# The leadership model of the school principal in the functioning of student councils

### Karadoulama Evdoxia

Sociologist- Secondary school teacher, M.Ed evdoxiakaradoulama@gmail.com

#### **Abstract**

Education for democracy remains always a topical theme. School ought to develop political skills in students so they can be incorporated in a free state. The educational institution of the students' councils acts to achieve the above purpose. The present research wants to investigate students' views, as members of school society that are main characters of the function of the institution, for the role of the school leadership especially the principal of the school. The searching method that was chosen was the quantity research with tool of the questionnaire. The research findings showed that the most preponderant model of leadership that students evaluate that can support the student council, has to do with the principal's adoption, is the interpersonal leadership. Their second choice is the participative leadership.

Keywords: student councils, school principal, leadership models

#### Introduction

The student voice and especially the student councils are in the interest of many international researches (Taylor & Johnson, 2002; Cotmore, 2004; Fielding, 2004; Keogh & White, 14 2005; Smyth, 2006; Mitra, 2008; Wade, 2008; Pautsch, 2010; Griebler & Nowak, 2012). A common posotion of all studies is that student councils can be a positive factor in students' political socialization (Καρατζιά, 2003; Mitra, 2008; Τουπαδάκη-Καψετάκη, 2009; Griebler & Nowak, 2012; Παπαοικονόμου, 2016), and at the same time contribute to better school performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Fielding, 2001; Taylor & Johnson, 2002; Cotmore, 2004; Mitra, 2008; Griebler & Nowak, 2012). In Greece, student councils are an inactive institution (Τουπαδάκη-Καψετάκη, 2009; Βουλή των Εφήβων, 2014; Παπαοικονόμου, 2015; Γόγολα & Κατσής, 2017; Συνήγορος του παιδιού, 2017). In the effort to strengthen their operation, the factors that could contribute to their successful operation are sought.

The role of the principal has emerged as an important factor in the positive functioning of the student council (Glatthorn, 1968; Καΐλά, 1989; Taylor & Johnson, 2002; Fielding, 2004; Smyth, 2006; Mitra, 2008; Wade, 2008; Pautsch, 2010; Griebler & Nowak, 2012; Συνήγορος του παιδιού, 2017). However, there is little research examining the ways in which the principal can support the operation of student councils.

The purpose of this research was to explore the views of members of the 15-member student council for the principal's role. The research question to which the research sought to answer was what leadership model the principal, as a school leader, could adopt to support the functioning of the student council. The research problem is based on the theoretical approach of student councils and the role of the principal in their operation.

## The student councils

Student education, which promotes democratic principles, was also institutionalized through student participation in the student community (Griebler & Nowak, 2012). Alexandros Delmouzos was the first in Greece, in 1923, to try to create community life in the Greek school (T $\sigma$ o $\lambda$ άκης, 1989). Delmouzos argued that, for the complete education of the student, it is not enough the education in the classroom but also the school life f. A key factor that shapes school life is the voice of students (Τερζής, 1998).



Students' voices can be activated through student councils (Mitra, 2005; Pautsch, 2010). Student councils are defined as groups of students who have been elected as student representatives in a school (Griebler & Nowal, 2012;  $\Pi \alpha \pi \alpha \ddot{\alpha} \kappa o \nu \phi_{\mu\nu}$ , 2016). Through councils, students elect and are elected and shape school life. The participation of students in the process of operation of student councils declares the citizen who participates in the political life of his community. (Neuman & Simmons, 2000).

In particular, students elect their representatives who make up student councils and meet in assemblies to make decisions on student or community issues and to act. Through the councils, the students actively participate in issues that concern the school life and the community ( $K\alpha p\alpha \tau \zeta i\dot{\alpha}$ , 2003). Issues with which can be dealt with the councils are the school regulation (Hess, 2003), study content, teaching aids, relations with students and teachers, students and administration and students among themselves, as well as school and wider community activities for solving problems or improving living conditions ( $K\alpha i\lambda \dot{\alpha}$ , 1989).

The operation of student councils has a positive impact in many areas. Taking into account various influencing factors, Mitra (2008) distinguishes the benefits of student voice in three areas for students: self-confidence, cooperation, communication and personal and social skills. Griebler & Nowak (2012) conducted an extensive study of scholarly articles on student councils. They focused on the results that presents the function of student councils in schools and distinguished three categories of results: results that concern the students personally, results related to the interactions of the members of the school community and results that concern the school organization in general. In all three categories the results were positive.

Having student councils in a school does not necessarily mean that they work successfully. When student councils do not have an active role, do not represent all students and are not respected by other members of the school community, their functioning deteriorates, students become frustrated and may be alienated from school (Griebler & Nowak, 2012). Axes that play an active role, so that student councils can be effective are the composition of the council as well as the way of electing student representatives (Griebler & Nowak, 2012), the support of the principal (Keogh & White, 2005 • Taylor & Johnson, 2002), the communication between the student council and all the students but also the teachers and the principal (Keogh & White, 2005 • Taylor & Johnson, 2002) and the education of the student council members (Keogh & White, 2005 ).

# The role of the principal in the functioning of student councils

The principal holding the most important role in school administration ( $\Sigma\alpha\ddot{\tau}\eta\varsigma$ , 2008) can determine how the student council works and influence student political behavior (Parker & Leithwood, 2000). The promotion of a vision by the principal that strengthens the student voice, but also in general the creation of a democratic climate in the school that is a key factor for the successful operation of the student council (Pautsch, 2010).

The director's support for the council come true in many ways. The principal can play a key role through his positions and actions and support the student council as an institution and as a school team (Glatthorn, 1968). Participates in its meetings (Parker & Leithwood, 2000; Pautsch, 2010) and undertakes to strengthen its actions (Mitra, 2008). It gives students the necessary information to carry out their actions, ensures the approval of these actions as well as the material and financial resources that may be needed (Mitra, 2008). In addition, it promotes the education and training of teachers and students in related subjects (Glatthorn, 1968; Parker & Leithwood, 2000; Pautsch, 2010).

Additional practices that refer to the action of the principal for the operation of the student councils are the encouragement of the teaching of the value of participation in the school elections, so that the students participate in the school administration, the promotion of the participation of the candidates in the elections, enabling the students to organize speeches and write brochures, to monitor the work of the council, without dominating its decisions, to protect the council from malicious criticism, to ensure the configuration of a school space where the council meetings will take place, the recognition of special rights to council



members who should be considered as an offer and not a discrimination, the council urges to participate in local government meetings by making proposals for specific problems, the facilitation of informing the student body and the wider society about the council's actions and finally the reward of the council for its effectiveness (Glatthorn, 1968).

Regarding the role of the principal in the functioning of student councils, research has shown the absence of reinforcement of the student voice by the principal (Pautsch, 2010; Parker & Leithwood, 2000). The reasons are mainly found in the principal's obsession with bureaucracy and in the resistance to the changes proposed by the council (Jenni, 1991), in the multitude of his responsibilities for the general operation of the school (Pautsch, 2010) and in the lack of physical meeting place for students and director (Fielding, 2004).

## School leadership-Leadership models

Undoubtedly the quality of leadership can have a big impact of effectiveness of each school ( $M\pi o u p \dot{\eta} \varsigma$ , 2008). Many of the definitions that refer to the concept of leadership cover basic elements of school leadership. Bush & Glover (2003) focuses on 4 elements of school leadership: influence, values, vision and administration.

Various forms of behavior that a leader uses and reflects his personality and culture have been studied (Κανελλόπουλος, 1984). Each form of behavior focuses on a different function of the school and is a different approach (Αραβανής, 2000). It affects the way the leader exercises power over those around him but also the freedoms he gives them (Μπουραντάς, 2005). These forms are called leadership styles, leadership models or leadership forms (Αραβανής, 2000). Competitive and alternative forms of leadership are found in abundance: administrative, transactional, participative, interpersonal and transformational ( $Z\alphaβλανός$ , 1998; Bush and Glover, 2003; Pάπτης & Βιτσιλάκη, 2007).

Most theories conclude that there is no ideal form of leadership. Each form should be adopted according to the operating conditions of each organization. The main criterion is the environment of the organization. The second criterion is the characteristics of the project that the leader wants to accomplish. The people who make up the organization are also a criterion that the leader must take into account when choosing the appropriate form of leadership. Their behavior, the maturity they show and their attitude towards the team will adapt the leader's decision for the form of leadership that will follow ( $M\pi oup \alpha v \tau \acute{\alpha} \varsigma$ , 2005).

Analyzing leadership models, reference is first made to transformational leadership which is a dynamic concept because it creates a new culture and transforms the organization itself ( $\Delta \alpha \rho \dot{\alpha} \kappa \eta$ , 2007). M $\pi o u \rho \alpha v \tau \dot{\alpha} \varsigma$  (2015) argues that he relies on the influence that the leader has on his followers. The awakening of the fans, has as a consequence to become more energetic and imaginative (Yukl, 2009). The types of transformational behavior according to Bass (1985) are based on the so-called 4I: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration.

Leithwood applied the theory of transformational leadership in education. Transformational leadership in education is characterized by 8 dimensions: building a school vision, establishing school goals, providing mental stimuli, providing personalized support, practicing practical and organizational values, developing high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture and promoting the participation of all in school decisions (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

Transactional leadership is also known as negotiation (Καντάς, 1998), or otherwise dialectical (Ζαβλανός, 1998). It is based on a transaction that takes place between a leader and members of the organization (Bass, 1985). It could also be characterized as a mutual deal (Καντάς, 1998). The leader demands the desired behavior in exchange for a resource valued appreciated by the subordinate (Miller & Miller, 2001) or the participation and loyalty of the members in the organization (Δαράκη, 2007).

In education, transactional leadership is proposed to be applied by large educational institutions. The climate that prevails in large institutions is offered to create groups that will



claim their interests and will come to intense negotiation with the leader (Pάπτης & Βιτσιλάκη, 2009). When a school principal adopts the transactional leadership style, teachers can converse with him / her, expecting a resource to be provided and not establishing lasting relationships (Miller & Miller, 2001). Their action in school life depends on providing immediate benefits to them (Bush, 2007).

After the prevalence of hierarchical structure, perceptions of participative leadership began to prevail (Banner & Gagné 1995). Participative leadership is also found as shared, collaborative and diffuse (Bush, 2003). Barnard (1968) began to form a new leadership called participative based on the principles of collaboration and adaptation. Today in participatory leadership, the leader delegates power to his subordinates, giving them responsibilities ( $M\pi oup\alpha v\tau \acute{\alpha} c$ , 2005) that he previously held exclusively as a leader (Yukl, 2009). Decision making is done collectively and responsibility is shared (Sinani, 2016).

In education, participative leadership is based on three assumptions: participation will increase school effectiveness, participation is based on democratic principles, and leadership opportunities are provided to any stakeholder (Leithwood et. All, 1999). Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, (2008) argue that school leadership exerts the greatest influence when it is distributed. Based on the assumptions, the members of the organization are given the opportunity to be involved in decision making. Many argue that the evolution of the organization will happen if teachers are not mere recipients and observers of the implementation of an educational policy but contribute to its shaping ( $P\dot{\alpha}\pi\tau\eta\varsigma$  &  $B\iota\tau\sigma\iota\lambda\dot{\alpha}\kappa\eta$ , 2009). When other members of the school are involved in decision making, they take on roles and commit to fulfilling them (Neuman & Simons, 2000). The ever-changing school environment favors this type of leadership (Harris, 2002).

The formal management model is reinforced by the administrative leadership model. Central values of administrative leadership are decision-making based on logic and power exercised by leaders based on their position to their subordinates (Bush, 2003). The leader has the decisive role in the organization, defines the goals, shapes the policy and makes the decisions ( $P\dot{\alpha}\pi\tau\eta\varsigma$  &  $B\iota\tau\sigma\iota\lambda\dot{\alpha}\kappa\eta$ , 2007).

The administrative model in education has been sharply criticized, as one-dimensional and technocratic. Some of its weaknesses are that educational organizations are not always focused on goals, decisions can not be made consistently based on rational criteria, the decisions of leaders are always accepted because of the power they hold, there is a crowdind out of the peculiarities of individual behavior and the organization is characterized by stability and unchanging structure (Bush, 2003).

Finally, interpersonal leadership is based on the interaction of the members of the organization (Bush, 2003). It focuses on member collaboration and interpersonal relationships (Pάπτης & Βιτσιλάκη, 2007). It shifts the focus of leadership from equality to justice and the interest of each individual (Nicolas & West-Burnham, 2016). This type of leadership achieves the necessary balance between power and interest in others. Its main characteristics are respect, trust, cooperation (Nicolas & West-Burnham, 2016). More specifically, interpersonal leadership is based on the leader's communication with his subordinates (Lamm, Carter & Lamm, 2016). Its main functions related to communication are member support, development (Yukl, Gordon & Taber, 2002) and motivation (Fleishman, Mumford, Zaccaro, Levin, Korotkin, & Hein, 1991; Kouzes & Posner, 2002. Leadership support is achieved through building and maintaining good relationships, understanding, caring and appreciation (Bass, 2008, cited in Lamm, Carter & Lamm, 2016) as well as conflict management (Yukl, et al., 2002). Finally, promoting member development by the interpersonal leader will become a reality by rewarding, recognizing and encouraging innovation (Yukl, et. al, 2002).

In education, Bennett, Crawford, Levacic, Glover & Earley (2000) argue that interpersonal leadership not only promotes collaboration but also enhances learning in educational institutions. Collaboration is not limited to the school leader with the teaching staff but, the



collaborative relationship is also observed between teachers and students (Johnston & Pickersgill, 1992). Finally, Bush (2003) argues that if educational organizations operate in a creative and harmonious context, it is necessary to adopt leadership models, such as interpersonal.

Researchers who have studied student councils have made specific suggestions for the types of leadership that a principal can follow. Keogh & White (2005) agree that the school principal can support the council by rewarding his work. Glatthron (1968) also considers that the manager should recognize special rights to members, giving elements of transactional leadership. Parker & Leithwood (2000) conducting a research on school boards also emphasizes the crucial role of the principal in their operation. The interpretation of the research elements is consistent with the use of transformational leadership which seems to have a positive effect on the school organization and the positive attitude of teachers towards school councils. Transformational leadership prevails for Leithwood & Jantzi (1999). The results of their research showed that the practices of transformational leadership have more positive effects than those of participative.

# Methodology

The research method chosen was quantitative. The quantitative method is identified according to the form of data, which consists of numerical measurements ( $\Delta\eta\mu\eta\tau\rho \acute{o}\pi o\upsilon\lambda o\varsigma$ , 2001), after collecting answers from a large number of people (Bell, 2005). The overall process of collecting research material lasted about a month.

The sample of the research consisted of students who were members of the 15-member student council of secondary schools as the student council with the most important responsibilities. The participating students attended Gymnasiums, General High School and Technical High School with agec 15-18. They came from schools in the county of Thessaloniki.

The sample was selected based on quota sampling. For the selection of schools, the area where the schools are housed, was taken into account: urban, semi-urban but also the area of the county of Thessaloniki to which they belong geographically: eastern and western Thessaloniki. The above approach is characteristic of percentage sampling where the sample shows percentages similar to those of the research population and increases its representativeness ( $\Delta \eta \mu \eta \tau \rho \delta \pi o \nu \lambda o \zeta$ , 2001;  $\Delta \phi \epsilon \rho \delta \pi o \nu \lambda o \zeta$ , 2005; Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2008).

**Table 1:**Number of questionnaires in urban and semi-urban areas

	Number of questionnaires	Percentage of students who participated	Percentage of students in the county of Thes/niki	
Urban area	156	73%	67,5%	
Semi-urban	59	27%	32,4%	
Area				
Total	215	100%	100%	

The research tool used in the quantitative research was the structured questionnaire which consisted of closed type questions. For its construction, data collected from a focus group consisting of secondary school students were used. A pilot survey was also conducted to check the level of comprehension of the questions. Gradual questions, like Likert, were used, through which the degree of agreement in a position is recorded ( $Z\alpha\varphi\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{o}\piou\lambda\circ\varsigma$ , 2005). A five-point scale was chosen so that there is a middle point, so that the respondent can answer neutrally ( $Z\alpha\varphi\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{o}\piou\lambda\circ\varsigma$ , 2005). The questionnaires that were filled in printed form were 200 while those that were filled in electronically through google forms were 12. The completion of the questionnaires was voluntary after first ensuring the anonymity of the participants as well as the written approval of the parents for the participation of the students in the research.



In the questionnaire, axes were defined from the types of school leadership that have been analyzed in the theoretical part. Types of leadership that formed the axes were transformational leadership, transactional, participative, interpersonal and administrative leadership. Axis Transformational and Transactional Leadership Questions can be found in Avolio and Bass Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire MLQ-Form 5x (2004). The questions of the participative leadership axis can be found in the questionnaire Ismail Zainuddin & Ibrahim (2010). The questions of the administrative leadership axis are in the 4-box Bolman & Deal (1992) questionnaire. The questions of the interpersonal leadership axis are found in the 4-box Bolman & Deal (1992) questionnaire.

Validity and reliability are considered essential properties of a scientific research (Σταμέλος & Δακοπούλου, 2007). The questionnaire consists of questions from three questionnaires which have been evaluated positively for their validity. The questionnaire was also distributed in its first form to a non-specific population, which was not a research population, to confirm its apparent validity. This was followed by a pilot survey of members of the 15-member student council who were not a sample of the survey and the necessary corrections were made.

The reliability of the questionnaire is considered particularly important for the scientificity of the research. Reliability is checked with correlation coefficients such as the Cronbach a index which is the internal relevance index. The results of the research prove that the scale of the questionnaire is reliable Crombach a = 0.810. When the values of the index are greater than 0.70, the questionnaire is considered reliable ( $Z\alpha$ ¢ειρόπουλος, 2005). The analysis of the results was done by statistical processing through the statistical package SPSS v21.

The researcher in preparing this study took into account her limitations. The sample through quota sampling cannot provide information that can be generalized to the entire survey population, as can any survey conducted using a population sample. Even the conclusions of the research do not necessarily apply to all students members of the 15-member student councils of the Prefecture of Thessaloniki, or Macedonia or the whole country. The sample, however, is characterized by a high degree of representativeness.

## Results

According to the results of the research, a comparison was made of the five leadership styles, the variables that theoretically make them up were added and the averages of the new variables were obtained. Interpersonal leadership has the greatest appreciation from students, followed by participative. With a small difference follows the transformative, with an even smaller difference follows the administrative one and the biggest difference between averages is observed between the fourth and fifth leadership style between administrative and transactional. Table 2 shows the classification set by students by type of leadership. There is a small difference between the types of leadership with a larger one between the last 2 types of administrative and transactional leadership. Table 2 follows with the frequency of answers for all types of leadership in a hierarchical order according to students' preferences.

Table 2: Mean value per leadership type

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean			
Interpersonal	214	12,6869			
Participative	214	12,2523			
Transformational	214	12,0093			
Administrative	214	11,8879			
Transactional	214	11,1308			
Valid N (listwise)	214				



The questions in the first row of the ranking are questions that measure students' preferences if the principal were to adopt interpersonal leadership. The first two questions equate to an average of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.7 for the first and 0.96 for the second. Students choose to support the operation of the 15-member student council, the principal to provide support and show interest in group members, and be a good listener. With a small difference follows the question that wants the principal to build trust through cooperative relationships with an average of 4.12 (standard deviation 0.81).

The second type of leadership that students choose to adopt by the principal is participatory. The question with the highest average of 4.21 among the participatory leadership questions (standard deviation 0.81) and occupies the 4th place in the ranking of all questions wants the principal to create an environment where members participate in decision making. With a slight difference (0.07) follows the question with an average of 4.14 (standard deviation 0.78) which the director gives the members the right to set the goals of the group. Last of the participatory leadership is the question with an average of 3.91 (standard deviation 0.9) where the members have the opportunity to determine how they will satisfy their needs.

The third type of leadership according to students' preferences is transformational leadership. The first of the transformational leadership questions that students choose is the question, which is in the top 3 of the ranking. Students attribute to the question that the principal puts the good of the team above his own individual interest, an average of 4.27 (standard deviation 0.91). This is followed by the question with quite a big difference from the previous one and an average of 3.95 (standard deviation 0.83) when the director suggests new ways to seek the completion of a project. The last of the questions of the transformational leadership is the question with an average of 3.79 (standard deviation 0.83) where the manager clearly states a fascinating vision for the future.

The next type of leadership according to students' preferences is administration. The question that holds the highest average among the questions of the administration leadership 4.10 (standard deviation 0.84) is the question that is in the middle of the general ranking in the 7th position in which the principal works according to logic. It follows with a small difference in the average of 3.95 (standard deviation 0.95) and the director's focus on the details. Last appears with about the same difference, the question with an average of 3.83 (standard deviation 0.87) and central concepts the careful planning and schedules.

The type of leadership that less than 5 students prefer is transactional leadership. The first preferred question that belongs to this group is the question that shows an average of 3.94 (standard deviation 0.93) and is in 10th place in the overall ranking. From the questions of the transactional leadership the students choose more the principal to express satisfaction when they meet his expectations. The next question is the one that expresses the assistance provided by the principal in return for the effort and has an average of 3.62 (standard deviation 0.98), much lower than the previous question. Last question of the trading leadership has an average of 3.57 (ie 0.94). When the principal behaves by drawing attention to the failures of achieving the goals, he wins the least agreement from the students. This is also the last question in the ranking of 15. Following is Table 3 with the average answers for the type of leadership of the principal.



 Table 3: Mean value answers for the leadership type of the principal

# **Descriptive Statistics**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.
				Deviation
Provides support and shows interest	2,00	5,00	4,29	,70415
in members				
He is a good listener	1,00	5,00	4,29	,96806
He puts the good of the team above	1,00	5,00	4,27	,91881
his own individual interest				
Creates an enviromet where	2,00	5,00	4,21	,81348
members participate in decision making				
Gives members the right to set	1,00	5,00	4,14	,78444
group goals	_,,,,	2,00	-,_ :	,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,
It builds trust through collaborative	1,00	5,00	4,12	,81672
relationships				
Approaches problems based on	1,00	5,00	4,10	,84957
logic				
Pays great attention to detail	1,00	5,00	3,95	,95812
Suggests new ways in which we can	1,00	5,00	3,95	,83787
seek the completion of a project				
Expresses satisfaction when I meet	1,00	5,00	3,94	,93780
his expectations				
Allows members to determine how	1,00	5,00	3,91	,90723
they will meet their needs				
Emphasizes careful planning and	1,00	5,00	3,83	,87732
schedules				
Clearly states a fascinating vision for	1,00	5,00	3,79	,91297
the future				
It helps me in return for my efforts	1,00	5,00	3,62	,98957
It draws my attention to the failures	1,00	5,00	3,57	,94558
of achieving the goals				

### Discussion

The questions of the interpersonal leadership that occupy the first places in the general classification determine the principal to provide support, to show interest in the members and to be a good listener. The interpersonal relationships that students develop with the principal play a crucial role in supporting the council.

Participative leadership as second in the preferences of students is justifiably in a high position because of the role that students want to play as members of the school government an important role in the school environment. The principal's practice of creating an environment where members are involved in decision-making finds students completely in agreement with the vast majority of responses. The students also agree with the view that the principal gives them the opportunity to set the goals of their group, thus expressing their autonomy so that they can function as an independent group with its own rules and goals.

The transformational leadership that follows presents high percentages of positive answers to two of the three questions. Specifically, the students largely agree that the principal puts the good of the team above his own individual interest, stating their desire for



the principal to act in the best interests of the team. The provision of alternative solution by the principal also seems to be appreciated by the council members. The formulation by the principal of a vision for the school found students in difficulty to decide on the existence of a vision in the school and whether this can work positively in the functioning of the council.

Administrative leadership is quite close to the preferences of students with transformational leadership. In the most popular question of administrative leadership the principal approaches the problems on the basis of logic. Next are the questions that concern the principal's attention to detail, careful planning and time limits. Focusing on details and timelines are practices that students value as less important perhaps seeking the freedom of movement that a more "flexible" approach would give them.

Finally, transactional leadership without rejection gathers the least positive answers and the most neutral. Students do not suggest that their relationship with the principal be compesatory. The low ranking of this question in the general ranking is an example of young people in the resistance to utilitarianism. The question that students accept the least is related to focusing on failures to achieve goals. The members of the 15-member recognize that the 15-member will work better if the manager does not focus on failures but encourages them in their work.

## **Conclusions**

Students agree with all leadership models showing that interpersonal leadership is predominant. Students highlight interpersonal leadership as more appropriate by agreeing greatly when the principal provides support and shows interest in members and is a good listener. Providing support is a practice that is supported for the successful political socialization of students ( $M\pi$ ( $\kappa$ o $\varsigma$ , 2011) and in particular listening to students' concerns (Silva, 2001; Mitra, 2008; Pautsch, 2010).

Participative leadership is chosen by students as second to their preferences, focusing on the principal's practice of creating an environment where members are involved in decision-making. Next is the administrative leadership with the most popular practice of the manager approaching the problems on the basis of logic. The transactional is chosen less by all types of leadership showing the greatest agreement in the principal's satisfaction when members meet his expectations.

The study of the topic offers knowledge in exploring students' views on the role of the principal in the operation of student councils. Students' perceptions provide valuable information with their suggestions for improving the functioning of student communities.

The results of the research could be taken into account by senior education officials in the design of Rules of operation of student communities. The issue is particularly relevant because a new Regulation has been a request of the educational community in recent years, since the last time it was revised was in 1985. In addition, the findings of the research could be used in the design of training programs for principals on their contribution to the operation of student councils. Training for managers could help them realize the role they play as educators.

The results of this research gave rise to the need for new investigations. The democratic school is a collective project and its implementation involves the study of the perspective of each part of the school community. Teachers, principals, and even parents and members of the local government, whose cooperation is deemed necessary, could evaluate appropriate ways of supporting student councils. Of particular interest would be to conduct the same research through the eyes of managers. Finally, the implementation of proposals that have universal acceptance in an experimental stage would provide valuable knowledge for the successful implementation of the student communities' institution.

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