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Constructing Success: Unveiling Leadership Styles in the Construction Industry in North Macedonia

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Abstract

Leadership plays a pivotal role in navigating the complexities of modern workplaces, particularly within the dynamic landscape of the construction industry. This study, sought to explore the utilization and effectiveness of seven distinct leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, transactional, transformational, paternalistic, charismatic, and laissez-faire. Drawing insights from 88 participants across diverse roles within the construction sector, this research sheds light on the prevalence of different leadership approaches and their impact on organizational dynamics. The findings underscore the prominence of charismatic and democratic leadership styles among successful leaders, while highlighting the relatively lower incidence of autocratic and laissez-faire styles. Practical considerations arising from these results emphasize the importance of cultivating charismatic qualities, enhancing democratic collaboration, and exploring transformative leadership approaches to drive success and sustainability within construction projects.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Construction industry, Charismatic leadership, Democratic leadership, Transformational leadership, Organizational effectiveness, North Macedonia

1. Introduction

Leadership, as delineated by Gurr and Drysdale (2020), embodies the process of guiding and motivating individuals towards the attainment of organizational objectives. Leadership is crucial in various industries due to its role in achieving organizational goals and fostering individual growth (Sheikh, 2022). Particularly in project-based sectors like construction, effective leadership is indispensable (Ismail & Syazli Fathi, 2018). Construction projects are inherently complex, requiring seamless coordination between leaders and diverse teams amidst time pressures and external uncertainties (Sheikh, 2022). Successful leadership styles, such as charismatic and democratic approaches, are vital for sustaining construction organizations and the industry as a whole (Odusami, Iyagba, & Omirin, 2003). The construction industry faces numerous challenges, categorized as general business obstacles and environmental factors (Toor & Ofori, 2006). Projects demand diverse skills from multi-functional, multi-national, and multi-ethnic teams, underscoring the importance of effective leadership (Liphadzi, Aigbavboa, & Thwala, 2015b). Leadership is further necessitated by the industry's poor public perception, fluctuating activity levels, and increasing globalization (Toor & Ofori, 2008). Technological advancements and talent scarcity amplify the need for competent leadership to navigate change and foster

Legal, regulatory, and ethical challenges, including diverse legal systems and corruption, also underscore the need for effective leadership (Toor & Ofori, 2008). In addressing these complexities, leadership at various levels, from industry-wide strategic planning to individual project management, is essential (Toor & Ofori, 2008). Professional institutions and companies alike require strong leadership to drive innovation and overcome daily challenges (Toor & Ofori, 2008). Effective leadership emerges as a primary solution to the construction industry's myriad issues, especially in developing countries like North Macedonia.

From all the above, it can be argued that effective leadership is one of the primary answers to the problems of the construction industry, especially the problems in developing countries, such as North Macedonia. The many levels of the construction industry need leadership. First, at the industry level, there is a need for strategic leadership and commitment to the continuous development and improvement of the industry. Second, professional institutions and trade associations require effective leadership to ensure the development of expertise and professionalism of members. Third, construction companies must be driven with competence and innovation given the enormous challenges in the construction industry and their working environments. Its leaders need to develop the necessary capabilities to overcome the aforementioned challenges they face on a daily basis (Toor & Ofori, 2008).

2. Literature Review

Leadership effectiveness hinges on the adaptability of leaders to situational demands (Robbins, 2001). They must possess versatility and flexibility to apply various leadership styles appropriately (Hersey et al., 1996). While a singular leadership style may suffice in certain situations, the dynamic nature of the construction industry necessitates a diverse range of styles of success. (Liphadzi, Aigbavboan, & Thwala, 2015a). The leadership style not only augments economic productivity but also facilitates knowledge dissemination, skill

acquisition, and income augmentation (Deller & Walwei, 2022, pp. 25–43).

Recent scholarly discourse has prominently centered on age-related dynamics within the workplace, instigated by demographic shifts and an aging workforce (Rudolph & Zacher, 2022). However, effectively navigating the leadership and engagement of a multi-generational workforce, each characterized by distinct perspectives, values, and exigencies, presents a formidable challenge. The management of generational diversity within the workforce necessitates the recognition and reconciliation of generational variances while adapting leadership style and organizational paradigms to sustain employee motivation and retention (Mahmoud et al., 2020, pp. 1–2).

Commonly recognized leadership styles in construction include:

- Autocratic
- Laissez-faire
- Transactional
- Transformational
- Paternalistc
- Charismatic

Understanding the impact of each style on employees is crucial for enhancing work performance (Wu, Li, & Fang, 2017). The complexity and capital-intensive nature of construction projects may require leaders to adapt their management behaviors accordingly, influencing employee attitudes and workplace behavior (Naum, 2001; Mahmoud et al., 2020, p. 7).

Effective leadership styles are those that resonate well with employees and promote effective work outcomes (Likhitwonnawut, 1996, p. 40). Leadership style and individualized consideration positively impact employee development and motivation (Sampson, 2020, p. 68). The formulation of an efficacious leadership theory necessitates the accommodation of evolving generational traits and workplace dynamics through the adaptation of leadership behaviors (Putriastuti & Stasi, 2019, p. 108). The cultivation of flexibility in leadership styles assumes paramount importance in fostering organizational innovation, enhancing change readiness, and nurturing positive workplace attitudes and behaviors (Chaubey et al., 2019; Metwally et al., 2019; Wang & Xu, 2019). Notably, disparate leadership styles wield differential influence over employee innovation capabilities, thereby exerting consequential effects on organizational productivity (Wei & Vasudevan, 2022).

Therefore, this paper aims to explore Macedonian construction workers' perceptions of their leaders' behavior to identify the most positively perceived leadership styles. Subsequent analysis delves into the aforementioned leadership styles.

2.1 Leadership Styles

Emere, Aigbavboa and Thwala (2018) say that an autocratic leader is initially work-focused

because his main goal is to get things done and get them done in a timely manner. This type of leader sets agendas, assigns tasks to subordinates, without consulting them or having any influence on decisions. The decisions are completely taken by the leader himself and he does not expect any objection.

Autocratic leadership implies that subordinates always need guidance and is a style of direct orders and instructions that do not involve any objections from subordinates. This leader dominates team members and controls all decisions with minimal or no input from his follower members. He does not consult with them and makes choices based on personal ideas, attitudes and judgments and rarely accepts advice from subordinates. Autocratic leadership involves absolute and authoritarian control over the team. The leader, alone, first identifies the problem, then considers alternative solutions and chooses the most appropriate one, and finally just communicates and presents the decision to the subordinates. He then directs the team into action, making it clear what he expects of them about what needs to be done, when it needs to be done and how it needs to be done (Liphadzi, Aigbovboa, & Thwala, 2015a). An autocratic leader prefers weak, less knowledgeable but highly obedient workers.

People of this type often have a lightning reaction, are energetic and intelligent and decisively overcome difficulties and solve problems independently. They make decisions quickly and boldly, and are persistent in realizing their realization. Basically, this type of leader tends to be self-confident and doesn't doubt his ability to lead a team. If the leader is well experienced or has access to information that other group members do not have, this leadership style may be appropriate (Kendra, 2015). This style works better and is effective in times of emergency or crisis situations, when decision time is short and immediate action is necessary (Murugesan, 2012; Emere, Aigbavboa, & Thwala, 2018).

Autocratic leaders are considered to be controlling and dictatorial bosses, with dominance that, if it crosses the line, and it can easily happen, it can irritate employees, which can backfire on the work and the company, which is why, in principle , this leadership style is often criticized (Emere, Aigbavboa, & Thwala, 2018). This type of leadership can cause resentment among team members because they cannot contribute ideas, and because their opinion is not sought, and even if it is, they know it will not be respected, and this can lead to them feeling underestimated and dissatisfied (Schaeffer, 2002). This may cause passive resistance on their part, due to which the leader will have to exert continuous pressure and constantly give directions to get things done (Murugesan, 2012). In the construction industry, an autocratic style of project management is useful when the project faces urgent and stressful problems: missed deadlines, lack of available labor and materials, or the risk of excessive change orders (Shamir, 2015).

Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, stands in contrast to autocratic leadership, as it fosters team involvement in decision-making and encourages idea-sharing (Yukl, 2013; Kendra, 2015). Leaders in this style collaborate with subordinates, delegating tasks while welcoming their input and suggestions (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). Through consultation, shared decision-making, and empowerment, democratic leaders inspire initiative, creativity, and a sense of responsibility among team members (Yukl, 2013). This

approach prioritizes feedback, personal development, and team knowledge enhancement (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). While democratic leadership is lauded for its ability to empower and engage employees, some argue it may not always correlate with increased job satisfaction (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008). The leader consults with subordinates and values group discussions but maintains control over the decision-making process, aiming to stimulate self-direction and self-actualization among team members (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). This leadership style is most effective when team members are skilled and motivated to contribute, allowing for better ideas and creative problem-solving (Kendra, 2015). However, it may falter in situations with unclear roles or time constraints (Kendra, 2015). When executed effectively, democratic leadership fosters harmony, motivation, and superior outcomes for all involved parties (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). It promotes collaboration, teamwork, and enhanced performance, making it conducive to success in the construction industry as well.

Transactional leadership involves a mutually beneficial exchange between leaders and followers to achieve set goals (Sorenson & Goethals, 2012). It emphasizes task orientation and establishing contact for negotiation, akin to managerial leadership (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008). This style focuses on meeting followers' physical and safety needs through rewards and punishments, primarily addressing basic needs within the hierarchy (Ismail & Fathi, 2018).

Leaders offer rewards such as bonuses, promotions, or praise for good performance, while also having the authority to impose discipline for substandard work or non-compliance (Northouse, 2019). Punishments may include corrective criticism or negative reinforcement to maintain organizational stability (Northouse, 2019).

Transactional leadership operates on two levels: high-level relationships, which involve emotional support, and low-level relationships, which encompass contractual provisions like pay and benefits (Zulch, 2014). While this style emphasizes control and stability, it may not prioritize promoting change within the organization (Northouse, 2019).

A transformational leader embodies charisma, empathy, inspiration, and intellect, fostering trust and cooperation among followers (Northouse, 2019). Bas (1990) describes transformational leadership as dynamic, leading organizational change while nurturing loyalty and motivation among followers. By raising awareness and transcending self-interests, these leaders cultivate higher levels of motivation and morale (Northouse, 2019). Key characteristics of transformational leadership include:

- Charisma: Leaders serve as role models, inspiring followers to emulate their behavior and ideals.
- Intellectual Stimulation: Leaders encourage innovation and creativity by challenging assumptions and fostering change (Northouse, 2019).
- Individualized Consideration: Leaders show care and support for each follower, nurturing personal growth and development (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008).

Transformational leaders are often referred to as social architects for their ability to

communicate a transformative vision that shapes organizational values and norms (Northouse, 2019). They possess a clear vision of the organization's future state, driving long-term organizational outcomes (Judge & Piccol, 2004). Studies suggest that effective leaders often exhibit transformational qualities (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

While some view transactional and transformational leadership as complementary, others see them as polar opposites (Bhatti et al., 2012). Transactional leaders focus on achieving goals through rewards and punishments, whereas transformational leaders prioritize individualized support and personal development (Bas, 1990). However, Bas (1990) suggests that leaders can embody both styles, with transformational leadership being more suitable for challenging times and transactional leadership for stable environments.

Paternalistic leaders exhibit traits of benevolence and authority, caring for subordinates' personal and workplace issues, extending support to their families, and fostering a familial work environment (Farh et al., 2008). This leadership style combines discipline with paternal/maternal benevolence, with the leader making decisions unilaterally and wielding power within the organization (Sposato, 2019). Paternalistic leadership regulates power dynamics and reputation among employees, leveraging authority to control, protect, and assist subordinates in exchange for loyalty and obedience (Farh et al., 2008).

Northouse (2019) describes both autocratic and paternalistic leadership as forms of dictatorship, with paternalistic leadership being characterized as a "benevolent dictatorship" focused on achieving goals (Sposato, 2019). Followers perceive paternalistic leaders as authoritative figures akin to parental figures, demanding loyalty above all else (Sposato, 2019).

According to Farh et al. (2008), paternalistic leadership is employed to regulate individual behavior and interpersonal relationships among those under the leader's control, reflecting a mutual obligation between leader and followers.

Charismatic leadership, as described by Klein and House (1995), ignites the energy and commitment of followers, surpassing ordinary performance. Weber (1947) defines charisma as possessing exceptional qualities or powers, inspiring devotion and emulation among followers.

Charismatic leaders exhibit strategic insight, self-confidence, and dynamic energy, inspiring idolization among subordinates (Yukl, 2013). They employ symbolic language and strong positive emotions to motivate and influence followers, encouraging internalization of new values and beliefs (Yukl, 2013). Charismatic leaders involve and empower team members, fostering creativity and innovative problem-solving. Each team member is encouraged to become a leader in their own right, contributing to the shared vision.

To be effective, a charismatic leader must possess high energy levels and a strong commitment to the organization's vision, motivating team members to align with this vision (Yukl, 2013). While some followers may be easily inspired, others may require more effort. Nevertheless, charismatic leadership fosters creativity and forward-thinking decision-making, leading to powerful team dynamics (Yukl, 2013).

Characteristics of charismatic leaders include a strong need for power, high self-esteem, and unwavering conviction in their beliefs (Yukl, 2013). Their influence on followers' attitudes and behaviors is facilitated through articulating an attractive vision, effective communication, personal sacrifice, and modeling behaviors aligned with the vision (Yukl, 2013). Additionally, charismatic leaders express optimism, trust, and high expectations for followers, empowering them to achieve collective goals.

Laissez-faire leadership, as described by Northouse (2019), entails the absence of active leadership involvement, where the leader avoids intervening in subordinates' tasks and responsibilities. This style is associated with dissatisfaction, unproductiveness, and ineffectiveness, as the leader provides little guidance or support to meet followers' needs (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008).

Khan et al. (2015) further characterize laissez-faire leadership as "hands-off," where employees are left to make decisions independently without guidance from the leader. While effective in situations where employees are skilled, motivated, and capable of independent work, this style fails when guidance and support are needed due to a lack of knowledge or experience (Khan et al., 2015).

Overall, effective leadership is crucial for organizational success, requiring alignment with organizational needs, employee satisfaction, and the leader's own values and abilities (King, Altman, & Lee, 2011). Developing a personalized leadership style involves understanding one's vision, values, skills, and motivations, as blindly adopting someone else's vision will not suffice due to individual differences in strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, discovering the right leadership style necessitates a deliberate and systematic approach to align personal and organizational realities. Leadership style and individualized consideration positively impact employee development and motivation (Sampson, 2020, p. 68). The formulation of an efficacious leadership theory necessitates the accommodation of evolving generational traits and workplace dynamics through the adaptation of leadership behaviors (Putriastuti & Stasi, 2019, p. 108). The cultivation of flexibility in leadership styles assumes paramount importance in fostering organizational innovation, enhancing change readiness, and nurturing positive workplace attitudes and behaviors (Chaubey et al., 2019; Metwally et al., 2019; Wang & Xu, 2019). Notably, disparate leadership styles wield differential influence over employee innovation capabilities, thereby exerting consequential effects on organizational productivity (Wei & Vasudevan, 2022).

The construction sector confronts a myriad of challenges amidst a surge in project demand, including resource scarcity, heightened risks, logistical impediments, and project delays and overruns. Scholars have diligently endeavored to develop comprehensive leadership success factors integrating digital advancements to ameliorate these challenges (Akinosho et al., 2020; Alaloul et al, 2020; Ngavo, 2021). Leadership competencies have ascended to prominence within both academic and industrial spheres, particularly amidst the transition to Industry 4.0 and the digitalization of the economy. The prevailing scholarly consensus underscores the imperative for updated leadership competencies to adeptly navigate the complexities of the 21st-century landscape.

2.2 Other Studies Findings

The empirical literature on leadership in the construction sector highlights various leadership styles and their impact on organizational outcomes. Despite some gaps in research, findings from different regions provide valuable insights into effective leadership practices.

Yukongdi (2004) conducted a study in Thailand, revealing a preference for consultative and participative management styles among construction workers. Transformational leadership emerged as dominant, associated with better organizational outcomes compared to transactional or laissez-faire styles. Similarly, a study in Nigeria by Adogbo, Kolo, and Nzekwe (2017) found transformational leadership to be the most preferred and successful style for project execution.

In South Africa, Liphadzi (2015) found transformational leadership to be most favored, followed by transactional and democratic styles. Autocratic and laissez-faire styles showed lower correlations with project success. Mendez et al. (2013) observed in Mexico that liberal leadership styles were more effective for small construction businesses, while autocratic leadership was less favored.

Toor and Ogunlana (2006) noted higher ratings for attributes of transformational leaders compared to transactional leaders, suggesting a preference for inspirational leadership behaviors. However, Jung et al. (2014) found preferences for both autocratic and participative leaders among construction professionals, highlighting cultural variations in leadership preferences.

Studies emphasize the importance of cultural context on leadership behaviors (Lok & Crawford, 2004). Emere, Aigbavboa, and Thwala (2019) identified critical leadership traits in South Africa, emphasizing communication skills, integrity, and self-discipline, among others.

Overall, while transformational leadership appears prevalent and effective in many contexts, cultural differences influence leadership styles and their effectiveness. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, especially in underrepresented regions like North Macedonia, to enhance understanding and inform effective leadership practices in the construction sector.

3. Research Methodology

The primary data for this study was collected using a questionnaire administered through Google Forms. Recognizing the reluctance of individuals to participate in surveys where their identities are exposed, the questionnaire was designed to ensure anonymity. This approach aimed to encourage candid responses from 88 employees of Macedonian construction companies, thus enhancing the validity and relevance of the research. Each leadership style was evaluated using five questions, with the exception of laissez-faire leadership, which was assessed through four questions. The formulation of questions for each style was guided by seminal works such as those of Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973), Northouse (2019), Kalshoven, Den Hartog, and De Hoogh (2011), Cheng et al. (2004), De Hoogh, Den Hartog, and Koopman (2004), Bass (1985), and Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1997).

The research aims to test two hypotheses regarding leadership styles in the construction sector:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The most frequently used leadership style in the construction sector is democratic.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The least used leadership style in the construction sector is laissez-faire.

The statistical analysis and validation of the two hypotheses were conducted using the International Business Machines Corporation Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) version 26. The tests performed include descriptive statistics: to analyze the representation in the research and the responses to the questions and calculation of scores using mean values of the responses. All tests were conducted at a 95% confidence interval, and values of $p<0.05$ were considered statistically significant.

4. Research Findings

In this section, we analyzed the representation of different leadership styles practiced by leaders in the construction sector in the country. The respondents' opinions and indices for each leadership characteristic were analyzed separately. The leadership styles are then ranked according to representation.

Table 1. Assessment of authorial leadership style

Question number	Question	Index
1	My supervisor makes most of the decisions and only announces them to the rest of the employees	3.32
2	My supervisor believes that most employees are insecure in their work and need direction	2.86
3	My supervisor gives employees little freedom to act independently	2.66
4	My supervisor believes that employee performance is entirely dependent on higher levels	3.16
5	My supervisor is boss-centric	3.34
EVALUATION OF AUTOCRATIC STYLE		**3.07**

Autocratic leaders are rated mostly as directed towards the bosses instead of the employees (M=3.34), and then similarly, that they make decisions and only announce them in front of the other employees (M=3.32). The average rating of these leaders is 3.07, and the lowest point is that they give employees little freedom to act independently (M=2.66). The overall opinion that their leaders believe that employees' results are completely dependent on higher levels is rated at 3.16, and that they believe that most employees are insecure in their work and need direction at 2.86.

Table 2. Rating of democratic leadership style

Question number	Question	Index
6	My supervisor presents problems, provides ideas, and allows questions and suggestions from employees	4.02
7	My supervisor presents an interim decision and asks employees to participate in the decision	3.80
8	My supervisor is focused on the team and the employees	4.25
9	My supervisor provides no-pressure guidance, and employees have a key role in setting their own performance goals	3.86
10	My supervisor delegates challenging responsibilities to the team	3.61
EVALUATION OF DEMOCRATIC STYLE		**3.91**

Leaders are recognized as democratic more than the previous, autocratic ones (M=3.91). This opinion of the construction workers is mostly influenced by the perception that the supervisor is focused on the team and employees (M=4.25) and that he presents problems, gives ideas and allows questions and suggestions from his subordinates (M=4.02). Respondents showed solid positive attitudes regarding democratic leadership characteristics in terms of other statements, i.e. that their supervisor provides guidance without pressure, and employees have a key role in setting their own performance goals (M=3.86) and that they present temporary decision and requires employees to participate in decision-making (M=3.80). The least respondents supported the view that their leader delegates challenging responsibilities to the team (M=3.61).

Table 3. Assessment of transactional leadership style

Question number	Question	Index
11	My supervisor provides a satisfactory exchange for my efforts (praise, compensation, rewards, promotions, recognition, etc.)	3.73
12	My supervisor expresses satisfaction when I perform well	4.11
13	My supervisor only takes action when the problem becomes serious	3.48
14	My supervisor tracks all errors	3.98
15	My supervisor clarifies what can be expected to be gained when the set goals are achieved	4.05
EVALUATION OF TRANSACTION STYLE		**3.87**

Respondents in recognizing their leader as transactional (M=3.87) mostly agree that he expresses satisfaction when subordinates perform well (M=4.11) and that he clarifies what can be expected to be obtained when they are achieved the set goals (M=4.05). The least stated that their superior takes measures only when the problem becomes serious (M=3.48).

Ensuring a satisfactory exchange for their efforts, which includes praise, monetary compensation, rewards, promotions, recognition, etc., was evaluated by the respondents as very good (M=3.73), but they also evaluated the monitoring of the mistakes of the employees as such (M=3.98).

Table 4. Assessment of transformational leadership style

Question number	Question	Index
16	My supervisor expresses confidence in achieving the goal	4.25
17	My supervisor requires a different perspective in problem solving	3.82
18	My supervisor suggests new ways to complete my work	3.75
19	My supervisor spends time training and coaching	3.75
20	My supervisor treats me as an individual rather than a member of a group and pays attention to me	3.23
EVALUATION OF TRANSFORMATION STYLE		**3.76**

Employees recognize transformational leadership qualities in their supervisor (M=3.76), which is mostly due to the fact that the supervisor expresses confidence in achieving the goal, which is rated as excellent (M=4.25). Supervisors know very well how to ask employees to apply a different perspective in solving problems (M=3.82), how to propose new ways to complete work (M=3.75). They spend quality time on training and coaching, a moment that is also rated as very good by the employees (M=3.75). The opinion that superiors treat workers as individuals instead of as members of a group is neutral, and in terms of the attention they give them (M=3.23).

Table 5. Rating of paternalistic leadership style

Question number	Question	Index
21	Outside of work relationships, my supervisor expresses concern about my daily life	3.25
22	My supervisor is trying to understand why I am not performing well	3.82
23	My supervisor encourages me when I encounter difficult problems	3.95
24	My supervisor also takes good care of my family members	3.27
25	My supervisor will help me in an emergency	4.23
EVALUATION OF PATERNALISTIC STYLE		**3.70**

Construction workers also recognize characteristics of paternalistic leaders in their superiors (M=3.70), as a result of which they believe that their superiors will help them in an emergency (M=4.23). They also indicate a very good experience in terms of the fact that their

superiors encourage them when they encounter difficult problems (M=395) and always try to understand the reason when one of the employees does not work well (M=3.82). That outside of work relations, superiors express concern for the daily life of their subordinates and that they take good care of their family members, employees had a neutral opinion (M=3.25 and M=3.27, respectively).

Table 6. Rating of charismatic leadership style

Question number	Question	Index
26	My manager talks to employees about what's important to them	4.09
27	My supervisor encourages employees to think independently	4.00
28	My manager encourages employees to develop their talents as best as possible	4.30
29	My manager has a vision and a picture of the future	4.23
30	My manager encourages employees to think about problems in new ways	4.07
EVALUATION OF CHARISMATIC STYLE		**4.14**

Macedonian leaders are mostly characterized as charismatic (M=4.14), because they have an excellent vision and picture of the future (M=4.23). They find a very good way to encourage employees to develop their talents as best as possible (M=4.30), talking to them about what is important to them (M=4.09) and encouraging them to think about the problems of new ways (M=4.07) and independently (M=4.00).

Table 7. Rating of laissez-faire leadership style

Question number	Question	Index
31	My supervisor avoids getting involved when important issues come up	2.36
32	My supervisor is absent when needed	2.11
33	My supervisor avoids making decisions	2.09
34	My supervisor delays responding to urgent questions	1.95
EVALUATION OF LAISSEZ-FAIRE STYLE		**2.13**

Leaders in construction are the most unrecognized as laissez-faire leaders (M=2.13), which is a good figure. Employees in the construction sector did not agree with any statement regarding this style (M<3). Next, we ranked the leadership styles according to the frequency of use, that is, according to the recognition of certain leadership characteristics among subordinates.

Table 8 displays the ranking of leadership styles according to their usage in North Macedonia's construction industry:

Table 8. Ranking of leadership styles according to use

Leadership style	Index	Rank
Autocratic	3.07	6
Democratic	3.91	2
Transactional	3.87	3
Transformational	3.76	4
Paternalistic	3.70	5
Charismatic	4.14	1
Laissez-faire	2.13	7

From Table 8, it's evident that the charismatic leadership style is the most frequently utilized in the construction sector of North Macedonia, with an average response index of 4.14. Conversely, the least practiced styles are laissez-faire leadership (2.13) and autocratic leadership (3.07), indicating satisfactory data.

Democratic and transactional leadership styles are also recognized among leaders, with moderate levels of use (3.91 and 3.87, respectively), ranking them as the second and third most prevalent styles.

Transformational and paternalistic leadership styles are comparatively less common, ranking fourth and fifth, respectively, in terms of usage.

Based on these findings, we reject Hypothesis 1, concluding that the most frequently used leadership style in the construction sector is not democratic but rather charismatic. However, we confirm Hypothesis 2, as the least utilized leadership style is indeed laissez-faire.

5. Conclusion

The findings regarding transformational and paternalistic leadership styles are intriguing, as they are relatively less represented compared to charismatic, democratic, and transactional styles. While transformational leadership has been widely recognized as effective in various contexts, its lower prevalence among Macedonian construction leaders suggests potential areas for improvement in fostering a more inclusive and developmental leadership approach.

Similarly, the limited presence of paternalistic leadership, which combines strong discipline with benevolence, indicates a departure from practices observed in other regions such as Thailand. This suggests that Macedonian construction leaders may prioritize other leadership styles over paternalistic approaches, potentially reflecting cultural differences or organizational preferences.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of leadership versatility and adaptability in the construction sector in North Macedonia. While charismatic leadership appears to be prominent, there is room for enhancing the adoption of transformational leadership practices to foster greater employee engagement, innovation, and organizational effectiveness. By cultivating a leadership culture that values inclusivity, collaboration, and continuous

improvement, Macedonian construction firms can better position themselves for success in an increasingly competitive and dynamic industry landscape.

The findings of this study hold several practical implications for leaders and organizations within the construction industry in North Macedonia. Firstly, the prevalence of charismatic leadership suggests that leaders should focus on developing and honing their charismatic qualities, such as strategic insight, strong convictions, and dynamic energy, to inspire and motivate their teams effectively. Secondly, while democratic and transactional leadership styles are also recognized among leaders, there is room for enhancing their implementation to foster collaboration and goal attainment within construction projects. Moreover, the relatively lower usage of transformational and paternalistic leadership styles indicates an opportunity for leaders to explore these approaches to further improve employee engagement, organizational commitment, and overall project performance. Lastly, the limited adoption of laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles aligns with best practices, highlighting the importance of avoiding overly passive or authoritarian leadership behaviors that can hinder productivity and morale. Overall, this study underscores the importance of aligning leadership styles with the unique demands and challenges of the construction sector in North Macedonia to drive success and sustainability in construction projects.

One significant limitation of this study pertains to the challenge of engaging construction workers in research activities. Many individuals in this field are deeply absorbed in their work responsibilities, leaving them with limited time or inclination to participate in research endeavors. Several factors contribute to this lack of interest, including the perception that participation offers little personal benefit, concerns about potential repercussions from supervisors, and apprehension regarding how their responses may be interpreted and utilized in the future. These factors collectively diminish the willingness of construction workers to engage with research initiatives, thereby limiting the breadth and depth of data that can be collected for analysis.

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