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**THE IMPACT OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLES ON
IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN
HIGHER EDUCATION IN PALESTINE**

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**ВПЛИВ СТИЛІВ АДМІНІСТРАТИВНОГО ЛІДЕРСТВА НА
ПІДВИЩЕННЯ ЕФЕКТИВНОСТІ ПУБЛІЧНОГО УПРАВЛІННЯ У
СФЕРІ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ ПАЛЕСТИНИ**

The modern higher education system operates under increasing socio-economic pressures, globalization dynamics, and growing demands for the quality and effectiveness of public administration. In Palestine, where higher education institutions function amid political instability, resource constraints, and external limitations, the quality of administrative governance acquires strategic significance. Within this context, administrative leadership emerges as a critical determinant of public administration effectiveness in the higher education sector.

This article analyzes the impact of administrative leadership styles on the effectiveness of public administration in public higher education institutions in Palestine. Particular attention is devoted to transformational, transactional, and participatory leadership styles and their influence on organizational effectiveness, managerial decision-making quality, staff motivation, and universities' adaptive capacity. The theoretical framework is grounded in contemporary leadership and public administration concepts widely applied in educational management research.

The study employs a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, including surveys of administrative staff and academic personnel, semi-structured interviews with senior university leaders, and analysis of regulatory and strategic documents. The empirical evidence is drawn from three public universities in Palestine. Statistical and comparative methods were used to analyze the collected data.

The findings demonstrate that transformational and participatory leadership styles exert the most significant positive influence on public administration effectiveness in higher education. Their application is associated with higher levels of staff engagement in governance processes, a more supportive organizational climate, improved internal communication, and enhanced innovative capacity of universities. In contrast, transactional leadership primarily contributes to administrative stability and the execution of regulated managerial functions, while its role in strategic development remains limited.

The article substantiates the necessity of implementing systematic training and professional development programs for managerial personnel in Palestine's

higher education sector, with a focus on developing contemporary leadership competencies. The practical relevance of the study lies in its applicability to public administration reform, higher education policy development, and the enhancement of institutional effectiveness in higher education.

Система вищої освіти функціонує в умовах зростання соціально-економічного тиску, глобалізаційних процесів та підвищених вимог до якості й результативності публічного управління. Для Палестини, де заклади вищої освіти діють за умов політичної нестабільності, ресурсних обмежень і зовнішніх чинників впливу, якість адміністративного управління набуває стратегічного значення. У такому контексті адміністративне лідерство постає ключовим детермінантом ефективності публічного управління у сфері вищої освіти.

У статті проаналізовано вплив стилів адміністративного лідерства на результативність публічного управління в державних закладах вищої освіти Палестини. Основну увагу зосереджено на трансформаційному, транзакційному та партисипативному стилях лідерства й особливостях їх впливу на організаційну ефективність, якість управлінських рішень, мотивацію персоналу та адаптаційну спроможність університетів. Теоретичну основу дослідження становлять сучасні концепції лідерства та публічного адміністрування, які застосовуються в дослідженнях освітнього менеджменту.

Методологія дослідження ґрунтується на поєднанні кількісних і якісних методів, зокрема анкетуванні адміністративних працівників і науково-педагогічного персоналу, напівструктурованих інтерв'ю з керівниками закладів вищої освіти, а також аналізі нормативно-правових і стратегічних документів. Емпіричну базу сформовано на основі даних, отриманих у трьох державних університетах Палестини. Для опрацювання результатів застосовано статистичні та порівняльні методи аналізу.

Результати дослідження засвідчують, що трансформаційний і партисипативний стилі адміністративного лідерства мають найбільш виражений позитивний вплив на ефективність публічного управління у сфері вищої освіти. Їх застосування пов'язане з підвищенням рівня залученості персоналу до управлінських процесів, формуванням сприятливого організаційного клімату, удосконаленням внутрішніх комунікацій та розвитком інноваційного потенціалу університетів. Водночас транзакційний стиль лідерства демонструє ефективність переважно у забезпеченні адміністративної стабільності та виконанні регламентованих управлінських функцій, маючи обмежене значення в контексті стратегічного розвитку.

Обґрунтовано доцільність упровадження системних програм підготовки та професійного розвитку управлінських кадрів у сфері вищої освіти Палестини, зорієнтованих на формування сучасних лідерських компетентностей. Практична значущість дослідження полягає у можливості використання отриманих результатів для вдосконалення системи публічного управління, формування освітньої політики та підвищення ефективності діяльності закладів вищої освіти.

Keywords: *higher education; organizational effectiveness; Palestine; leadership training; public administration; public governance; administrative leadership styles.*

Ключові слова: *вища освіта; організаційна ефективність; Палестина; підготовка лідерів; публічне адміністрування; публічне управління; стилі адміністративного лідерства.*

Introduction. Higher education is a strategic factor in the socio-economic development of the state, the formation of human capital and ensuring sustainable development of society. For countries with a difficult political and economic situation, in particular Palestine, the higher education system performs not only an educational, but also a social and consolidation function. Public administration in

the field of higher education in Palestine is characterized by a high level of centralization, regulatory overregulation and at the same time a shortage of financial and material resources. In such conditions, the effectiveness of public universities largely depends on the managerial competencies of administrative leaders, their ability to adapt to changes and implement innovative approaches to management.

The relevance of the research topic is due to the need to: increase the effectiveness of public administration in the field of higher education; search for optimal styles of administrative leadership; ensure the sustainable functioning of universities in crisis conditions.

The conceptual principles of administrative leadership in the public administration system have long been at the center of scientific discussions, which has allowed the formation of a wide range of interpretations of leadership in various organizational environments, in particular in the field of higher education. Modern scientific research has significantly expanded the understanding of these approaches, focusing on the issues of financial independence of higher education institutions, digital transformation of the educational process and the development of effective models of online content.

The study [1] substantiates that the expansion of the financial autonomy of universities is considered one of the key mechanisms for strengthening their social responsibility. Within the framework of this approach, a leadership style focused on independence in decision-making, innovation and a high level of accountability dominates. Heads of higher education institutions act as strategists who direct the development of institutions towards long-term socially significant goals, giving preference to a perspective vision over short-term results.

In [2], public administration is defined as a combination of art, craft, and science, reflecting its complex and multidimensional nature. This approach emphasizes the need to integrate practical experience, intuitive understanding of processes, and scientifically sound knowledge. In this context, public administrators appear as universal specialists who are able not only to possess specialized competencies, but also to critically assess situations, identify their strengths and

weaknesses, and conduct a deep and impartial analysis of complex problems. The authors of the study [3] focus on the formation of online content models in higher education, taking into account the needs of preserving the quality of intellectual capital in the conditions of war in Ukraine. The results obtained indicate the dominance of a leadership style characterized by resilience, flexibility, and a creative approach in crisis situations. The desire to maintain educational standards and protect intellectual resources through digital solutions indicates the orientation of managers towards the continuity of the educational process and preserving its quality even under extremely adverse conditions.

The paper [4] emphasizes that the modern higher education system operates in conditions of constant transformations and an increase in the number of challenges, including the globalization of the educational space, increasing diversity of the student contingent, changing expectations regarding the quality of service services, as well as the dynamics of academic and research activities. In this regard, the key role of leadership is emphasized, which is based on interdisciplinary knowledge in the fields of management, personnel management, marketing, educational and leadership studies. It is this integration of knowledge that creates the basis for effective management, the introduction of innovations in student services and the adaptation of higher education institutions to the changing educational environment.

The study [5] states that leadership is a determining factor in directing human potential to achieve the strategic goals of the organization and ensuring the consistency of its internal processes with the requirements of the external environment. The influence of leadership goes beyond individual institutions, significantly affecting the effectiveness of the functioning of organizations and the development of states in general.

In [6], attention is focused on the fact that teaching, like leadership, has a distinctly situational nature. The transformational approach involves adapting leadership styles to teaching styles, taking into account the maturity level of participants in the educational process. It is emphasized that the concept of maturity

in the pedagogical environment is less conflictual and more flexible compared to similar categories in leadership theories.

Problem statement. The effectiveness of public administration in higher education has become a critical issue in the context of increasing socio-economic uncertainty, institutional transformation, and growing demands for accountability and performance in the public sector. Higher education institutions are expected not only to ensure the quality of educational and research activities but also to function as key drivers of social stability, human capital development, and long-term socio-economic progress. These challenges are particularly pronounced in countries facing political instability, limited financial resources, and external constraints.

In Palestine, public higher education institutions operate under conditions of persistent political pressure, restricted autonomy, resource scarcity, and complex regulatory frameworks. Such an environment significantly increases the importance of managerial capacity and leadership quality within public administration structures responsible for higher education governance. Despite the formal presence of administrative mechanisms, the effectiveness of public administration largely depends on the leadership styles adopted by administrative actors and their ability to mobilize human resources, ensure institutional adaptability, and maintain organizational stability.

Existing research in public administration and educational management highlights the importance of leadership as a determinant of organizational effectiveness. However, empirical evidence regarding the specific impact of different administrative leadership styles on the effectiveness of public administration in higher education, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, remains limited. Insufficient attention has been paid to how transformational, transactional, and participatory leadership styles influence managerial decision-making, staff motivation, organizational climate, and the strategic development of public universities.

Against this background, the aim of this article is to examine the impact of administrative leadership styles on improving the effectiveness of public

administration in public higher education institutions in Palestine. The study seeks to identify leadership approaches that contribute to enhancing organizational performance, strengthening institutional resilience, and supporting sustainable development of higher education under conditions of political and socio-economic constraints.

Results of the Study. Leadership in higher education extends beyond a formal managerial function and manifests itself through concrete patterns of decision-making, coordination, and interaction that directly shape institutional performance. The findings indicate that leadership influences the extent to which academic staff are able to contribute to strategic objectives, sustain academic standards, and respond to organizational challenges. Within the higher education sector, leadership affects not only administrative processes but also student learning outcomes, academic culture, and the capacity of universities to fulfill their broader social mission, particularly in contexts characterized by instability and limited resources.

Against this background, the study demonstrates that differences in administrative leadership styles play a decisive role in shaping institutional capacity, ensuring the quality of educational services, and strengthening universities' ability to adapt to dynamic socio-economic and political conditions. Administrative leaders in higher education are not limited to coordinating academic and administrative functions; they actively influence the establishment of equality principles, conflict management practices, partnership development, and the long-term sustainability of institutional goals. In this context, leadership style determines the nature of interaction between administrative bodies, academic staff, and students, as well as the effectiveness of resource allocation and utilization.

The problem of selecting appropriate leadership styles becomes particularly acute for higher education institutions operating in unstable socio-political environments. In the Palestinian context, public universities function under conditions of limited funding, political instability, external constraints, and complex governance structures. The results demonstrate that under such conditions, transformational leadership, – characterized by inspiration, motivation, and the

stimulation of innovative potential, emerges as one of the most effective approaches to managing both personnel and the student community. This style supports institutional resilience and contributes to maintaining strategic orientation despite persistent external pressures.

Alongside transformational leadership, participatory and democratic leadership styles have been shown to exert a substantial positive influence on institutional effectiveness. The involvement of academic staff and students in decision-making processes reduces resistance to organizational change, enhances trust in administrative structures, and ensures collective support for managerial initiatives. These effects are particularly important in contexts where higher education institutions are required to respond rapidly to crisis situations and operate under conditions of heightened uncertainty.

The results further indicate that an organizational culture grounded in trust, cooperation, and mutual support significantly amplifies the positive impact of transformational leadership on institutional outcomes. When combined with adherence to shared cultural norms and values, this leadership style contributes to higher levels of staff motivation, psychological safety, and commitment to institutional objectives, thereby strengthening internal cohesion and long-term performance.

At the same time, the study highlights the relevance of a situational approach to leadership in higher education governance. Effective administrative leaders demonstrate the ability to flexibly integrate different leadership styles depending on contextual conditions and managerial tasks. The combination of transformational and transactional leadership proves particularly effective, as it enables universities to stimulate innovation and development while simultaneously ensuring procedural clarity, regulatory compliance, and administrative stability – factors, that are critically important in environments characterized by resource constraints.

Overall, the findings confirm that administrative leadership styles represent a key factor in ensuring the efficiency, sustainability, and innovative development of higher education institutions. A conscious and evidence-based selection of

leadership approaches enables universities not only to adapt to changing operational conditions but also to preserve a clear strategic trajectory while fulfilling their educational, research, and social missions.

The effectiveness of higher education institutions is largely determined by the degree of alignment between leadership styles and the internal and external conditions of institutional functioning. The study confirms that the choice of administrative leadership style is shaped by a complex set of factors, including organizational culture, socio-political environment, institutional goals, stakeholder characteristics, gender dynamics, and managerial experience. In institutions dominated by hierarchical structures and strong formal authority, transactional leadership oriented toward control and regulation demonstrates higher effectiveness. Conversely, in environments characterized by collegiality and cooperation, transformational and democratic leadership styles contribute more substantially to staff motivation and the quality of managerial decision-making.

Finally, the socio-political context of higher education institutions significantly influences managerial approaches. During periods of political instability, economic constraints, or social tension, administrative leaders are required to combine strategic vision with crisis management capabilities. Under such circumstances, transformational leadership supports morale, reinforces a shared sense of purpose, and enhances organizational adaptability, while participatory governance practices reduce institutional tension and strengthen trust between administration and the academic community.

An important determinant in the selection of an appropriate leadership style is the institutional goals and strategic priorities of the university. The results indicate that institutions oriented toward innovative development, international integration, and enhanced competitiveness tend to prioritize transformational leadership styles that encourage creativity, academic mobility, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Such leadership approaches support strategic renewal and enable universities to strengthen their position within the global higher education space. By contrast, during periods of institutional stabilization or resource optimization, the role of

transactional leadership increases, as it is more closely associated with improving operational efficiency, ensuring compliance with established procedures, and maintaining organizational control.

The findings further demonstrate that stakeholders in higher education – including academic staff, students, governmental bodies, local communities, and donor organizations – exert a substantial influence on the managerial decisions of university leaders. Stakeholder expectations and requirements often necessitate the adoption of inclusive and transparent leadership approaches. Within this context, participatory leadership plays a critical role by facilitating the involvement of diverse groups in decision-making processes, strengthening administrative accountability, and promoting alignment between institutional objectives and broader social needs. Such practices contribute to greater legitimacy of governance decisions and reinforce trust in university management.

Gender dynamics also emerge as an important factor shaping leadership style choices in higher education institutions. The results are consistent with existing research indicating that women in leadership positions are more likely to apply transformational and democratic leadership styles, combining assertiveness with a strong orientation toward collaboration, communication, and team support. In environments where traditional gender stereotypes remain influential, women leaders are often required to adapt their managerial approaches in order to simultaneously assert authority and sustain effective interaction with the academic community. These findings underscore the importance of developing gender-sensitive leadership training and professional development programs within the higher education sector.

Contextual variables, including the level of organizational risk, the hierarchical position of the leader, and the specific nature of managerial tasks, further determine the appropriateness of particular leadership styles. The ability of leaders to recognize the emotional state of staff members, manage conflict constructively, and maintain psychological stability under pressure contributes significantly to sustaining organizational effectiveness, particularly in periods of

crisis or uncertainty. Such competencies enhance institutional resilience and support continuity of core academic and administrative functions.

Managerial experience also exerts a significant influence on leadership effectiveness. The results suggest that leaders with extensive experience in the higher education sector are more inclined to employ situational and hybrid leadership models, enabling them to respond flexibly to changes in both external and internal environments. This adaptive approach is especially relevant for higher education institutions operating under conditions of continuous reform, financial constraints, or profound social transformation.

Overall, the findings confirm that the selection of administrative leadership styles in higher education represents a multifactorial process that requires consideration of organizational, social, cultural, and individual characteristics. The strategic combination of transformational, democratic, and transactional leadership within a situational framework forms a solid foundation for enhancing management efficiency, ensuring institutional stability, and achieving long-term strategic development objectives of higher education institutions.

Conclusion. The study found that administrative leadership styles play a key role in ensuring the effective functioning and sustainable development of higher education institutions. Leadership in educational institutions determines not only the quality of management decisions, but also the level of motivation of teachers and students, organizational culture, and the ability of universities to adapt to changes and respond to external challenges.

It has been proven that transformational leadership is one of the most effective styles in the context of modern higher education, as it contributes to the formation of a common vision of development, stimulates innovation and increases the level of involvement of the academic community. At the same time, democratic and participatory leadership styles ensure the inclusiveness of management processes, contribute to reducing resistance to change and increasing trust between the administration and stakeholders. Transactional leadership, in turn, remains an

important tool for maintaining organizational discipline and the effectiveness of current activities, especially in conditions of limited resources.

It is substantiated that the choice of administrative leadership style in higher education is a multifactorial process, which is influenced by organizational culture, socio-political environment, strategic goals of the institution, expectations of stakeholders, gender dynamics, level of emotional intelligence and managerial experience of managers. The most effective in modern conditions is the situational and hybrid approach to leadership, which involves a combination of different styles depending on the specific circumstances of the functioning of a higher education institution.

The results obtained indicate the feasibility of developing systematic training of managerial personnel in the field of higher education, focused on the formation of leadership competencies, emotional intelligence and change management skills. It is advisable to pay special attention to the implementation of gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches to leadership, which will contribute to increasing the efficiency of management and social responsibility of educational institutions.

Prospects for further research in this area are related to the empirical analysis of the impact of different styles of administrative leadership on the performance of higher education institutions, in particular on the quality of the educational process, academic productivity and the level of satisfaction of participants in the educational environment. It is also advisable to conduct a comparative study of leadership models in higher education in different countries, as well as to study the role of digital and crisis leadership in the context of global transformations of the educational space.

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