



# Leadership and service quality in higher education

## The case of the Technological Educational Institute of Larissa

Panagiotis Trivellas and Dimitra Dargenidou

*School of Business and Finance,*

*Technological Education Institute (TEI) of Larissa, Larissa, Greece*

### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of leadership roles on the quality of services provided in higher education.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Drawing upon a sample of 134 faculty and administration members at the Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Larissa, a structured questionnaire is developed to measure leadership roles and quality in services and internal processes. The competing values model is adopted to operationalise the eight leadership roles.

**Findings** – Results indicate that different leadership roles are linked with different dimensions of higher education service quality. The importance of the innovator and monitor role in explaining the variance of two out of four teaching quality aspects is confirmed, while the broker and facilitator roles are strongly associated with both dimensions of administration quality. The producer, director and coordinator proved to be the most prevalent roles among administration staff, while the director, coordinator and mentor roles dominated among faculty members.

**Research limitations/implications** – The possibility to generalise the results to other countries with different characteristics (e.g. regulatory framework, economic development) needs to be verified, by executing similar research projects.

**Practical implications** – Understanding the nature of the association between leadership and higher education service quality would enable academics and administrators to pursue or cultivate these roles and behaviours fostering both the quality of teaching and administration.

**Originality/value** – The research led to the diagnosis of the leadership role profiles of both administration and faculty members. Findings also highlight the importance of specific leadership roles in explaining the variance of different aspects of higher education service quality.

**Keywords** Leadership, Customer service quality, Higher education, Greece

**Paper type** Research paper



### 1. Introduction

Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) are experiencing pressures from rapid technological change and quality issues have drawn the interest of academics and practitioners. As a result, they have been forced to adopt more competitive ways of recruiting both students and staff.

Recently, in Greece, legislation forced HEIs to the adoption of necessary metrics and processes in order to assure and improve the quality of services provided by HEIs. This national quality assurance system aims at improving transparency, comparability and accountability of the Greek higher education system, fostering quality culture throughout the HEIs. Teaching and administrative staff as well as students are expected to be the main participants and contributors in this process. Evidence from other

countries have shown that the introduction of an evaluation system, quality assurance procedures, and long-range planning leading to cultural change has met the opposition and resistance of the majority of HEIs' stakeholders (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). The success of the quality management systems' change and the necessary transition in quality culture of HEIs depends on the ability of academic leaders to handle crisis and to build a strategy supportive culture with the contribution of all the participants.

This paper addresses these issues examining leadership, quality change and their relationship. In particular, we attempt to provide an insight into the leadership profile of faculty and administration staff, in the case of the Technological Educational Institute of Larissa (TEIL), which is currently involved in the implementation of a quality assurance system. More specifically, the current study aims to:

- diagnose the leadership profile of faculty and administration staff by utilizing a comprehensive and diagnostic framework; and
- investigate the relationship between leadership and higher education service quality.

Following this introductory section, the next section presents definitions and measures of higher education service quality and leadership. This is followed by the research methodology and the description of institute's leadership profile. Afterwards, statistical analysis and findings are presented. At the last section, conclusions and management implications for higher education are drawn.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Service quality

Though several measuring instruments have been developed aiming to capture and explain service quality, SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988, 1994), has proved to be the most popular, as acknowledged even by its critics (Asubonteng *et al.*, 1996). The 22 items of this instrument are categorised into the reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance and empathy service quality dimensions.

Despite the wide application of SERVQUAL, it has also been under extensive criticism, based on topics such as the:

- applicability of the "perceptions minus expectations" model to measure quality; and
- number and type of the instrument's dimensions as well as their generic applicability to all contexts.

Comprehensive descriptions of the debate regarding SERVQUAL and other service quality measurement instruments can be found in the work of several scholars (Asubonteng *et al.*, 1996; Seth *et al.*, 2005).

### 2.2 Service quality in higher education

Despite the debate on quality definitions and different perceptions of quality, which are both inevitable and legitimate, there is some consensus that quality has to be determined by stakeholders (Harvey and Green, 1993; Lindsay, 1994; Tam, 1999). In particular, higher education has a number of stakeholders such as students, their parents and family, academic and administration staff and society, all of whom experience different quality views of the higher education institutions.

However, improvements that would meet only external customers' perceptions, leaving out internal customers would almost certainly provoke a negative reaction among the latter. The fulfilment of all stakeholders' criteria is not inherently incompatible but, given limited resources, it may not be possible to simultaneously accomplish them. For example, in educational organisations, it is difficult to improve appearance and responsiveness, and at the same time the task-based service given to staff (Galloway, 1998).

The majority of the studies in higher education service quality have focused on student's view of quality, while little attention has been paid on the perspective of academic and administration staff. Besides, few researchers have empirically tested measurement instruments of service quality referring to teaching processes as well as administration services. In this study, two frameworks of service quality measurement were synthesised:

- (1) Owlia and Aspinall's (1996) theoretical framework of quality dimensions with an emphasis on teaching aspects of education (academic resources, competence, attitude, content).
- (2) Waugh (2001) model of administrative and supportive services quality (reliability and responsiveness, assurance and empathy).

Owing to the fact that our study is focused on the academic and administration staff, the dimension tangible was renamed to academic resources in the measurement of administration quality, following Owlia and Aspinall's recommendations.

Waugh's (2001) instrument for the quality of administrative and supportive services was based on SERVQUAL, which was revised and adapted for its application in higher education. As a result, it was based on two main aspects:

- (1) reliability and responsiveness; and
- (2) assurance and empathy.

The sub-scales of the instrument we applied for the measurement of higher education service quality, is described in Table I.

Although administrators do not participate in the teaching process, the quality of teaching and administration processes should be evaluated by both academic and administration personnel, as organisational members of the TEIL. The evaluation is based on their perception of quality, which in this survey refers to teaching aspects and administration and supportive services. Many theorists consider administrators and faculty as the internal customers of quality services, so it is important to assess their view. According to Newton (2002), HEIs' members through their own interpretative work actions attach meaning to the various aspects of the quality system as they interact with it. Several scholars argue that "employees not only deliver and create the service, but are actually part of the service in the customers' view" (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Czepiel *et al.*, 1985).

### *2.3 Leadership in higher education*

The study of leadership in colleges and universities is problematic because of the dual control systems, the conflicts between professional and administrative authority, the unclear goals and other special properties of normative, professional organisations. Leadership has to be applied in a variety of different settings including administrative

Quality dimension	Sample items	Number of items
Academic resources	Sufficiency of academic equipment, e.g. laboratories, workshops Ease of access to information sources, e.g. books, journals, networks	5
Competence	Theoretical (relevant) knowledge of academic staff Practical (relevant) knowledge of academic staff Expertise of academic staff in teaching/communication	4
Attitude	Extent to which academic staff understand students' academic needs Degree of academic staff's willingness to help Availability of academic staff for guidance and advice	3
Content	Extent to which students learn communication skills Extent to which students learn team working skills Relevance of curriculum to the future jobs of students	7
Reliability and responsiveness	Administrative contact Confident and dependable administrative advice Early notification of administrative changes	9
Assurance and empathy	Courteous and confidence in contact Personal contact and understanding Contact with caring	8

**Table I.**  
The survey instrument  
of teaching and  
administration quality

and academic departments (Lewis and Smith, 1994). Novak (2002) stated that leadership in the context of higher education may be defined as a personal and professional ethical relationship between those in leadership positions and their subordinate staff, needed in order to appreciate and call forth their full potential.

Besides, academic leaders nowadays face more challenges than ever before since new systems of quality assurance, new rules and regulations and close monitoring are coming enforced. External bodies expect universities to embrace change, restructure and re-engineer themselves accordingly.

Several strategies have been launched in an effort to deal with these mixed expectations. For example, university may be regarded as a service institution, as an adaptive or entrepreneurial one, or as a learning organisation (Tjeldvold, 1997; Clark, 2000; Sporn, 1999; Askling and Kristensen, 2000). Even, if it is possible to identify several differences between these strategies, they do also have some common elements, such as the emphasis on strong institutional leadership (Askling, 2001). "Strong leaders" are those who initiate change processes, identify important objectives to be pursued, and develop strategies to achieve them, though this is not necessarily the best condition of implementing change. However, "strong" leaders actually may have a negative impact on improvement and change processes in higher education. In a study on the impact of national quality evaluations in Norway, results pointed to the fact that some "proactive" leaders with "clear" and pre-defined objectives regarding the outcome of the evaluation process, actually limited motivation and involvement from the academic staff (Stensaker, 1999). In this process, "strong" leadership created

well-written self-evaluation reports but without any collegial discussions and analysis related to the product or to future actions. As a consequence, these strategies resulted in disappointment and alienation among the staff.

In a similar vein, a challenge that university leadership comes to deal with, is the treatment of its internal members, i.e. faculty and administrators and the extent to which they facilitate or resist such change mentioned above. Thomas (1998) advocated that resistance is understandable, since change tightly associated with uncertainty, evokes fear and suspicion in those parties affected by such change. Higher education has a long history of resistance to change under external pressure (Benjamin, 1994). The emphasis on autonomy from external control and manipulation affects the degree to which faculty and administrators view the importance of quality assurance as a path towards institutional effectiveness.

Front-line staffs do not mutely accept policy or the changes associated with it, and are not passive recipients of management actions (Trowler, 1998). The fundamental problem of academic leadership is how to encourage members to discard old ways and outdated values; essentially to “unlearn” and embrace new values (Elwood and Leyden, 2000). Academic leadership is one of the most important factors when initiating and implementing institutional development or change processes. Thus, our study attempts to shed light upon these leadership roles which are associated with quality and therefore suitable and supportive in improving effectiveness in HEIs. Building on the competing values approach for leadership, this study aims to identify the leadership profile of TEIL, and investigate the management roles that are supportive in an imposed quality change.

#### *2.4 Leadership roles*

Competing values model (CVM) is adopted in this study for the operationalisation of the leadership roles construct (Quinn, 1988), as it shares wider acceptance among researchers. CVM has also been utilised as a device for mapping organisations' leadership profiles and conducting comparative analysis (Quinn, 1988; Quinn *et al.*, 2003). It is constituted from two dimensions (flexibility versus control and internal versus external focus), defining four quadrants and eight leadership roles that address distinct demands in the organisational arena (Table II, Figure 1).

Task leadership stresses the criteria of productivity, accomplishment, direction and goal clarity. Two leadership roles are assigned to this quadrant; those are the producer who motives people to take actions and the director who clarifies expectations and establishes objectives. Stability leadership stresses stability, control, documentation and information management. It highlights monitoring and coordinating the work effort. Regarding the two corresponding roles, the monitor ensures compliance, tracks progress and analyses results; the coordinator maintains order, structure and flow of the system. People leadership builds on flexibility and internal focus. Mentoring subordinates and facilitating teamwork are the core activities attached to the two corresponding roles. In particular, the mentor engages in the development of people with care and empathy, while the facilitator fosters collective effort to build trust, cohesion and teamwork. Adaptive leadership stresses innovativeness, entrepreneurship, adaptation and resource acquisition. The broker, who obtains resources for the unit and the innovator who identifies and facilitates adaptation to changes are the two roles assigned to this leadership orientation.

Task leadership	Brief description
Producer	Motivate members Accomplish stated goals Maintain high productivity
Director	Clarify expectations Define problems Establish objectives Generate rules and policies Give instructions
<i>Stability leadership</i>	
Coordinator	Maintain the structure and the flow of the system Coordinate Handle crisis
Monitor	Attend technical and logistical issues Know what is going on the unit See if people comply with rules and regulations See whether the unit meet its quotas/budgets
<i>People leadership</i>	
Facilitator	Foster collective effort Build cohesion and teamwork Manage interpersonal conflict
Mentor	Engage in the development of people with care and empathy Helpful, considerate, sensitive, open, approachable and fair
<i>Adaptive leadership</i>	
Innovator	Pay attention to changes Identify and facilitate adaptation to changes
Broker	Meet people from outside the unit Represent the unit Negotiate and require resources for the unit

**Table II.**  
The competing values  
model approach for  
leadership

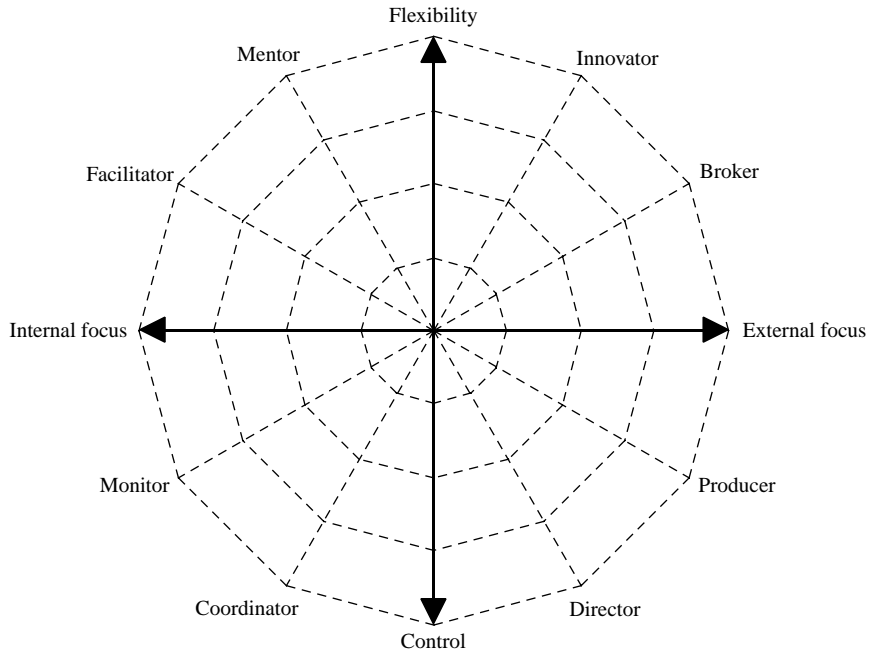
### 3. Research methodology

#### 3.1 Sample and questionnaire design

The field research was focused on faculty and administration members of TEIL. The resulting sample comprised 134 valid questionnaires (response rate about 85 per cent). The research instrument was a structured questionnaire based on a seven-point Likert-type scale, which was developed to measure leadership roles and the delivered quality in services and internal processes. Tapping on the advantages of CVM, leadership roles scale was articulated by items suggested by Quinn (1988). Higher education service quality was operationalised by adopting both the quality dimensions emphasised on teaching aspects proposed by Owlia and Aspinall (1996) and Waugh's (2001) measures of administration quality.

#### 3.2 Leadership profiles of faculty and administration staff

Regarding leadership roles, faculty considered the director (mean = 4.35) and coordinator (mean = 4.33) as the most frequently adopted roles, while administration staff ranked producer (mean = 4.63) and coordinator also, (mean = 4.66) as the dominant ones. The CVM based instrument applied as a diagnostic tool, reveals that this organisation is deficient in roles emphasising innovativeness, creativity, risk



**Figure 1.**  
VM of leadership roles

Source: Adapted from Quinn (1988)

taking, monitoring and networking with external constituencies reflected on the innovator, broker and monitor roles.

Besides, *t*-test analysis was used to assess the statistical significance of the differences between faculty and administration members of TEIL. Results summarised in Table III, indicate that administration staff is more inclined to the producer role, in comparison with academics.

A producer manager is expected to foster a productive working environment, to manage time, to balance competing demands, and to motivate employees in order to increase production and accomplish stated goals. Academics on the other hand are more

	Faculty	Administration	Sig. ( <i>t</i> -test)
<i>Leadership roles</i>			
Innovator	3.82	3.66	ns
Broker	3.76	4.07	ns
Producer	4.03	4.63	<i>p</i> < 0.05
Director	4.35	4.66	ns
Coordinator	4.33	4.47	ns
Monitor	3.91	4.06	ns
Facilitator	4.14	4.13	ns
Mentor	4.33	4.21	ns
Valid <i>n</i>	66	68	

**Table III.**  
Results of paired *t*-test  
analysis among  
leadership roles



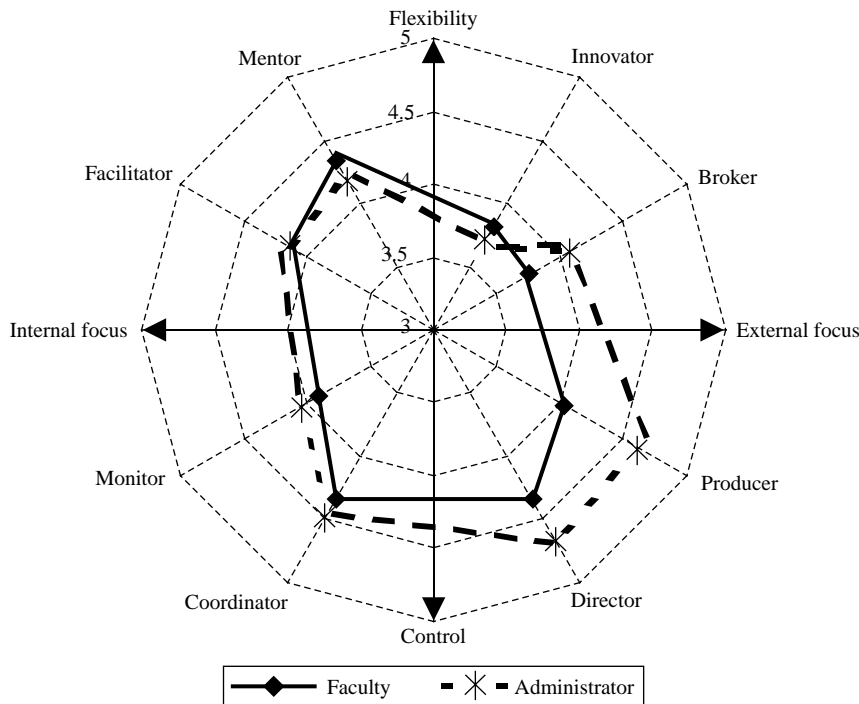
inclined to the director role, characterised by setting objectives, establishing clear expectations, and emphasising goal setting and role clarification. A graphic visualisation of the findings across the emerging leadership profiles is shown in Figure 2.

#### 4. Statistical analysis and results

##### 4.1 Principal component analysis (PCA)

PCA was conducted to identify latent factors within leadership roles. Eight factors were extracted from the data, as it is shown in Table IV (see also the Appendix, Table AI). These principal components accounted for over 94 per cent of the total variation. A cut-off of 0.50 was used for item scale selection and it was adopted a normalised varimax rotation to bring about simple and interpretable structure. Following an inspection of the items' loadings on each factor, eight distinct principal components were identified, corresponding to the eight managerial roles. Preceding PCA, the Bartlett sphericity testing on the degree of correlation between the variables ( $p < 0.001$ ) and the appropriateness of the sample according to Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index ( $KMO > 0.85$ ) verified the appropriateness of the sample (Norusi, 1990).

Inter-item analysis is used to verify leadership roles and higher education service quality scales for internal consistency or reliability. Specifically, Cronbach's coefficient alpha is calculated for each scale, as recommended by Flynn *et al.* (1990), ranging



**Figure 2.** Leadership profiles of faculty and administration members



	Mean	SD	Items	Cronbach alpha	KMO
<i>Leadership roles</i>					0.898
Innovator	3.74	1.627	2	0.923	
Broker	3.92	1.463	2	0.932	
Producer	4.34	1.485	2	0.925	
Director	4.51	1.567	2	0.924	
Coordinator	4.40	1.602	2	0.910	
Monitor	3.99	1.565	2	0.778	
Facilitator	4.13	1.635	2	0.933	
Mentor	4.27	1.801	2	0.965	
<i>Higher education service quality</i>					0.855
Quality of teaching					
Academic resources	4.13	1.302	5	0.833	
Competence	4.28	1.259	4	0.921	
Attitude	4.09	1.403	3	0.934	
Content	4.08	1.261	7	0.955	
<i>Quality of administration</i>					
Reliability and responsiveness	4.28	1.450	9	0.966	
Assurance and empathy	4.38	1.496	8	0.968	

**Table IV.**  
Descriptive statistics  
and internal reliability  
analysis of all scales

**Note:** Valid  $n = 134$

approximately from 0.77 to 0.97 (Table IV). Thus, all sub-scales exhibited well over the minimum acceptable reliability level of 0.7 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

#### 4.2 Multiple regression analysis

Six multiple regression analyses were conducted one for each higher education service quality dimension as dependent variable, testing their relationships with leadership roles. We included age, gender, educational level, tenure, status (administrator or faculty personnel) as control variables.

Results show that the predictor variables have captured a significant proportion of change in the dependent variables, explaining 54.6 per cent of variance in academic resources, 43.8 per cent of variance in quality competence, 36.6 per cent of variance in higher education service attitudes, 43.4 per cent of variance in quality content, 74.0 per cent of variance in reliability and responsiveness and 67.6 per cent of variance in service assurance and empathy.

No serious problems of multi-collinearity exist between the independent variables as variance inflation factors are far below the three points limit suggested in Social Sciences literature. The results of regression analyses (standardised  $\beta$ , adjusted  $R^2$  and significance levels) are exhibited in Table V. Also, the data were examined for outliers, skewness, kurtosis and multivariate normality.

In Model 1, the values of standardised betas reveal that innovator (stand.  $\beta = 0.220$ ) is significantly and positively related to the academic resources' aspect of higher education service quality. In Model 2, innovator (stand.  $\beta = 0.258$ ) and monitor (stand.  $\beta = 0.318$ ) are significantly and positively associated with quality competence. Examining the attitude dimension of higher education service quality (Model 3), monitor (stand.  $\beta = 0.346$ ) and facilitator (stand.  $\beta = 0.542$ ) are related positively to the dependent variable. On the contrary, producer (stand.  $\beta = -0.440$ ) and mentor

Independent variables	Higher education service quality			Quality of administration	
	Academic resources	Quality of teaching	Reliability and responsiveness	Assurance and empathy	
		Competence	Attitude	Content	
<i>Control variables</i>					
Gender	0.048	0.190*	0.011	-0.055	0.074
Faculty	0.073	0.136	-0.001	0.259*	0.117
Education	-0.295**	-0.131	-0.025	-0.201	-0.172*
Age	-0.044	-0.074	0.089	-0.044	0.422***
Experience	0.026	0.034	-0.084	-0.036	-0.250**
<i>Managerial roles</i>					
Innovator	0.220*	0.258*	-0.079	0.192	-0.083
Broker	0.187	0.091	0.142	-0.017	0.265**
Producer	0.100	-0.054	-0.440**	-0.182	-0.083
Director	0.062	0.008	0.308	0.243	0.229*
Coordinator	0.088	0.189	0.032	0.341*	0.330***
Monitor	0.141	0.318**	0.346**	0.108	0.022
Facilitator	-0.090	0.090	0.542***	0.115	0.367***
Mentor	0.065	-0.244	-0.410**	-0.118	-0.139
Adjusted $R^2$	0.546***	0.438***	0.366***	0.434***	0.740***

Notes: Significant at: \* 0.05, \*\* 0.01 and \*\*\* 0.001 levels, respectively;  $n = 134$

**Table V.**  
Results of regression models testing the relationships of leadership roles and higher education service quality

(stand.  $\beta = -0.410$ ) exert strong negative relationships. Considering higher education service quality content (Model 4), only coordinator (stand.  $\beta = 0.341$ ) exerts a strong positive relationship. Regarding reliability and responsiveness (Model 5), broker (stand.  $\beta = 0.265$ ), director (stand.  $\beta = 0.229$ ), coordinator (stand.  $b = 0.330$ ), and facilitator (stand.  $\beta = 0.367$ ) are positively related to the dependent variable. Finally, in a similar vein, broker (stand.  $\beta = 0.268$ ) and facilitator (stand.  $\beta = 0.434$ ) are positively associated with assurance and empathy (Model 6).

Consequently, innovator and monitor were found to be the most powerful predictors of higher education teaching quality, while broker and facilitator are strongly associated with administration quality.

## 5. Discussion

This study aims to investigate first, the leadership profiles of faculty and administration staff of TEIL, and second the relationship among leadership roles and higher education service quality. Findings reveal that faculty recognises the director and the coordinator as the dominant leadership roles in TEIL. Both roles are characterised by a control orientation, so leaders who emphasise these roles may be stability-oriented and conservative in their decision-making styles. The director clarifies expectations, defines problems, establishes objectives, generates roles and policies and provides instructions. On the other hand, the coordinator is expected to maintain order, structure, schedule and smooth flow of the system.

What applies to administrators is that they prefer the producer and coordinator roles. The producer has the same orientation (control) as the director and both belong to the task leadership style reflecting stability, rigidity and conservatism. This role is adopted by leaders who are expected to motivate members in order to increase productivity and accomplish stated goals. The academics' and administrators' opinion converge to the second most adopted role, the coordinator. It belongs to the stability leadership quadrant, which emphasises on the internal functioning of the unit. A leader who adopts this role prefers monitoring and coordinating the work of the unit. The coordinator is expected to maintain the structure and flow of the system, handle crises and attend technical and logistical issues.

Thus, the most adopted leadership roles in TEIL refer to a stability oriented and conservative style. Faculty and administrators' profiles are deficient in roles emphasising innovativeness, creativity, risk taking, monitoring and networking with external constituencies reflected on the innovator, broker and monitor roles. This finding provides supporting evidence for other researchers' arguments that public institutions are characterised by bureaucratic cultures emphasising on order and control and their leaders adopt stability oriented roles (Trivellas and Dargenidou, 2009; Hooijberg and Choi, 2000).

We also investigated the relationship among specific leadership roles and higher education service quality. The importance of the innovator role (adaptive leadership) in explaining the variance of the two out of four teaching quality aspects, namely academic resources and quality competence, was confirmed. More specifically, the innovator and the monitor (stability leadership) roles were found to be the most powerful predictors of higher education teaching quality. The innovator, reflecting adaptation to changes, is more efficient to ensure quality of academic resources, and at the same time to increase the quality of teaching competence taping his teaching

expertise, as well as his theoretical and practical knowledge. The improvement of quality of teaching competence not only requires creative spirit, experimentation, receptiveness to radical new ideas, tolerance to ambiguity and inclination to change but also compliance with rules and regulations as the monitor role prescribes. The monitor also, providing the necessary information and a sense of continuity and stability, fosters quality of teaching attitude which emphasises on the availability of academic staff for guidance and advice.

The broker and facilitator roles were strongly associated with both dimensions of administration quality (reliability and responsiveness, assurance and empathy). These two roles are considered to be flexible in the resolution of problems and supportive in building consensus towards its practical application. Reliability and responsiveness, an administration quality dimension according to Waugh (2001), refers to administrative contact, provision of administrative material, confident and dependable administrative advice, and advanced notice of administrative changes. Accordingly, assurance and empathy concern courteousness and confidence, individual contact and understanding, caring and secure contact. The producer (task leadership) and the mentor roles (people leadership) were found to exert strong negative influence on the teaching quality dimensions attitude. Since attitude refers to understanding of students' academics needs, sometimes in expense of accomplishing the stated goals and schedules, the producer's priorities may be regarded as a drawback. On the contrary, too much openness, intimacy and emotional engagement with students, as it may be happen within the mentor role, is considered as a flaw, since leaders must maintain political balance in human relations to ensure objectivity and fairness in decision making.

The dominant role of both faculty and administration staff profiles, that is the coordinator, is strongly related to quality of teaching content, because it supports the curriculum, so as to deliver communication and teamwork skills to the students. Also, this role offers the foundations of crisis management, and schedule observance, providing confident and dependable administrative advice, reflected at the reliability and responsiveness quality dimension. The later quality aspect of administration quality is also associated with the director, who clarifies expectations, gives instructions and generates rules and policies.

To recapitulate, results indicate that different leadership roles are linked with different dimensions of higher education service quality. Each role exhibits strong relationships with at least one dimension of service quality, which means that effective managers are expected to perform these multiple and disparate leadership roles, although to a different degree. However, these eight leadership roles, sharing CVM premises, are often referred to as paradoxical, in that the roles on the opposite continuum represent conflicting or competing demands in nature.

There is growing evidence to support the view that individual leaders' effectiveness, as well as their organisations, is founded on their cognitive and behavioural complexity; that is, their ability to respond appropriately to a wide range of situations that may in fact require seemingly contradictory and opposing behaviours (Smart, 2003; Denison *et al.*, 1995; Hooijberg, 1996; Hart and Quinn, 1993; Quinn *et al.*, 1992). In particular, Quinn and his colleagues reported that managers who balance competing leadership roles will tend to be more successful than those who display a limited number of roles (Hooijberg, 1996; Hart and Quinn, 1993). Denison *et al.* (1995) concluded that highly effective managers were perceived to exhibit a greater degree of

behavioural complexity than less effective peers whose profile was characterised by an emphasis on fewer leadership roles associated primarily with control, stability and productivity. However, few researchers have determined certain leadership roles which are more vital than others for success (Shamir *et al.*, 1993; Sosik *et al.*, 1997). This study fills this gap in the related literature by matching specific roles to certain quality dimensions. The importance of the innovator and the monitor roles in explaining the variance of two out of four teaching quality aspects was confirmed, while the broker and facilitator roles were strongly associated with both dimensions of administration quality (reliability and responsiveness, assurance and empathy).

Interestingly, enough, it was found no significant differences between academics and faculty perception in relation between leadership roles and quality dimensions except from the quality dimension content which refer to the quality of the courses in the curriculum.

Mosadeghard (2006) advocated that the improvement of higher education service quality lies in the organisation's ability to provide an overall culture for change, through its various decision-making systems and human resource practices. In alignment with this argument, a transformation towards a more flexible structure fostering decentralisation, employee involvement and effective leadership is a prerequisite for institutional adaptation on the road to the implementation of quality assurance systems (Mizikaci, 2003).

The role of leadership in improving service quality and becoming supportive in cultural change is very crucial at this point. Even though there are many alternative forms of management and leadership practices, many theorists support that a leadership style based on human relations is more likely to contribute to higher staff satisfaction, increased group cohesiveness, and improved performance results (Osseo-Asare *et al.*, 2005). Additionally, Tata and Prasad (1998) support that people-oriented, flexible cultures and the associated leadership roles are more conducive to the success of quality management implementation and change compared to the opposing styles. They recognise that practices such as employee involvement and empowerment, teamwork, customer focus and continuous improvement are the reflection of people-centred and flexible cultures.

## 6. Conclusion

Over the last years, the increasing demand for higher quality and effectiveness have led HEIs to employ more fragmented activities, serve more diverse stakeholders and face more challenges than ever before. External pressure for further adaptation and change mould their cultures and leadership styles (Gioia *et al.*, 2000).

In Greece, higher education has launched the implementation of quality assurance systems. This transformation promotes uncertainty and evokes fear and suspicion in those parties affected by such change. Cameron and Quinn (1999) stress that "culture change, at its root, is intimately tied to individual change" and, in the end, culture change depends on the implementation of behaviours by organisational leaders that reinforce and are consistent with new cultural values. Cameron and Ulrich (1986) describe this transformation task as being "to unfreeze the organisation and create enough dissatisfaction with the status quo so that individuals are motivated to change". Argyris (1994) support that any college's ability to change is dependent upon the ability of its members to recognise environmental shifts, adapt common goals

and progress by embracing change. The educational system comprises various classes of stakeholders regarded as internal (faculty and administrative staff) and external (students and industry) customers. The satisfaction of the internal customer would always be a precondition to improve customer orientation and satisfaction of the external customer (Sahney *et al.*, 2008).

Along this line, of inquiry, leadership in higher education should create conditions that are beneficial to quality culture and in which staff can perform to the best of their abilities in a way that is congruent with organisational values (EUA, 2004). This involves good communication, motivation and providing possibilities for staff development but also reducing the administrative workload for academic staff in order to free resources for developing new ideas.

Our results point out that teaching quality is mainly associated with two contradictory roles; those are the innovator and the monitor. Besides, the broker and the facilitator roles are the foundations for the improvement of administration quality, referring to administration contact, reliability, confidence, understanding and caring. Thus, behaviour complexity of leaders should shift to more transformational roles reflected in people oriented and adaptive leadership rather than the stability oriented styles currently realised in higher education.

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(The Appendix follows overleaf.)

	Mentor	Producer	Broker	Innovator	Coordinator	Monitor	Director	Facilitator
Item 1	–	–	–	0.787	–	–	–	–
Item 2	–	–	–	0.796	–	–	–	–
Item 3	–	–	0.871	–	–	–	–	–
Item 4	–	–	0.864	–	–	–	–	–
Item 5	–	0.808	–	–	–	–	–	–
Item 6	–	0.763	–	–	–	–	–	–
Item 7	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.200	–
Item 8	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.753	–
Item 9	–	–	–	–	0.726	–	–	–
Item 10	–	–	–	–	0.546	–	–	–
Item 11	–	–	–	–	–	0.524	–	–
Item 12	–	–	–	–	–	0.814	–	–
Item 13	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.580
Item 14	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.562
Item 15	0.849	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Item 16	0.885	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Eigenvalues	3.683	3.311	2.248	1.993	1.291	1.182	0.886	0.525
Percent of total variation	23.02	20.70	14.05	12.46	8.07	7.39	5.54	3.28
Cumulative percent of total variation	23.02	43.72	57.77	70.22	78.30	85.68	91.22	94.50

**Table AI.**  
Principal component analysis of leadership roles scale

**Notes:** Rotation: varimax with Kaiser normalisation; all loadings less than 0.5 suppressed

#### About the authors

Panagiotis Trivellas is an Associate Professor of Management in the Technological Education Institute of Larissa, Greece. He holds a PhD degree in Management Patterns and Styles from National Technical University of Athens. He has published a number of articles and he was co-author in one book. His core research interests focus on the areas of organisational behaviour, human resource management, TQM, strategic management and leadership. Panagiotis Trivellas is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: ptriv@tee.gr

Dimitra Dargenidou is a Researcher at the Department of Accountancy in the Technological Education Institute of Larissa, Greece. She holds a Master degree in Business Administration from Staffordshire University, UK. Her research interests include service quality and leadership in higher education. She holds an administrative post in the Organisation of Teacher Training (O.EP.EK).

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