Lebanese cherishing a transformational educational leader

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to find out if the characteristics, traits and leadership style of an effective university leader in Lebanon match those of a transformational one. Moreover, it is intended to shed light on the possible transferability of the transformational leadership's success to the Middle-Eastern society where norms and values differ significantly from the North-American context where research extensively supported its positive effect.

Design/methodology/approach – Qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews conducted with eight faculty and two staff members chosen based on the purposiveness sampling technique. The researcher tape-recorded the interviews, then transcribed and coded the data before analyzing it.

Findings – Results revealed that the director demonstrated to a great extent all the characteristics that define a transformational leader, except when it comes to nepotism and to the lower level employees who are not usually invited to share in the decision-making process. He was able to successfully challenge the process, inspire and motivate all the campus's employees. However, in order to generalize and conclude that the whole Lebanese higher educational setting encompasses and cherishes the transformational leadership style, additional research is to be undertaken.

Originality/value – Although Lebanon has long been a pioneer in the education field in the Middle-East, however, not enough studies are found on the various leadership styles exhibited by Lebanese university leaders, and here lies this research's value.

Keywords Transformational leadership, Empowerment, Decision making, Recognition,
Climate and collegiality, Lebanese culture

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Global trends in educational management involve the creation of effective schools. In competitive market-oriented societies, schools, like all organizations, are being forced to produce results through systems of continuous improvement and effective management (Everard and Morris, 1996). Within effective schools, there is a need for productive staff and progressive leadership. McGaw *et al.* (1991, p. 2) suggest that "[a]n effective school is one that achieves greater student learning than might have been predicted from the context in which it works."

Over the last 30 years a great deal of research has studied the direct effects of leadership on work outcomes such as job performance, creativity and organizational citizenship behavior (Zhu *et al.*, 2013). During this era, the focus of leadership research has moved from transactional (i.e. where the leaders provide rewards in return for the followers performance) to transformational (i.e. where the leaders motivate their followers to perform beyond expectations) models of leadership (Pillai, 2013).

Transformational leadership is a transition from the older views of leader-centered theory to the newer views of process-centered theory (Nusair *et al.*, 2012).

Lebanon has positioned itself strongly in the educational field in the Middle-East. However, its market lacks research on the various leadership styles exhibited by university leaders. Thus, the following study aims to pinpoint the characteristics of an effective leader of a university campus in Lebanon. The data collected and analyzed will show how a successful leader operates and how his/her followers perceive him/her. It offers a comprehensive overview of the skills that an effective leader cherishes, a leader who could be considered as transformational. Moreover, it sheds light on the possible transferability of transformational leadership to the Middle-Eastern society where norms and values differ significantly from the North-American context where research extensively supported the positive effect of transformational leadership.

With these objectives in mind, the researcher chose one branch of a leading Lebanese university, adopting the American system, to conduct the study in. What triggered this selection is the radical change that this branch witnessed upon the appointment of a new director, referred to in this paper as Mr Leader, "Mr L." Thus the purpose of this research is to find out if the characteristics, traits and leadership style of an effective university leader in Lebanon match those of a transformational one.

Literature review

Changes to the culture of work, such as the processes of decision making, communication, recognition, professionalism, teamwork and personal regard are currently transforming the structure of the school system. They have given rise to new relationships within school organizations, particularly new models of leadership. These changes reflect a wider and more comprehensive set of values shaping social reality in recent decades and require a different approach to creating educational excellence. New and increasing demands are being placed on educational administrators in that they need to develop new ways of thinking and new strategies (McGaw *et al.*, 1992). New administration, management and leadership skills are also needed (D'Orsa and D'Orsa, 1997). Problems brought about by structural and cultural change are complex and value-laden given the increasing participation of a variety of stakeholders in the educational decision-making process. To note, that the term "school" is used extensively in the literature review section, while the term "university" is more read in the data analysis section. Although these two terms might be used interchangeably in a US context, they denote different meanings in other countries. The researcher here is interested in the leadership skills exhibited by a leader in any educational setting, whether school, college or university; consequently she paid no attention to the word selection. However, the move later was to the term "university," as this was her case study and in Lebanon a university is different from a school. This is also true for "teachers" who are referred to "faculty members" in a university.

Nowadays the shift is from "school management" to "school leadership." This migration has been considered a decisive factor in safeguarding any reform activities and its success (Ofsted, 2000). Through management, principals facilitate the school's work by ensuring that what is done is in accord with the organization's rules and regulations. While through leadership, principals ensure that the work of the organization is what it needs to be. A good leader is crucial in creating a vision for the school and encouraging an organizational culture conducive to reflection, criticism, negotiation and compromise (Duignan, 1987). According to Schon (1983, p. 165), "successful educational leaders become agents of organizational learning." Good leaders also build effective networks and mold the normal interactions of daily school

life into dynamic yet focussed outcomes. Therefore, good leadership is vital for two crucial reasons. The first is to implement effective school-level control and vision as well as to enhance teachers' motivation. Second, to ensure that the participants in the planning process (such as teachers, parents and community) are properly informed, do not exert undue influence, have an opportunity to provide feedback and are involved in monitoring and reviewing outcomes.

Research had demonstrated the connection between the quality of leadership and school effectiveness (Mortimore *et al.*, 2000 cited in Bush and Jackson, 2002). Moreover the school improvement literature makes similar links between the leadership of the principal, teachers' motivation and the quality of teaching and learning (Day *et al.*, 2000). In order for the contemporary school organization to provide effective, quality education for the technological and industrial society, educational administrators will need to develop leadership skills to mobilize and motivate people, and to manage physical resources in a dynamic and positive environment. Crowther and Caldwell (1992) argue that leaders need to be creative, innovative, motivated and confident. Moreover, Hallinger (2003) argues that for the long journey of school improvement, school leaders have to develop and expand their leadership repertoires; because this journey offers a context for the development of new understandings about both leadership and school development. For instance, teachers will be given the opportunity to study, to learn about, to share and to enact leadership (p. 340).

The principal's or the director's role in an effective school is to reflect on the changes occurring in the wider society as well as in the school, and to turn these changes into challenges and creative opportunities. Barth (2002, p. 6, cited in Hallinger, 2003, pp. 346-347) highlights the principal's impact on the school's culture; he said that the principal "can provide forms of leadership that invite others to join as observers of the old and architects of the new. The effect must be to transform what we did last September into what we would like to do next September".

Busher (1998) states that the culture is highlighted by the practices occurring inside an organization, such as, the extent to which people trust each other and are ready to talk about their differences, as well as the degree to which they are given the possibility to share in the decision making. Also it is manifested in the readiness of senior staff to support and give from their time, staff and students, as well as in "the language used in talking about particular events or people and the stories that are told to illustrate success or failure" (p. 25). While Samier (1997) suggest that the school culture is depicted by the informal dimensions of organization life, Busher (1992 cited in Busher, 1998) refutes this by arguing that culture is embedded by each behavior of every person inside it whether this behavior is formal or informal.

Hallinger and Heck (1998) argue that "organizational culture" is one of the school conditions through which leadership may exercise its influence; and it stresses the importance of developing shared meanings, values, norms, beliefs and assumptions that shape members' decisions and actions. The contribution of culture to school effectiveness depends on the content of these norms and values (e.g. student centered), and on the extent to which they are shared and stress collaborative work. This shares meanings with the "learning environment" described by Reynolds *et al.* (1996) and the "consensus and cooperative planning" described by Scheerens (1997).

Gerstner and Day (1994, p. 123, cited in Hallinger and Heck, 2003, p. 228) argue that "[b]ecause leadership is a cultural phenomenon, inextricably linked to the values and customs of a group of people, we do not expect differences in leadership prototypes to be completely random. Rather they should be linked to dimensions of national culture".

Thus, the school's culture as well as the principal's leadership style are affected by the national and local socio-political contexts in which the school operates (Earley, 1998 cited in Busher and Harris, 1999).

For instance, nepotism, which is the favoring of family or friends over those who are more qualified for a task, is part of the Lebanese culture and history. Therefore, it is not possible to eliminate it (Hobeika, 2013) and it deems necessary to highlight it in a paper discussing leadership. According to Hobeika, Lebanese society has been based on these types of practices since the Turkish occupation and French mandate until now. He explained, "Lebanon has not been able to set up a healthy economy. This is why having personal contacts is important for one to be able to get a job." The authoritarian Arabic regimes depend on informal personal networks with influential social groups. The ruler acts as a patron who provides privileges to his clientele in exchange for loyalty and support. Furthermore, the structure of Arab societies focusses on tribal and extended family ties where cooperation and help are essential to maintain a good relation for all parties. This is deeply rooted in these societies' norms and values; it became a habit and people will keep using it as long as others are doing the same (Barnett *et al.*, 2013).

In the culture's relationship with structures, Bennett (2001) argues that "just as structures generate the degree of freedom or constraint of individuals, so cultures shape how they act within those freedoms or constraints [...] They shape what is seen as legitimate action in a given setting" (p. 109). While structures and cultures are both established by legal activities and are subject to change, structures create formal and publicly admitted rules; whereas, cultures create informal and mainly unspoken rules.

Economic power resource is legitimated by structures, thus it can be used overtly and directly, whereas cultures legitimate the normative and much of the knowledge power resources since these forms of power originate from the individual him/herself, rather them from the office assigned by the structures. Bennett (2001) argues that effectiveness researches are obliged "to look beyond issues of structure into questions of organizational culture and how they interpenetrate with structures. The power dimension provides a vehicle through which this can be attempted" (p. 119); whereas, improvement researches are concerned with both cultural and structural issues. Heterogeneity among members inside an organization and the associated conflict that may arise are to be acknowledged and viewed as a normal process through which dissimilarities can be expressed and resolved openly (Stoll and Myers, 1998).

Power has been traditionally viewed as domination through formal authority flowing down from the top of the chart. However, facilitative power is based on mutuality and understanding and it flows in multiple direction. While the hierarchy remains intact, facilitative leaders use their power to support professional give-and-take. This power is a power through, not a power over. Lashway (1995) argue that it is best suited for schools where teaching needs autonomy direction, not standardized formulas. Since schools cannot be updated by simple prescriptions, researchers began looking for more sophisticated conceptions of leadership, they have greatly directed their attention to "transformational" or "facilitative" models of leadership that stress collaboration and empowerment (Lashway, 1995).

Transformational leadership has its roots stemming from the writings of Weber (1963) on charismatic leadership and Downton (1973) on rebel leadership. Many scholars have extensively addressed the topic in their works (Burns, 1978; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bass, 1985; Howell and Avolio, 1993).

A transformational leader is a leader who inspires followers to go beyond their own self-interests and let them work for the good of the organization. This can be explained by

the following attributes that characterize a transformational leader (Bass, 1990). First is the charisma that enables him/her to gain respect and trust, to create a vision and articulate a mission that must stir the imagination and feed the soul. Transformational leadership goes beyond charisma, in that, under the later, followers are to assume the charismatic's world view and go no further, whereas transformational leaders invite the followers to question not only established views but also those of the leader (Avolio and Bass, 1985). Second is the inspiration shown in the leader's ability to communicate with the followers high expectations, to simplify the ways they have to undertake and put their efforts in, in order to attain organizational targets. Third is the intellectual stimulation where the leader promotes intelligence and liberates energies that have been imprisoned by outdated procedures and habits of thought (Gardner, 1990). The leader helps followers examine the situation in a rational way. He/she is willing and able to show followers new ways in finding solutions as well as encouraging them to be creative in suggesting other alternatives in solving problems (Bass, 1990). The final characteristic is individualized consideration where the leader coaches and advises each individual separately by paying attention to this individual's needs and helping him/her to achieve personal growth. In transformational leadership, the quality of personal interactions is one of the many factors determining the success in collaboratively achieving the organization's mission.

The conceptual model of transformational leadership that had originated in studies of political and corporate leadership, seemed to be better suited to the needs of schools as they evolved in the era of restructuring (Gunter, 2001). Leithwood (1994) and Leithwood *et al.* (1999) described a model of transformational leadership in schools. This model was originally based on six dimensions: building school vision and goals; providing intellectual stimulation; offering individualized support; symbolizing professional practices and values; demonstrating high performance expectations; and developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. Then, four new dimensions were added to this model in order to reflect the transactional practices; which are undermined in most transformational leadership models. They are managerial in nature and essential to organizational stability. These new dimensions are: staffing, instructional support, monitoring school activity and community focus (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2003).

This model seeks to influence people by building from the bottom-up (understanding the needs of individual staff) rather than from the top-down (coordinating and controlling). Moreover, it assumes that leadership is shared between principal and teachers (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000). Under such a model, the principal's efforts are viewed in the school conditions that produce changes in people rather than in promoting specific instructional practices (Bottery, 2001). Those principals spend considerable time developing human resources, support teachers, provide recognition, know the school's problems and seek new ideas. Day *et al.* (2001) and Fullan (2002) found that transformational leadership has an impact on teachers' perceptions of school conditions, their commitment to change, the organizational learning that takes place; as well as on their perceptions of enhanced student outcomes.

Originally, transformational leadership was viewed as a personal quality that inspires others to look beyond their self-interest and focus on organizational goals; but with time, the concept has evolved and it is often considered now as a broad strategy that has been described as facilitative (Lashway, 1995). Facilitative leadership is defined by Conley and Goldman (1994 cited in Lashway, 1995, p. 2) as "the behaviors that enhance collective ability of a school to adapt, solve problems, and improve performance." This definition is followed by the key strategies a facilitative leader uses, and they are: overcoming resource constraints; building teams; providing feedback,

coordination, and conflict management; creating communication networks; practicing collaborative politics; and modeling the school's vision (Lashway, 1995, p. 2).

In practicing collaborative politics and inviting participants to share in the decision making, the principal might be exercising a collaborative leadership, but not all collaborative leadership is transformational (Busher, 1998). Busher and Saran (1995), defined two extremes for collaborative leadership, one is the corporate style, two is the co-operative one; while Hargreaves (1994) contrasted the first opposite which is contrived collegiality to the second which is real collegiality. Under the first extreme, the leader consults with the teachers but the decision-making power remains in his or her hands. However, the second predicts a major entrustment of power, within an agreed framework of decision making, to those responsible for enacting practice; this is what Telford (1996 cited in Busher, 1998) refers to as collaborative leadership.

The leadership in an educational setting in which sustained improvement has been achieved and maintained, is characterized by patterns that are more collaborative, interactive and dynamic. Jackson (2000) and Fullan (2002) argue that school improvement is a journey and that different types of leadership are suitable at different stages of this journey. While moving on, to the desired direction, teachers' commitment needs to be supported by a strong transformational leader who emphasizes an empowerment strategy and focusses on stimulating change through bottom-up participation (Day *et al.*, 2001; Jackson, 2000).

However, since norms, custom and values differ significantly among different cultures, it is expected that leadership would be manifested differently across cultures. Studies in leadership and cultural diversity have suggested the need for cultural support of leadership theories. While research extensively supported the positive effect of transformational leadership in the North-American context, very little is known about its impact in many other cultures, especially the Middle Eastern.

Many studies, whether inside or outside the USA, supported the relationship between leader behavior and employees' commitment to the organization, which contribute to the growing body of literature on leadership practices and organizational commitment, and strengthens the existing knowledge on the effectiveness of US-based leadership practices in other countries. Jörg Felfe *et al.* (2004) found that, although some limitations have to be considered, the concept of transformational leadership is a successful one in Germany. Moreover, Kalu (2010) showed that transformational leadership was applicable in Nigeria, and had strong positive relationship with such outcomes as employee job satisfaction, extra effort and effectiveness. Whereas, a weak and insignificant relationship was observed between transactional leadership and employee job satisfaction.

However, Hsieh (2004) found that the influence of both transformational and transactional leadership on organizational commitment in Taiwan is positive. This finding supported the hypotheses regarding the impact of transformational leadership but did not back up the hypotheses supporting the expected negative transactional leadership's effect. Dorfman and Mittal (2012) found that the servant leadership dimensions of egalitarianism and empowering were supported more strongly in Nordic/European cultures but to a lower extent in Asian and similar cultures. Whereas, the dimensions of empathy and humility were more strongly endorsed in Asian cultures than European ones. Further, significant relationships were found between several societal cultural values and aspects of servant leadership which explains why nations differ in endorsing this leadership construct. Tuulik and Alas (2009) revealed that Estonia, as opposed to other East European countries, is somehow similar to other European countries when considering team orientation. They revealed that Estonians

expect their leaders to be charismatic, value based, team oriented and participative; and not, humane, self-protective and autonomous as these styles are considered to inhibit outstanding leadership.

In addition to the original dimensions found in the literature, four categories of transformational leadership emerged in the study conducted by Karakitapoğlu-Aygün and Gumusluoglu (2013) in Turkey: benevolent paternalism, implementation of the vision, employee participation and teamwork, and proactive behavior. Benevolent paternalism was found to be the most frequently mentioned aspect of transformational leadership in the Turkish context, which implies that cultural context may directly impact the way transformational leadership is presented. Arnold (2004) found that feedback is a central feature of leadership success among black leaders since contingent reinforcing behavior correlates with effectiveness outcomes at levels similar to transformational attributes. When it comes to the Lebanese context, Akkary (2014) argued that although many role similarities are found, principals in Lebanon, in contrast to their western counterparts, give limited attention to the instructional dimension of the role, assume limited responsibilities as the mediator for school improvement, adopt an authoritarian orientation in enacting the role and hold a highly idiosyncratic "craft" conception of the work of the principal. This was attributed to the differences in the socio-political and cultural dimensions. Within the same context, Mattar (2012) found that Lebanese public schools' principals assume climate-related functions more than the technological ones under the instructional leadership style. However, both sets of functions are significantly performed better by the principals in the high-achieving schools in comparison to their colleagues in the low-achieving ones (Mattar, 2012). The technological functions deal particularly with the teaching and learning process, setting goals, coordinating the curriculum, supervising instruction, evaluating teachers' achievement and controlling student progress. Whereas under the climate-related functions, the principal assumes activities to create in the school, an environment motivating to learning, by protecting instructional time, minimizing the number of non-instructional interruptions that teachers experience in their classrooms, promoting personal and professional development, providing positive support, stressing on the academic standards and maintaining high visibility.

Context of the study

According to the official website of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, there is one public university, 32 private universities, seven university institutes, and three university institutes for theological studies in Lebanon. The university under investigation is one of the universities that adopt the American system; it has proved to be one of the top universities in Lebanon. It has been working over the past few years on getting accreditation from a credible American association. This step is pushed forward substantially and has pushed the university to further improve. In addition to the different faculties which are seeking individual accreditation, such as the Faculty of Engineering with the ABBET, the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics with the AACSB, and others.

Concerning work organization, the university president serves a three-year term that could be renewed. This is also true for a regional campus director (RCD). Since this study is conducted in one of the regional campuses, the researcher will stress from now on the regional campus. The RCD is responsible for managing all issues related to the campus while preserving all the university's internal bylaws, rules and regulations. The main difference between the regional campuses and the main campus, is that some

paper work, such as final diplomas, transcripts, petitions, could not be processed locally at the regional campus but must be sent to the main campus for approval and legalization. Moreover, at the regional campus, the faculty coordinators are managing the daily academic operations, each of his/her faculty. They are in charge of preparing the course offerings, assuring the same quality of education as that of the main campus through peer observation, screening for and hiring highly qualified instructors as well as controlling their performance and assuring that the same course syllabus is being applied. They must report back to the RCD as well as to the faculty's chairpersons and dean at the main campus.

Although the university's main campus excelled and became one of the excellent Lebanese universities, the operations of the regional campus were not really promising. However, this has been changed upon the appointment of Mr L as the RCD. To note that the number of students enrolled at the regional campus under investigation increased gradually from 341 students in Fall 2008, the time Mr L started fulfilling his duties as a director, to around 800 students in Fall 2014. In terms of quality, very few recent examples that occurred during the academic year 2013-2014, will clarify the case:

- Royal Forex Trading organized a trading competition (stocks, commodities, Forex) for finance/financial engineering students. Participants were senior finance/financial engineering students from the university's main campus (55 students) and the regional campus under study (13 students). Students were competing using Meta-Trader 4 platform. The first place came for a student from the regional campus!

- During the graduation ceremony, out the 1,000 graduating students, the first places in the faculty of engineering and the faculty of natural and applied sciences, came for students enrolled at the regional campus!

- One of the architecture students in the regional campus won the first prize in the annual national competition held by the orders of engineers.

Since almost all the faculty members and staff were the same at the time the numbers began to increase, the researchers searched for the factors that could have led to this increase and to the quality improvement. Furthermore, the number of students kept rising even with the increase in the number of universities in the surrounding area, and which became around 16. These universities are at most ten minutes driving time away from each others. Thus, the competition is really tough. Especially that when it comes to tuition fees, the university under investigation has the highest price per credit in comparison to the other nearby universities. This is why the researcher decided to study the director's leadership style and find out the factors that have allowed Mr L to find the ways to attract students to enroll at this campus instead of any other university, while securing an outstanding level of higher education and a positive climate.

Research methodology
The researcher adopted the qualitative interpretive approach using the purposiveness sampling technique to collect primary data and answer the following research questions:

RQ1. Does an effective Lebanese leader in higher education assume the transformational aspects of leadership?

RQ2. Are these characteristics dependent on the Lebanese context and its cultural components?

The researcher collected the data through face-to-face semi-structured interviews held with two staff members and eight faculty members in this branch.

Silverman (1993) argues that interviews in qualitative research are useful for collecting facts, finding out feelings and motives, and looking for causes and explanations. In order to achieve these objectives, the interview has to be open ended or semi structured in such a way to let interviewees declare their own ways of defining the world, and to enable them to raise issues and matters that might not have been thought by the researcher while preparing his/her predevised schedule (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

A semi-structured interview, "where topics and open-ended questions are written but the exact sequence and wording does not have to be followed with each respondent," was employed in this study (Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 278). Thus, prompts and probes have been taken into consideration (Morrison, 1993 cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

After gaining the willingness of the interviewees to participate, the researcher decided on the method of recording. There is no substitute for a full tape recording of an interview (Powney and Watts, 1987) as it encourages those being observed to give their "best" performance. Using a tape recorder allows the interviewer to maintain eye contact during the interviews, and not to miss facial expressions and other non-verbal cues.

The seven stages of an interview investigation that are discussed by Kvale (1996) had been followed in this research. These stages are: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying and reporting. The first stage is thematizing, where the purpose of the investigation was formulated by translating the general goals of the research into more specific objectives. The second stage is designing; where the research objectives were translated into the questions making up the interview (see the Appendix). The formulation of the questions depended on the variables the researcher was trying to measure and study. Tuckman (1972 cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 276) identifies four question formats: direct or indirect and general or specific. He suggests that "specific questions, like direct ones, may cause a respondent to become cautious or guarded and give less -than-honest answers. Non-specific questions may lead circuitously to the desired information but with less alarm by respondents." Thus, the researcher made sure that easier and less threatening, non-controversial questions are addressed earlier in the interview in order to let the interviewees feel at ease. Consequently, the movement was from the general to the more specific questions. For example, questions about the progress of the campus preceded those questions seeking the interviewee's attitude toward his or her director's leadership style. The last question in the interview schedule is: "which aspect(s) do you dislike the most in your Director's leadership style?"

While interviewing the participants, the third stage, it was necessary to think of an interview as a social, interpersonal encounter, not only a data collection device. Consequently, the interviewer had built up the appropriate atmosphere, inviting the interviewee to feel free and secure in talking what he/she is thinking of (Kvale, 1996). Then, the interviewer explained the purpose of the interview, and took the respondent's assent for tape recording the responses (Tuckman, 1972 cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Moreover, confidentiality was guaranteed.

Kvale (1996) argues that most of the power is in the hands of the interviewer. Thus, the interviewer here was responsible for taking due care of the dynamics of the situation by keeping the interview moving forward, motivating the interviewee to declare all his/her thoughts and providing him/her with an encouraging feedback. She had made use of all her senses in order to interpret the answers in the course of the interview.

The interviews were transcribed while preserving the anonymity of the respondents. The data were reduced and then categorized in order to group the similar information from all the different sources under one category (Kvale, 1996). Then the information within each category was compared and contrasted until one conclusion was formulated regarding that category and progressively being able to answer the research questions at hand. Throughout the transcribing, coding and analysis processes, the researcher thrived to transfer the interviewees' own personal opinion about the leader without being subjective or trying to alter any of the results. Each interviewee is referred to with "P" next to it 1, 2, 3, etc. referring to participant no. 1 (P1), Participant no. 2 (P2), etc. (Cohen *et al.*, 2000).

The researcher was unable to triangulate the results due to a lack of previous Lebanese studies in this specific field and to the inability to obtain relevant quantitative data, specifically from students. It would be difficult to find students who were present at the university before and after Mr L was appointed as the branch director. Moreover, asking only current students will not serve the purpose of this research, as they did not experience the management of previous directors, thus unable to draw conclusions about the changes that occurred.

The ten interviewees were purposively chosen. Each one of them has been a full-time employee at this branch for over eight years, and is an active member in all the educational and social events that are held at the campus. Their time at the university has allowed them to have ample contact with Mr L and witness many situations that this Director played a role in managing and handling. It is worth noting that the case is built on the fact that it is the feeling of the faculty and staff members that is one of the most important aspects of transformational leadership.

Data presentation and analysis

In this section, the qualitative data collected from the interviews is presented and analyzed, in order to find out if the director under investigation is a real transformational leader and consequently assessing the possibility of judging that the Lebanese culture cherishes transformational leadership.

All the interviewees pointed out to the regional campus's progress throughout the years even though the political unrest in the area was not really encouraging students to attend local universities. Some spoke about internal factors such as enhancing the academic program, a better relation with the main campus, providing transportation to students, equipping the laboratories and renovating the offices. However, all the interviewees stated that Mr L, is the major reason behind this campus's success. P1 concentrated on his ability to make quick and wise decisions. She argued, "many directors came before Mr L with the same faculty and staff members, yet they were unable to achieve the success that he achieved." P1 and P2 stated that he motivated and asked the faculty coordinators to perform peer observations in classrooms in order to assess instructors' performance and make decisions in coordination with him about hiring more qualified instructors. Moreover, three of the interviewees spoke about the fact that Mr L's leadership impressed the accreditation committee that visited the university. P1 mentioned that the committee's members called him "Mr Popular." P2 said that Mr L took the initiative to open new majors at the branch. P4 said: "our Director takes the right decision at the right time." P6 stressed on Mr L's ability to foster the university's goodwill in the area. As many leadership theories define a leader as a person who is able to influence others, it is obvious after analyzing the interviews that all the employees are not only influenced by Mr L, but they admire him greatly. They esteem his charisma.

It seems that Mr L is a charismatic leader who showed high confidence in his ability, set a vision to improve the status quo, was able to translate this idealized goal in understandable and achievable terms and showed strong commitment all the way in achieving it. Thus, his behavior is believed to be extraordinary as he was ready to make radical changes, while being highly sensitive to the environment, its constraints and its resources (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

However, if the leader lacks other needed skills, his/her charisma alone will not be sufficient to manage the organization effectively. The way the leader uses charisma to better interact with his/her followers based on the situation at hand is what makes him/her effective and successful. Sergiovanni (1999 cited in Muijs and Harris, 2003) argues that while the quality of teaching most strongly influences the levels of students' motivation and performance, the teachers' motivation and the teaching quality are much dependent on the quality of leadership. Thus leadership is indirectly related to students' outcomes; it influences the way teachers organize and conduct their instruction, their educational interactions with students, and the challenges and expectations teachers place on their pupils (Mulford and Silins, 2003). From this point the researcher moves further to analyze the answers to the questions related to identifying the leadership skills and traits that Mr L exhibited.

The following section will be presented according to the five transformational leadership aspects of the leadership practices inventory (LPI), as created by Kouzes and Posner (1987) and which are: challenge the process (CP); inspire a shared vision (ISV); enable others to act (EOA); model the way (MW); and encourage the hearth (EH) (cited in Ergeneli *et al.*, 2007). However, sixth section describes the non-transformational leadership aspects revealed. To note that the Kouzes and Posner's (1993) conceptual framework is followed here as it grew out of data collected from managers and individual contributors across a wide variety of public and private sector companies around the world; and not concentrating only on great leaders in history (e.g. senior US Army officers) as Bass (1997) had done earlier.

CP
"Leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. They accept challenge, which might be in the form of an innovative new product, a cutting-edge service, and the establishment of a new business."

Interviewees highlighted the bald decisions Mr L has made related to academics such as integrating new majors, equipping new labs, building the walkway, buying buses to transport students, and signing contracts with nearby dorms to attract students from remote regions, and last but not least, starting the construction of four new buildings to expand the campus. P8's happiness was revealed in his statement: "Seven years ago, we were in a position to cease operations in this campus, today we are investing in more and more buildings, theatre, advanced engineering and sciences laboratories, restaurants, trading room, etc., isn't it a dream!" P1 put it in another way: "I had the tears in my eyes when I saw the excavating trucks and equipments installed in the site to start operations." P3 told the researcher about the walkway photo uploaded by an alumna on her Facebook account, when she found out by chance that it is finally done, although she and her friends did many strikes before, asking for this! Kouzes and Posner (1987), argued that leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. Mr L was ready to accept the challenge of offering new majors not previously taught at this campus and most of the times, he was opposed by the deans of the concerned faculties; as revealed by P1.

Although these practices might be considered transactional and undermined in most transformational leadership models (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2003); here, they are pure transformational as they transformed the already existing status quo.

Moreover, what seem to be a real challenge were the positive and motivating climate created at the campus as well as the smoother communication process built.

Campus climate. The social interactions among school members, between teachers and principal as well as between teachers themselves, promote the successful implementation of any change leading to an effective school improvement (Sergiovanni, 1995). The university director is responsible for creating a positive climate for faculty members that stimulates and supports professional growth which will in turn enhance and foster student achievement.

According to the interviewees, Mr L excelled in this mission. Since his appointment as a director, he was able to positively affect the atmosphere and the work environment at the campus. P9 stated that before the appointment of Mr L, she was not motivated to wake up in the morning and to come to work, however, Mr L changed this reality. Three interviewees used the word "family" when describing the relation with their colleagues. P1 and P4 said that Mr L tries hard to help co-workers to get along. He makes sure that faculty members interact with each other and works to join them in formal and informal events and gatherings. According to the interviewees, he was able to create a comfortable and healthy work environment at the campus. They are all thrilled to the way he has transformed the atmosphere and the campus climate. He was able to maximize each member's satisfaction. In Jordan too, Al-awamleh and Al-Dmour (2005) found a positive impact of transformational leadership of bank managers on employee job satisfaction and self-perceived performance. Leithwood *et al.* (1999) argue that the future school is a "high reliability learning community" (p. 223), thus it requires a deeper and broader approach of transformational leadership, where five dimensions were explained. One of these dimensions is maintaining the emotional balance, and specifically preventing teacher's stress and burnout.

Mr L was able to create a family like environment or as described by P3 "a comfy campus environment." She said "we joke around and laugh with each other, you can feel that we are very close to each other" and she linked this to Mr L who was able to create such an environment that was not present before. Grimmett and Crehan (1992) caution against the way collegiality is implemented. They argue that any attempt at initiating collegiality is inevitably contrived. However, they differentiated between an administratively imposed collegiality, where teachers are mandated to collaborate voluntarily, and an organizationally induced type of contrived collegiality. This last type is "characterized by "top-down" attempts at fostering "bottom-up" problem-solving approaches to school improvement through careful manipulation, not of teachers' practices and behaviors, but of the environment within which teachers live and work and have their professional being" (p. 70). This type is fostered in a collaborative school culture. Without the right culture, the practice of peer coaching will not generate genuine collaboration.

All the interviewees agreed on the fact Mr L was smart enough to create that collaborative campus culture ready to embed the genuine collegiality and challenge the old practice. P6 said, "we enjoy working and coming to work." Interviewees highlighted the importance of trust, respect and sympathy that Mr L shows to them, believing that these factors influence their life, improve their level of motivation and maintain positive attitude. They all agreed that Mr L was able to lead the campus in a transformational

manner while maximizing employees and students' satisfaction. In Nigeria too, transformational leadership is found to have a strong positive relationship with such outputs as employee job satisfaction, extra effort and effectiveness (Kalu, 2010). Moreover, Victor *et al.* (2008) found a positive correlation between transformational leadership style and organizational performance in Taiwan.

Mr L was able to foster the staff and faculty members' sense of belonging. He motivated them to work together as a team for the sake of the institution they belong to. It is worth noting that these employees have been working together for many years before Mr L, but only Mr L was able to consolidate their efforts in an effective way. This means that he was able to transform the campus atmosphere immensely and to make the employees highly motivated and satisfied. Hughes (1994) argues that educational leaders are those who act as developers of human relationships, devoting much of their energy toward the building of this relationship, by inspiring trust and unleashing the power of human resources within the school.

P10, P7 and P4 related the excellent work environment directly to Mr L who is always alert, making sure that all members are cooperating with each other for the sake of achieving prime outcomes. Starratt (1993, p. 7) argues that transformational leadership "seeks to unite people in the pursuit of communal interests beyond their individual interests. Motivating such collective actions are large values such as freedom, community, equity, justice, brotherhood […] [it] attempts to elevate members' self-centered attitudes, values and beliefs to higher, altruistic attitudes, values and beliefs."

P4 argued that Mr L does not tolerate clashes between faculty members; but invites every member to grow as the campus is growing and prospering; chances are many and opportunities are equally open to all. Related to this thought, P9 said that Mr L always organizes gatherings outside the university, which allows members to mingle and socialize outside the stressful work setting. In order to motivate teachers and increase their commitment, principals have to find out ways to strengthen the social interaction among teachers and to forbid isolation in the work place. As a result, teachers may be suppliers of useful data and new ideas, and all together, they act as problem solvers to problems they face and share (Glatthorn, 1984 cited in Sergiovanni, 1995). In that way, the quality of work life improves in the university.

Even though Mr L has created a friendly work environment, however, and as mentioned by P2 everyone knows that the university's rules and regulations are to be well respected. Here, P1 stated, "he keeps an eye on everything and everyone but in a wise way without making anyone feel uncomfortable or being monitored." Moreover, Mr L takes into consideration the faculty members' needs to develop the faculties they belong to whether by equipping the laboratories, adding new majors or hiring more qualified instructors; while leading the university toward success. He is a leader who cares for his employees' satisfaction and at the same time consolidates all the efforts to achieve the goals of the organization he is leading.

Communication with staff, faculty members and students. In addition to personality traits, there are other leadership skills that affect the leadership effectiveness, one of these is the communication skills with all the institution's stakeholders; faculty and staff members as well as the students enrolled at the university along with their parents.

As revealed by the interviewees, Mr L has excellent communication skills. This was finely said by P8 who described Mr L as a good communicator who conducts both formal and informal meetings on a regular basis. P1, P2 and P7 revealed that he adopts

an open door policy with, not only the employees, but also with the students and their parents. P1 added that, "he is wise enough to be on the ground and mingle with everyone. He delegates and allows the employees to decide and act while being fully aware of everything happening." P2 said, "during his first meeting with us, he said: you will report to me and I'll fully trust you for your decisions." P10 stated that Mr L encourages them to work as a team and not as a superior and subordinates. He continued and described Mr L as "a good listener." He is always ready to meet with everyone and discuss any subject because he believes that communication is the means to save the institution, thus motivates students and employees to work harder and efficiently. He listens efficiently to others' needs. Thus, he boosted the students' financial aid programs as revealed by P1 and offered payment facilities for parents who are unable to meet their dues.

P3 stated: "Mr L does not keep a distance between himself and others; whoever needs help can come into his office. No prior appointment is required." P4 said "you can rarely find him in his office, he is always between offices, in different floors, working closely with his followers." P4 said, "Mr L values teamwork and appreciates everyone's opinion and ideas, which motivates me to work harder." This was also P6 and P9's opinion. An effective educational leader is the one who is able to handle and communicate with all the university's staff and faculty members and trust their teaching skills and abilities and consequently influence their teaching quality (Price, 2012). Mr L reveals great communication skills, which smoothen the work and allow faculty members to be more productive and thus, maximize the quality of education.

It seems that his good communication skills are also exercised smartly with the students. P2-P7 shared the way Mr L was able to resolve disputes that occurred during the students' cabinet elections. He was able to solve the problem democratically and even convinced the students to split the cabinet through all the members without having an election. This is a sign of his wisdom, his outstanding communication skills and his ability to lead. He was able to create a students' cabinet whose members come from different political affiliations, something that is very hard to do in Lebanon. He was able to comprehend the problems in a democratic manner without forcing any harsh decisions on anyone. According to P2, Mr L was wise enough to find a compromise and satisfy all the parties. P7 said, "he created a peaceful environment at the campus and between the students." P6 believes that the way he handled the conflicts that occurred during the students' cabinet election left a good echo in the region, and gave the people confidence in the director and at the same time in the institution he is leading. Such incidents reveal that Mr L is indeed an effective leader, because as deducted by Delure *et al.* (2011), a criticizer to the traits approach, an effective leader demonstrates excellent practical behaviors and not only uses his innate traits to solve and overcome difficulties.

ISV
"Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become."

All interviewees reported that Mr L shared with faculty, staff and students an inspired vision. P1 said: "He is always telling us: we have to be number one, and we do not have time to lose, thus do not count on others but initiate the actions yourselves!" Mr L envisioned the future and created an ideal and unique image of what the campus can become. P7 revealed that Mr L's dream when he was first appointed, is to go from

less than 300 students to more than 1,000 in nine years, along with enhancing and boosting the quality of education at the branch. He continued by saying that this became everyone's dream on campus. Kouzes and Posner (1987) explained this phenomenon by arguing that through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future. P4 put it in a funny way: "when I wake up by chance during the night, it becomes hard for me to fall asleep again, cause I start thinking of ways to enhance the quality of education and attract new students!" P6 revealed that faculty members used to dance in their offices at the end of each registration period when they found out that the number of enrolled students increased. This reveals how members shared Mr L's inspired vision. Klein and Dikert (1999) discuss the emotional commitment in arguing that leadership is artful and not creative. Gardner (1998) discusses the intelligence of leaders shown in their abilities "to tell a convincing story; and they can embody that story in their own daily lives" (p. 204). Jenkins (1997) argues that cultural change through "collaborative cultures" can be used by leaders to foster and support learning among staff.

EOA
"Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful."

Involvement in the decision-making process. Dimmock (1991) argues that by allowing teachers to make meaningful contributions to the school's management, the teachers and the school will be better off. The reason is that the school can benefit from additional resources for information and increased level of professional judgment. Consequently, the decisions' quality can be greatly enhanced by giving the teachers the opportunity to participate in the process because decision making is at the core of administrative educational activities (Sergiovanni, 1995). Duttweiler (1986) argues that, for some, participation fulfills the need to belong.

Faculty members interviewed stated that Mr L makes the final decision after taking their opinions. He does not impose decisions without consulting them personally, whether formally or not. Once he has listened to all points of views, he directly makes the appropriate decision. Mr L does care for his employees' needs but at the same time works hard to achieve the university's goals and vision.

Six of the interviewees stated that he is always ready to enforce the decision that benefits the campus. P1 said that he makes decisions in groups; he listens to and respects the faculty members' opinions. He evaluates the importance of their proposals and its impact on the university's growth. He is a quick decision maker, not "a procrastinator" as stated by P8, who continued and said: "he always wants to solve any emerging issue on the spot, he does not like to postpone." P7 described Mr L as a leader who is very committed to the university. Mr L allows the personnel to get involved in the decision-making process and allows them to freely articulate their needs and opinions. Employee participation, which is well highlighted in the transformational leadership in the Turkish culture (Karakitapoğlu-Aygün and Gumusluoglu, 2013), is also reinforced in the Lebanese context.

It is evident that a leader who listens to others and allows the subordinates to help in reaching the company's vision is an effective leader. The interviewees' comments show

that Mr L uses his special innate traits and skills to make the most appropriate decisions while preserving the employees' satisfaction and motivation. This is also true for the Estonians who expect their leaders to be charismatic, team oriented and participative (Tuulik and Alas, 2009). Hallinger and Heck (1996) mentioned the importance of the leader having flexibility to adapt to developments and updates in the educational system as well as articulating to the staff this change through involving them in the change process.

In order to secure followers' commitment, a strong transformational leader seeks to generate "second-order effects" by enhancing the capacity of others (e.g. teachers) in the school to produce first-order effects on learning (Leithwood and Louis, 1999). Hopkins and Jackson (2002, p. 95) stress the importance of "capacity building" in sustaining school improvement, and argue that "distributed leadership along with social cohesion and trust" is the essence of the capacity-building model.

However, three interviewees, P5, P10 and P1, mentioned that Mr L is not always adopting the same participative leadership approach with everyone, as he is telling drivers and security guards, for instance, what to do; and he does not invite them to share in the decision-making process. The situational theory assumes that leadership style can be varied and is not fixed. Hence, successful leadership is achieved by selecting the right leadership style, which, according to Hersey and Blanchard (1969), depends on the level of the follower's readiness. Mr L is exercising the S1 – telling style effectively when the followers' readiness is low, hence, they are clearly instructed and directed by the leader. Within the same perspective, Mr L is adopting the "coercive style," one of the six leadership styles identified by Goleman (2014), and which is: "Do what I say," and demands immediate compliance. Within this context, the finding here supports Akkary's (2014) one who argued that Lebanese principals adopt an authoritarian orientation in enacting the role.

Although democratic leadership styles have proven to be mostly productive in school administration, it should be noted that there is nothing so called "best leadership style." Every context and even every situation requires a specific leadership style to be exhibited by the principal (Goleman, 2000). Within the business domain, "leaders who have mastered four or more, especially the authoritative, democratic, affiliative, and coaching styles, have the best climate and business performance" (Goleman, 2000, p. 11). Ghamrawi (2013) found a statistically significant relationship between autocratic leadership styles and negative attitudes toward using ICT in teaching and learning. Autocratic leadership style works best when the leaders possess all the information and skills to handle a given issue (Goleman, 2000). Given that Mr L's proficiency is more advanced in financial and routine managerial issues, and to a bit lower extent in academic-related matters, you can see him authoritarian with an officer for instance, and democratic with a faculty coordinator, while being affectionate with everyone.

Empowering followers. By empowering teachers to assume leadership roles, their self-esteem and work satisfaction increase, which in turn enhance performance caused by a higher level of motivation (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Principals' leadership styles play a significant role in teachers' motivation and well-being. P5's statement was impressive: "he believed in us and showed us that he has full confidence in our capabilities, consequently we were trying our best to perform better and give all what we can in order to assure him that he is not mistaken." This finding confirms what Bono and Judge (2003) reported, that transformational leadership predicted

followers' self-concordance goals, the autonomous motivation for one's specific goals. P1, P2, P7 and P8 revealed that Mr L left the academic-related decisions to the faculty coordinators and the faculty members. He has been allowing coordinators to perform peer observations in order to evaluate the instructors' performance. Moreover, Mr L gathers information, though indirectly, from students in order to ask coordinators about an instructor and his/her teaching methodology. According to P1, "Mr L is wise enough to make you feel that he is knowledgeable in every aspect of the academic program." P2 said, "academically speaking, he allows us to do our job but of course we have to make objective decisions and clarify the process." Furthermore, P2 explained the process of recruiting new faculty members where Mr L meets only with those recommended by the faculty coordinator. This shows that he trusts his followers, takes into consideration their opinions and feels comfortable to delegate duties and responsibilities to them. P2, P7 and P8 agreed that he collects and grasps, through the faculty members, all the necessary information related to academia.

It is obvious that Mr L is an efficient high-level manager who has great technical and conceptual skills. He did not only rely on his innate skills, yet he made use of his years of experience to acquire more skills and ameliorate present ones. As a university branch director, it is not necessary or even feasible to be well knowledgeable in all the disciplines and majors, but as articulated by P3, "he listens to the needs of the Faculty from the Coordinators and takes all the necessary actions that could improve the teaching quality at the campus."

Moreover, P4 pointed out that Mr L's good relation with the main campus and his encouragement to the branch faculty members to teach at the main campus and be part of the university committees and vice versa, has ameliorated the conformity to one syllabus and almost the same teaching methodologies, and has fortified the regional campus' faculty members' confidence. She added, "this decision was smart and extremely beneficial: first it enhanced the teaching quality at the campus and second, it motivated faculty members to excel in their jobs, whether in teaching or in offering services to the university; thus giving them the opportunity to show and prove that a Regional Campus and its faculty members are not a second class entity, an image previously defended." This shows that Mr L was able to understand the main mission of being a university director and which is to ensure optimal students education through empowering faculty members and granting them all possible chances for growth. An effective leader is the one who is wise enough to appropriately use the subordinates' knowledge and expertise in order to reach the vision of the institution he/she is leading. Nir and Hameiri (2014) found that the transformational leadership style is positively related to the use of soft powerbases such as leaders' interpersonal influence through expertise, rational persuasion, personal reward, mutual dependency or charisma; which will in turn lead to effective schools. P1 insisted to inform the researcher about this incident in order to stress on Mr L's willingness to strengthen others, even students, making each person feel capable, important and powerful. She said: "during one of the graduation ceremonies in the main campus, and in front of more that 6,000 persons, the valedictorian (first in her promotion, with the highest GPA at graduation) thanked in her speech Mr L who believed in her and supported her financially."

Although Dorfman and Mittal (2012) found that the servant leadership facet of empowering was reinforced more strongly in European cultures but to a lower extent in Asian and similar cultures; this study reveals that the Lebanese (i.e. Middle-Eastern) culture cherishes this leadership dimension.

MW

"Leaders establish principles concerning the way people should be treated and the way goals should be pursued. They create standards of excellence and then set an example for others to follow."

P2 revealed how Mr L influenced the faculty and staff member in the way they deal with students and with each other. His generosity in time, care, love, kindness and support unconsciously enforced these attributes among followers as well as between themselves, the students and the community as whole. P6 said: "how am I supposed to come late to university and I live five minutes away, where my Director is always at campus in the very early morning when he needs to drive for more than one hour and 15 minutes?" all the interviewees agreed that Mr L was not absent for a single day for the past seven years, but on the contrary, he is most of the time, present during the weekends as well, in order to participate in funerals, wedding ceremonies and other events in this community. To note, that Mr L is from a different Lebanese area and was somehow unfamiliar with this new Lebanese region and its inhabitants. P1 revealed an interesting incident of how Mr L serves a role model for her, she said: "when I refused to be in the same committee with another colleague, accusing this faculty member's character, the Director responded wisely saying that we need to love and show care for every single person, then this person will eventually change his negative attitude." P3 is amazed by the way Mr L is mingling around the administrative offices helping officers in every single transaction during busy seasons. She said: "if you just see him welcoming new applicants with their parents in the Admission office, handing-in students their payment slips in the Business office, guiding new students to clear some social security issues in the Students' Affairs office, etc." Mr L was modeling the way effectively, as Kouzes and Posner (1987) describe transformational leaders saying that they unstitch bureaucracy when it delays action; they put up signposts when people are unsure of where to go or how to get there; and they create opportunities for victory.

EH

EH "is the fifth transformational leadership aspect of the LPI, defined by Kouzes and Posner (1987). It depicts that it is hard to accomplish extraordinary things. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders should recognize the efforts that individuals invest. In every winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their accomplishments; so leaders celebrate triumphs, making people feel like heroes."

With respect to the recognition of his subordinates' efforts, all the interviewees converged on the fact that, yes, he does it outstandingly; although different wordings were used. P6 argued, "we are extremely happy to see our efforts being recognized, something which was missing under the previous directors' leadership." This can also be emphasized by P9's words when she said "He is the only one from whom I have heard, thank you, throughout my 15 years of services at this university." Most of the interviewees mentioned that this recognition is not financial, but as P1 said, it is sometimes done through some kind words or an invitation over a cup of orange juice. She continued by saying "by spending a few pennies he lets you double your work. How much will a cup of orange juice cost the university? A maximum of half-a-dollar, but by this, he motivates me to work for millions of dollars." Two of the interviewees added that after the accreditation committee reported, though informally, that this regional campus is doing an outstanding job, Mr L invited all the faculty and staff members for lunch and thanked them for their hard work. Moreover, P6 gave the researcher few examples of motivational tips the director was using: "surprise cakes on

each member's birthday, lunch for all and presents for the mothers working on campus on Mothers' Day, invitations for special dinners and shows on Christmas, etc." P10 argued: "he creates the occasion to celebrate and recognize his followers' efforts, and what is important is that he does this fairly to all." P9 said that during events on campus, she helps even if it is not her job and so do all other staff members. This is triggered by Mr L's appreciation of hard work and his outstanding listening abilities that motivate all to work double and harder. In conclusion, Mr L values every member's efforts and makes everyone feel that the campus' growth and prosperity are dependent on him/her. This finding supports Arnold (2004) who argued that successful black leaders are found to adopt contingent reinforcing behavior, as it correlates with effectiveness outcomes at levels similar to transformational attributes. Under transformational leadership, followers' identification with the organization's goals and the leader's vision is generated, which is an important component of autonomous motivation. In contrast, transactional leadership, which involves contingent rewards, has been described as hindering followers' self-determination (Gagné and Deci, 2005).

All roles in a university offer opportunities worthy of recognition; even the more simple virtues of reliability, dedication and consistency should be recognized. As Reynolds (1997) argues that effective schools are not achieved by outstanding accomplishments only, but by the attention to the quality of the everyday routines. To summarize, Mr L developed a leadership style that shows evidence of confidence in the faculty members' ability to perform educationally. He recognized their contributions to the campus. Sergiovanni (1999 cited in Muijs and Harris, 2003) argues that while the teaching quality most strongly influences the levels of students' motivation and performance, it has been found that the teachers' motivation and the teaching quality are much dependent on the quality of leadership.

Non-transformational leadership aspects

When interviewees were asked about something they dislike the most in their director's leadership style, most of them agreed on his spontaneous quick reaction, especially in odd situations. P10 said: "sometimes he rushes in saying something without having the whole picture." P4 mentioned that: "when something wrong happens, he is blaming the guilty on the spot, in front of whoever is present. This might be embarrassing!" P6 put it this way: "I feel a bit bothered when he accuses a staff member, for instance, during my presence." Within the same context, P5 revealed "even though he might become nervous in front of any negative behavior, he is ready to ease the situation again within less than an hour." P1 revealed the following incident: "I was photocopying my exam next to the Director's office and I heard some high voices coming from inside depicting some kind of clash or misunderstanding. Then, we knew that the problem was with one of our staff members. One hour later, we found out that the director passed by this employee's office to hug him before he went home."

Three interviewees revealed another negative issue highlighting the director's interference, although very rare, in some academic cases to respect some politicians' will. It is when Mr L asks a faculty coordinator to assign a given course to a specific part-time instructor. However, P5 continued and said: "we understand this as our director will be consequently able to ask a favor in return from these politicians, a favor that benefits our campus and its growth. He does it the Lebanese way!" Another interviewee, P2, also mentioned something similar and reminded the researcher of the case where Mr L was able to resolve the conflict between students belonging to different political parties. His good relation with these parties' leaders, along with his

excellent communication skills, helped him secure peace inside the campus, especially around the election period of the students' cabinet. Here, the Lebanese context seems to shape the way leadership is exercised. Although favoritism reduces employees' commitment and dedication (Wong and Kleiner, 1994), "in Lebanon, we suffer from confessional and political nepotism and this phenomenon cannot be eliminated unless the concept of real citizenship overshadows the current Lebanese confessional political system," said Mohammad Shihan, one of the founders of Bala Wasta. Ezzedeen and Sweircz (2001) found that 65 percent of employees in the second largest mobile telecommunications provider in Lebanon were hired through nepotism.

Conclusion

After thoroughly analyzing the interviewees' responses, the researcher concludes that Mr L is, in one way or another, a transformational leader. He exhibits various admirable and influential characteristics that have allowed the campus to progress. This is something that previous directors were incapable of achieving. He was able to successfully CP, ISV, EOA, MW and recognize his followers' efforts.

Mr L demonstrated to a great extent the majority of the characteristics and attitudes that define a transformational leader. He did not only care about increasing the number of students, but he thrived to improve the quality of education through hiring more qualified faculty members and equipping laboratories for all majors. Although one might see him transactional in this specific behavior, you can realize that he did it the transformational way when the whole context is highlighted. He was able to use his skills in order to create a great working team that is ready to work day and night in order to achieve the university's goals. Mr L inspired and motivated all the campus's employees whether they were staff or faculty members through fostering collegiality, creating a friendly work environment and respecting teamwork. Stoll and Myers (1998) stress the importance of the collegial style of leadership in sustaining a school environment full of enthusiasm and raising the staff morale by empowering them and inviting them to share in the decision-making process. Moreover, Mr L was able to make use of his followers' skills, although to a lower extent with the lower level employees, in order to transform the university from the path of stagnancy, if not to say failure, toward becoming one of the main competitors to other important universities located in the region. Now the researcher does not wonder why the head of the accreditation committee was referring to Mr L as "Mr. Popular," while delivering the exit report at the end of his visit to the university.

Moreover, it is worth noting that, as mentioned by P1 and P10, although Mr L is charismatic and possesses a great physical stamina and mental strength that allows him to perform effectively for long hours, he is not physically attractive when it comes to height and muscular body shape, an image people constructed about a leader and which is one of the four main personal characteristics or traits inherent within leaders under the trait theory. It seems that his social, personality and personal traits overcame the partially missed attributes of the physical traits. Moreover, McCrae and John (1992) argues that someone's personality is the combination of each of his/her Big Five personality characteristics and which are: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Generally positive values on all factors are found in leaders, except "neuroticism," where low levels are desirable. It seems that Mr L's tendency to sometimes experience unpleasant emotions easily, such as anger, as described by the interviewees, makes him lose some credits.

In conclusion, this research depicts that, to a great extent, a transformational leader has been behind this campus's success, except when it comes to nepotism which is embedded in the Lebanese culture and to the lower level employees who are not usually invited to share in the decision-making process. However, the puzzling question is whether this finding can be generalizable to the whole Lebanese higher education setting, and consequently being able to draw a conclusion saying that the Lebanese culture adopts the positive North American findings about transformational leadership. Yahchouchi (2009) found that in the Lebanese university too, the leadership style is more transformational than transactional. On the other hand, Alamrey (2003) reported that Saudi managers in public corporations do not possess the characteristics of transformational leadership as they should. When Ergeneli *et al.* (2007) examined the relationships between the five aspects of transformational leadership and Hofstede's culture value dimensions by investigating the responses of Pakistani, Kazakh and Turkish business students; they found that some aspects of transformational leadership are found to be common, whereas others are culture specific. The transformational leadership aspects such as challenging the process and enabling others to act were found to be independent of any of the culture value dimensions. However, inspiring a shared vision and modeling the way were significantly and negatively related to uncertainty avoidance while encouraging the hearth was positively related to power distance. Felfe *et al.* (2004) indicate that followers' characteristics, such as personality traits and implicit leadership theories, influence the perception and acceptance of transformational leadership. All the faculty members in this research who are in a professorial rank (assistant and associate) studied outside Lebanon and got their PhDs from counties such USA, UK, Canada, France, Belgium and South Korea. As for the others in the non-professorial ranks, some received American degrees and the remaining Lebanese ones. This information highlights the fact that the majority of the faculty members at this campus were exposed to North American, English as well as European cultures, which enables them to understand and appreciate what these cultures value as the practices of a successful leader, which in turn makes it difficult to assess the hundred percent transferability of the idea that a transformational leader is also successful in a Lebanese culture. However, when it comes to staff members and students, they captured the Lebanese culture with all its facets and norms, since school days to university ones. Consequently, some credits are added to the results. Nevertheless, in order to generalize and conclude that the Lebanese higher educational setting encompasses and cherishes the transformational leadership style, additional research is to be undertaken. Thus, the study's results reinforce the need for more in-depth cross-cultural comparative studies of education professionals.

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Appendix. The semi-structured interview schedule

(1) Give me a brief background about your education, degree, previous experience and current position.

(2) How do you evaluate the progress of the campus?

(3) What do you believe are the factors that have led to this progress?

(4) Elaborate on the director's leadership style, in terms of:

- campus climate;
- participation in the decision-making process;
- recognition of his followers' efforts;
- empowerment of his followers; and
- communication with staff, faculty members and students.

(5) Give me an incident that reveals your director's appreciated leadership style.

(6) Which aspect(s) do you dislike the most in your director's leadership style?

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