të Shkollës*. [For a new concept of school management]. Shtëpia Botuese Enciklopedike.
- AQSH [Central State Archive] Fondi 511, Ministria e Arsimit dhe Kulturës, Viti 1967, Dosja 10, fq. 008–009. [Group Fund I: Central State Institutions, Fund nr. 511 Ministry of Education and Culture, box. 1967, File 10, pp. 008–009]. Mbi luftën për një stil dhe metodë revolucionare në Ministrinë e Arsimit dhe të Kulturës [On the struggle for a revolutionary style and method in the Ministry of Education and Culture].
- AQSH [Central State Archive] Fondi 511, Ministria e Arsimit dhe Kulturës, Viti 1967, Dosja 10, fq. 105–106. [Group Fund I: Central State Institutions, Fund nr. 511

- Ministry of Education and Culture, box. 1967, File 10, pp. 105–106]. Diskutim i Kryeministrit Mehmet Shehu në Këshillin e Ministrave: Mbi konkluzionet e para në lidhje me zbatimin e vendimeve të byrosë politike të KQ, të Partisë mbi luftën kundër burokracisë, 17 shkurt 1966 [The speech of the Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu, in the Council of Ministers: On the first conclusions regarding the implementation of political bureau decisions of the Central Committee, on the fight against bureaucracy, February 17, 1966].
- AQSh [Central State Archive] Fondi 511, Ministria e Arsimit dhe Kulturës, Viti 1969, Dosja 11, fq. 021. [Group Fund I: Central State Institutions, Fund nr. 511 Ministry of Education and Culture, box. 1969, File 11, p. 021]. Seminar me drejtorët e shkollave tetevjecare 27–29 gusht 1969 [Seminar with eight-year school principals during August 27–29, 1969].
- AQSH [Central State Archive] Fondi 511, Ministria e Arsimit dhe Kulturës, Viti 1969, Dosja 11, fq. 001–017. [Group Fund I: Central State Institutions, Fund nr. 511 Ministry of Education and Culture, box. 1969, File 11, pp. 001–017]. Mbi detyrat tona për fillimin e vitit të ri shkollor 1969–1970 [Our tasks for the beginning of the new school year 1969–1970].
- AQSH [Central State Archive] Fondi 511, Ministria e Arsimit dhe Kulturës, Viti 1969, Dosja 9, fq. 151–157. [Group Fund I: Central State Institutions, Fund nr. 511 Ministry of Education and Culture, box. 1969, File 9, pp. 151–157]. Diskutimi i Ministrit të Arsimit dhe Kulturës Thoma Deliana, në Kuvendin Popullor, në 1969, me temë: Të forcojmë boshtin ideologjik Marksist-Leninist në punën e mësimore edukative të shkollës [The speech of the Minister of Education and Culture Thoma Deliana, in the Popular Assembly, 1969, on the topic: To strengthen the Marxist-Leninist ideological axis through our educational work in schools].
- AQSH [Central State Archive] Fondi 511, Ministria e Arsimit dhe Kulturës, Viti 1970, Dosja 152, fq. 152.1. [Group Fund I: Central State Institutions, Fund nr. 511 Ministry of Education and Culture, box. 1970, File 9, p. 152.1]. Komunikimin shkresor të Ministrisë së Arsimit dhe Kulturës mbi emërimin e drejtuesve dhe mësuesve në arsim, 1970. [Written information and communication of the Ministry of Education and Culture on the appointment of education leaders and teachers, 1970].
- ASCAP. (2021). *Raport: Identifikimi i Nevojave për Zhvillim Profesional të Punonjësve Arsimorë në Arsimin Parauniversitar* [Report: Identification of education employees' needs on professional development in the Pre-University level]. <https://www.ascap.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Identifikimi-i-Nevojave-p%C3%ABr-Zhvillim-Profesional-t%C3%AB-Punonj%C3%ABsve-Arsimor%C3%AB-n%C3%AB-Arsimin-Parauniversitar-1.pdf>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis, *APA handbook of research methods in psychology*. American Psychological Association. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269930410_Thematic_analysis
- Cakrt, M. (1993). Management education in Eastern Europe: Toward mutual understanding, *Academy of Management*, 7(4), 63–68. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4165155>
- Counts, G. (1961). A word about the Soviet teacher. *Comparative Education Review*, 5(1), 13–16. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1186196>
- Elsie, R. (1997). *Histori e letërsisë shqiptare* [History of Albanian literature]. <http://www.elsie.de/pdf/B1997HistLetShqip.pdf>
- Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. The Falmer Press.
- Grant, N. (1969). *Society, schools and progress in Eastern Europe*. Pergamon Press.

- Grogan, M., Bredeson, P., Sherman, W., Preis, S., & Beaty, D. (2009). The design and delivery of leadership preparation, In J. Murphy, M. D. Young, G. M. Crow & R. T. Ogawa (Eds.), *Handbook of research on the education of school principals* (pp. 395–415). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Hargreaves, D. (1998). *Creative professionalism: The role of teachers in the knowledge society*. Demos. <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/creativeprofessionalism.pdf>
- House, R., Hanges, P., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P., & Gupta, V. (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. Sage Publications.
- INSTAT. (2021). *Population*. <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/population>
- Islami, V. (2000). Administrimi i arsimit tonë kombëtar në këndvështrimin historik [Albanian school administration from the historical point of view], In A. Marto, B. Basha, P. Karameta, B. Golemi, A. Misha & V. Demiraj (Eds.), *Administrimi dhe menaxhimi i arsimit [Administration and school management]*, 1(1), (pp. 10–32). ISP.
- Islami, V. (2002). Administrimi i arsimit tonë kombëtar në këndvështrimin historik [Albanian school administration from the historical point of view], In P. Karameta, A. Misha & A. Limani (Eds.), *Administrimi dhe menaxhimi i arsimit [Administration and school management]*, 1(2), 7–25.
- Jonnaert, P., Barrette, J., Masciotra, D., & Yaya, M. (2006). *Revisiting the concept of competence as an organizing principle for programs of study: From competence to competent action*. Observatoire des réformes en éducation, Université du Québec à Montréal.
- Kraja, M. (1993). *Mësuesit për Kombin Shqiptar [Teachers for Albania]*. Botimet Toena.
- Lama, I., Sula, A., & Gjokutaj, M. (2011). Current issues of teacher training in Albania. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 32, 47–57. <http://www.scientiasocialis.lt/pec/node/files/pdf/vol32/47-57>
- MASR. (2020). Për procedurat e emërimit, pezullimit dhe shkarkimit të drejtorit të institucionit 164ate164c të arsimit parauniversitar (2020). Udhëzim, nr. 2, 164ate 28.01,2020 MASR, Prot. 762, [On the principal appointment, suspension and dismissal procedures on public institutions of Pre-University level (2020) Instruction, no. 2; 28.01.2020 Ministry of Education and Sport, Prot, 762]. <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/UDH%C3%8BZIM-NR.-2-28.01.2020-P%C3%8BR-PROCEDURAT-E-EM%C3%8BRIMIT-PEZULLIMIT-DHE-SHKARKIMIT-T%C3%8B-DREJTORIT-T%C3%8B-IPAP.pdf>
- MASR, ASCAP. (2021). <https://trajname.arsimi.rash.al>
- McCarthy, M., & Forsyth, Patrick. (2009). An historical review of research and development activities pertaining to the preparation of school leaders, In J. Murphy, M. D. Young, G. M. Crow & R. T. Ogawa (Eds.), *Handbook of research on the education of school leaders* (pp. 86–128). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Meredith, K., & Steele, J. (2000). Education in transition: Trends in Central and Eastern Europe, In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.) *Handbook of Reading Research Routledge* (pp. 29–39). <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781410605023.ch3>
- Ministria e Arsimit dhe e Sportit. (2014). Strategjia e Zhvillimit të Arsimit Parauniversitar 2014–2020; Përsosja e qeverisjes, e udhëheqjes dhe e menaxhimit të kapaciteteve dhe burimeve, [Pre-University education development strategy 2014–2020; improving governance, leadership, capacity and resource management]. https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Strategji_APU_dokumenti_perfundimtar_24_03_2015-1.pdf

- Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth. (2020). *Statistical yearbook of education, sports, and youth 2018–2019 and timely series*. <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Vjetari-statistikor-2018-2019-i-botuar.pdf>
- Naisbitt, J., & Aburdene, P. (1990). *Megatrends 2000: Ten new directions for the 1990's*. Avon.
- Nathanaili, V. (2015). School leadership in Pre-University Albanian education system (1995–2012): Politics, issues and trends. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 5(3), 201–208. <https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2015.v5n3p201>
- Nelson, D. (1984). Charisma, control, and coercion: The dilemma of communist leadership. *Comparative Politics*, 17(1), 1–15. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/421734>
- Northouse, P. (2010). *Leadership, theory and practice* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- OECD. (2019). Education policy outlook 2019: Working together to help students to achieve their potential, Chapter 1: Comparing trends in policy priorities and policy developments, Chapter 2: School improvement Policy priorities and trends 2008–19. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/2b8ad56e-en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/2b8ad56e-en>
- Pai, Y., Adler, S., & Shadiow, L. (2006). *Cultural foundations of education* (4th ed.). Pearson, Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Pont, B. (2020). A literature review of school leadership policy reforms. *European Journal of Education*, 55(2), 154–168. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12398>
- On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania Law of 2012, No. 69 of 06/21/2012, as amended 03/08/2018, art. 55, §2. (2018). Retrieved from <http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2018/07/23/48>
- Stoll, L., Bolam, R., & Collarbone, P. (2002). Leading for change: Building capacity for learning, (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational leadership and administration*, (pp. 41–73). Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- UNICEF Albania. (2019). FINAL REPORT UNICEF: Albania support to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth in conducting an appraisal of the current strategy of Pre-University education 2014–2020. <https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/2031/file/Education%20Sector%20Appraisal%20Document%20Eng.pdf>
- Vampa, M. (2013). *Çështje të zhvillimit të aftësive të drejtimit në arsimin shqiptar mbas viteve '90 [Issues of leadership development skills in Albanian education system after the '90s]*. [Doctoral dissertation: Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences.] <https://unitir.edu.al/doktoratura-magdalini-vampa-fakulteti-i-shkencave-sociale-departamenti-psikologji-pedagogjise/>
- Vampa, M. (2014). Albanian universities' mission on the system of long-life education, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences MCSER Publishing*, 126–138. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n19p126>
- Vampa, M. (2018). The necessity of formation and transformation of principals. *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research* 5(2), 8–18. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ejser-2018-0029>