A TELSA School Leaders' Self-Assessment Application: A Case of Private Schools in Albania

Ibrahim Can Korkut[*]

PhD Candidate, Depo Luli Magjistralja Prishtinë-Shkup km 4,Prishtinë 10000, Kosova

Email: ickorkut13@epoka.edu.al

Abstract

Competition in private schooling of our fast changing and globalized world demands higher qualities, at least significant development, not to fall behind and consequently lose the challenge. Schools play a crucial role in everybody's life and families demand better education and outcomes for their children's future. School leaders are the ones who can lead the development by keeping in touch with improvements and (inter)national requirements of success. All developments start with assessing the current state and making plans accordingly. However, leaders should start assessment from themselves. Especially in last twenty years, there have been more efforts to set standards for school leadership, their professional assessment and development. Self-assessments are formative assessments which can help leaders to develop their leadership knowledge, skills and practice if necessary steps are taken. Training and Educational Leader Self-Assessment (TELSA) as a free and thrust-worthy assessment tool with various dimensions can serve for the purpose as it is used as a school leaders' self-assessment tool in this research. The purpose of this research is to find out how school leaders in Albanian private schools assess themselves, their strongest and weakest leadership development fields. The research focuses on three subdivisions as gender, educational background and work experience to classify their strongest and weakest points from the point of self-development. The results provide some cautionary signals to remind the school leaders of modern-world leadership concepts and advances.

Keywords: School leader; self-development; assessment; Telsa.

----

* Corresponding author.

1. Introduction

"Leadership assessment follows locally determined, contract-driven review processes largely for personnel purposes" [1]. In general, the three basic uses of assessment tools are for management of personnel, leaders' improvement/learning and improvement of organizations. Assessment tools and their results can set control over organizations, new learning/improvement objectives and policy making. From another point of view, assessment tools can provide information on responsibilities, knowledge and skills, processes and organizational outcomes [2].

Two main types of assessment tests, summative and formative, have different purposes although they both measure the competence of an assessee and try to evaluate a leader's knowledge and ability. Summative assessments are used for employment concerns and there is no improvement plan or remediation after performing the test. However, it is a difficult and risky decision to make someone redundant merely due to an assessment test. Furthermore, such a usage without any feedback and development agenda is cause of stress over school leaders. The formative one serves as a personal development plan while it also measures the competence. When assessment tools are used as feedbacks, they serve as constructive tools for better performance in the future. Studies on assessments and their feedback in different fields such as athletics [3], computer technologies [4], medicine [5], military [6] and other learning contexts [7] have all investigated the formative role of feedback. Lessons from different studies on the purposes, uses, feedback and revision of assessments have important implications for education to improve practice. However, the matter has not yet been extensively studied in school leadership [1].

Another important issue about assessment tests is their reliability and validity. The key point of reliability is that the same conclusions should be drawn under specific circumstances. For an assessment test to be reliable, stable responses should be taken from different people under the same circumstances and factors. In short, reliability is a matter of stability. When it comes to validity, the basic rule for the validity of any assessment tool is that it must measure what it tends to. Some questions for these purposes should be answered as relevance of what is measured as school outcomes, challenges and actions in demand.

Basically, there are two types of validity as content and construct validity. Content validity deals with the all dimensions of a construct and it is degreed according to the test item measuring a construct. A school leader's performance is an issue of such validity. This kind of validity should be established by linking test items to a practice or a set of standards, such as VAL-ED. Construct validity is "the degree to which a test measures what it claims, or purports, to be measuring" [8]. In other words, a test should measure the intended construct, the notion built on purpose by the researcher to hypothesize the hidden variable. Construct validity is fixed according to the degree that test components measure a construct and it is mostly used for linguistic studies, social sciences and psychology.

From the point of school management, school leaders or/and their superiors set a frame of objectives to be reached and evaluated within or/and outside the school at the end of the academic year. Most school leadership assessments focus on school leaders' current practices. School leadership assessments provide school leaders

and their superiors useful data about school outcomes and whether they meet school leadership standards. As the National Association of Elementary School Principals [9] states that along with greater emphasis on instruction, assessment should focus more on actual behavior and actions, rather than knowledge or traits. In addition, development must be the basic concern of school leadership assessments and should be applied with long intervals to see continual development. Especially if assessment tools create meaningful and continual feedback, it provides an improvement (or learning) loop/cycle [10].

Different aspects of school leadership such as relations with a community, school facilities, curriculum and programs, personnel management, students' achievement and behavior, professional development, staff commitment are used as assessment facilities. According to the Council of Chief State School Officers [11] "a performance assessment system that is able to change behaviors and results must be focused on a narrow and prioritized set of observable behaviors – 'driver behaviors' – that if improved, will have the greatest likelihood of improving the quality of teaching and learning".

Assessment tools do not tell what actions to take but it is possible to find out weaknesses and strengths of leaders in different fields of leadership if the results are analyzed well. Through the analysis of assessment tests supervisors can lead school leaders to professional improvement (programs/trainings) that are suitable for each person.

Critics on school leadership assessments should also be taken into account for their development and effectiveness. One major area/purpose of school leadership assessment tools is to measure school leaders' impact on students' learning. There is still a lack of such measures in the field of education [12]. The biggest problem in this field might be that without any assessment tool with psychometric development and consensus, many organizations continue to measure their educational leaders' competencies and abilities. For instance, in the USA assessment instruments have little consensus in spite of the fact that they claim that they are based on the ISLLC Standards or derived from and only two-thirds of assessment tools used in the USA monitor curriculum, quality instruction, learning culture or professional behavior [13].

Except for the problems of validity, credibility and consensus, assessment tools/instruments are mostly applied by governments through supervisors for personnel purposes without any concern for professional development. They are conducted as formal questionnaires once a year without any improvement plans behind. Another drawback of some assessment tools is that try to measure a wide range of leadership aspects without any depth.

Gronn [14] expresses the concern that standards-driven headship training regime may have a negative impact on headship recruitment. Mongan and Ingvarson [15] claim that some tools such as the Australian state of Victoria's principal management system suffers from the lack of linkage between improvements of students' outcomes, quality management and performance management. As a result, there are not enough researches about the effects of assessment tools on school leaders and there is much more way to go.

2. Training and Educational Leader Self-Assessment (TELSA) as a Self-Assessment Tool

TELSA as a self-assessment tool was first initialized by the Westinghouse Electric Company of CBS, Inc. for

the U.S. Department of Energy's Carlsbad Area Office (CAO) in 1998. CAO itself has had more than 8000 transfers to U.S. schools and 500 companies and small businesses [16].

The purpose of the tool is to regulate educational leaders' training and their need for improvement. TELSA is designed to be useful for the following leadership positions [17]:

- Academic Dean
- Academic Department Chair
- Human Resources Development Manager
- Organizational Development Manager
- Organizational Learning Manager
- School Principal
- School Superintendent
- Training Manager/Director
- Training or Educational Team Leader

Moreover, TELSA deals with more specific areas of school leadership with sufficient number of items for each section as it has the following sections:

- Lead Analysis, Design, and development of Instruction
- Lead Implementation of Instruction
- Lead Evaluation of Institution
- Lead Staff Development
- Perform Learner-Related Administrative Duties
- Perform Staff-Related Administrative Duties
- Perform Budgetary and Other Administrative Duties
- Communicative / Use Communication Technology
- Self-Development
- Crisis Management

Organizations and individuals can focus on any desired section(s) and can get immediate advice for the section. In addition, after evaluating each section TELSA gives a set of advice for three groups of school leaders according to the total average of each section. Table 1 below shows the list of advice for each group.

TELSA is a free assessment tool which consists of 40 pages in ten different sections and engages a Difficulty-Importance-Frequency (DIF) analysis. Table 2 below shows the DIF table of TELSA.

After the DIF analysis, TELSA also gives the assessee with an average score of 12-15 a list of reading material for each section [17].

Table 1: TELSA list of advice

SCORE	ADVICE
3 - 7	No formal training or development necessary - address your specific needs through reading and/or coaching from a mentor.
8 - 11	Initial formal training and development necessary (train one time). Take a college or commercial training course. Attend a seminar.
12 - 15	Initial and on-going training and development necessary. Take a college or commercial training course; attend a seminar. Follow up with refresher courses and seminars.

(Source: http://www.e-lead.org/library/tesla_westinghouse.pdf)

Table 2: The DIF table of TELSA

Difficulty in Performing task Properly	Importance of Performing task Properly	Frequency in Performing task
1 = EASY for me to perform	1 = of MINIMAL IMPORTANCE	D = I perform this task DAILY or more
2 = SOMEWHAT EASY for me to perform	2 = of SOME IMPORTANCE	W = I perform this task WEEKLY
3 = AVERAGE DIFFICULTY for me to perform	3 = of AVARAGE IMPORTANCE	M = I perform this task MONTHLY
4 = DIFFICULT for me to perform	4 = of ABOVE AVERAGE IMPORTANCE	Y = I perform this task YEARLY or less
5 = VERY DIFFICULT for me to perform	5 = of EXTREME IMPORTANCE	N = I have NEVER performed this task

(Source: http://www.e-lead.org/library/tesla_westinghouse.pdf)

3. Material and Method

The research has a descriptive quality to find out how school leaders in private schools in Albania assess themselves from the point of self-development, which aspects of school leadership they find important and difficult and how often they apply to means of school leadership development. The research measures the differences between variables as gender, educational background and years of work experience as well. The research focuses on personal and professional development of school leaders. Furthermore, it is an important concern of the research to introduce some modern-world leadership concepts to school leaders since they might be absorbed in their own way of leading/managing without thinking some key concepts of leadership.

The first step to apply an assessment tool is to choose the right one, at least an appropriate one. TELSA has some reasons to be chosen in this meaning. First of all, it is a free tool designed by an experienced and

respectable organization (the Westinghouse Electric Company of CBS, Inc.) for a governmental body (the U.S. Department of Energy's Carlsbad Area Office) that has been developing assessment tools since 1995. In addition, the main purpose of TELSA is to provide advice and help to educational leaders and organizations with development needs. It can be applied to a wide range of educational leadership positions from training managers to academic deans [16]. Moreover, TELSA deals with more specific areas of school leadership with sufficient number of items for each section and provides a list of reading material for each group of educational leaders to develop according to their average results.

It is clear that the length of assessment and the method that it uses affects the results considerably. Even though assessees respond to the items, concentration falls greatly when there are too many items. At the beginning of the research, the author of this research tried different assessment tools to have a general idea about the practice. Only one school leader showed willingness to respond to a 50-item assessment while others found it too long to complete. This experience alone shows the urge to develop a sense of assessment applications. As TELSA has ten different sections within the tool, it allows researchers to pick an independent section to be applied without losing assessees' attention. As TELSA has got seven items in the self-development section, the author has taken the first six items and added five items to the assessment. Below are the items used in the research.

1. Assess your own work performance
2. Manage your time - handle multiple priorities
3. Handle job stress
4. Balance work life with home life
5. Obtain a mentor
6. Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities
7. Ask others to assess your work performance
8. Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them
9. Inform your staff about your self-development efforts
10. Follow technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development
11. Take up a new activity or hobby that is not your organization's requirement

A five-level Likert scale is used and each item has three dimensions as 'Difficulty', 'Importance' and 'Frequency'.

The research frame of this research includes private pre-university educational institutions in four cities of Albania. Having chosen the assessment tool for school leaders' self-development, the purpose of the tool was explained to the executives of 15 private educational institutions from four different cities and asked for permission. Although all the institutions helped greatly, no results have been handled by the organizations. The results have been collected through e-mails or face-to-face fulfillments. Within the frame of school leaders, headmasters, assistants of headmasters who are responsible for the curriculum and assistant who are responsible for consultancy, head of hostels and head of departments have taken part as the phrase 'school/educational leaders' does not mean only headmasters/principals. Gender (male/female), years of work experience (1-3/4-9/10 or more years) and educational background (science/social) are used as variables to identify the weaknesses and strengths of each group.

Total number of assessees is sixty-nine. Gender, background education and work experience are three subdivisions of the assessment. The distribution of subdivisions is given below in Figure 3.

Table 3: Subdivisions and the numbers and percentages of assessees

ASSESSEES (TOTAL NUMBER: 69)	SUBDIVISIONS						
	GENDER		EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND		WORK EXPERIENCE		
	MALE	FEMALE	SCIENCE	SOCIAL	1-3	4-9	10+
NUMBER OF ASSESSEES	45	24	30	39	22	24	23
PERCENTAGE OF ASSESSEES	% 65	% 35	% 43.5	% 56.5	% 31.9	% 34.8	% 33.3

As it can be concluded from the above-given numbers, majority of school leaders are males. But in the other subdivisions contributions are almost equal. Another important fact is that the average of school leaders' age is quite low (approximately the average is around 30-32 years).

4. Results

The first aim of the research is to find out overall averages of all items to find out how private school leaders in Albania evaluate their self-development, and their strongest and weakest points. Figure 1 shows the averages for eleven items from the highest to the lowest.
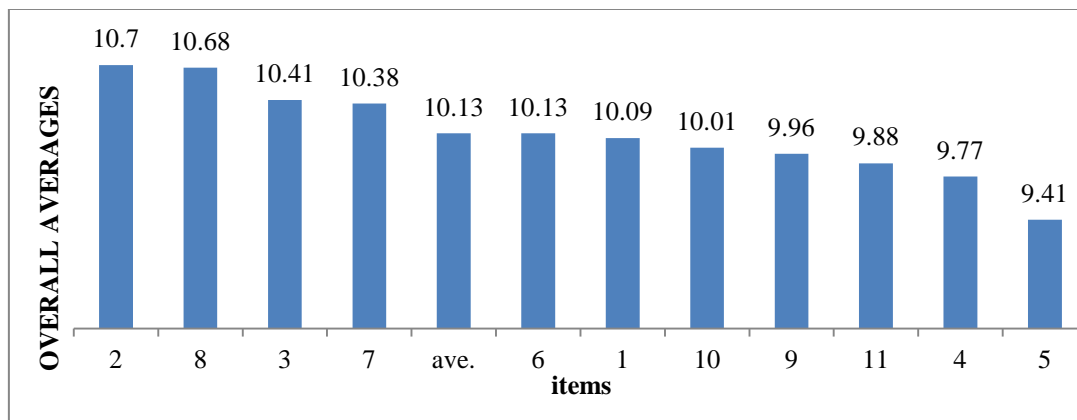

Figure 1: Overall averages of private school leaders in Albania by items

As it is seen from Figure 1, the overall average of 69 educational leaders is 10.13 which fall into the group of 'Score of 8-11' in Table 1. TELSA providers advice for this group 'initial formal training and development' once, taking a college or commercial training course and attending a seminar. This group is considered as the

moderate one and the providers do not give any list of reading material for this group although it could be useful to read as reading can serve anybody as self-assessment tool. However, it is a very positive result that none of the averages of eleven items fall into the third group that requires immediate and the most intensive attention. Additionally, Figure 1 allows to comment that educational leaders of private schools in Albania evaluate themselves as the weakest in 'managing their time - handle multiple priorities (item 2)' and 'setting their own self-development targets and plans and follow them' (item 8) where they claim 'balancing work life with home life (item 4)' and 'obtaining a mentor (item 5)' as their strongest quality. It can be a result of fast-paced work-life in private institutions as one needs to handle a lot of different tasks at the same time and leaders do not find enough time to think about their own development as all the concentration goes the organizational development despite the importance of self-development. Therefore, as one of their strongest point 'obtaining a mentor' becomes very important. A very surprising result is that although they think managing time is their weakest point, they also claim that they are successful in balancing work life and family life. Also they find their jobs stressful and they estimate out-of-job activities as good resource.

Table 4 compares the results between 2004 TELSA average results of 32 rising administrators for self-development in Arizona in February 2003 [18] and average results of 59 school leaders for self-development Albania in 2012.

Table 4: Averages of TELSA school leaders' self-development results in Arizona in 2003 and in Albania in 2012

	Difficulty	Importance	Frequency	Sum
Arizona 2003	2.34	4.55	1.6	8.49
Albania 2012	3.3	4.02	2.81	10.13

According to the results given above in Table 4 private school leaders in Albania find leadership development more difficult than the rising administrators in Arizona in 2003. Additionally, Albanian administrators / school leaders' attribute less attention to self-development. Finally, frequency of self-development practice by school leaders in Albanian private schools is much lower with an average of 2.81 which means almost once a month in spite of the fact that the average in Arizona assessees was 1.6 which is in the middle of once a day and once a week making an approximate average of once every three or four days. The same frequency average for private school leaders in Albania according to the average of 2.81 is once every 24-25 days. Total average in Arizona was 8.49. That is in the lowest part of the second group for advice list. The overall average in this research is 10.13. That is also in the second group but closer to the third one. However, some variables such as nine years difference and where the assessment came from may have played a role in the results.

Figure 2 according to the subdivisions also shows a similar result. Educational leaders in the subdivisions of '4-to-9-year work experience and ten or more years of work experience' are the group in need of self-development most meanwhile the subdivision with minimal experience are on the other side of the self-development chart.

Another result worth-mentioning is that school leaders with a social educational background need more development attempts than the ones with a scientific background. Table 5 shows school leaders' strongest and weakest points according to the subdivisions.
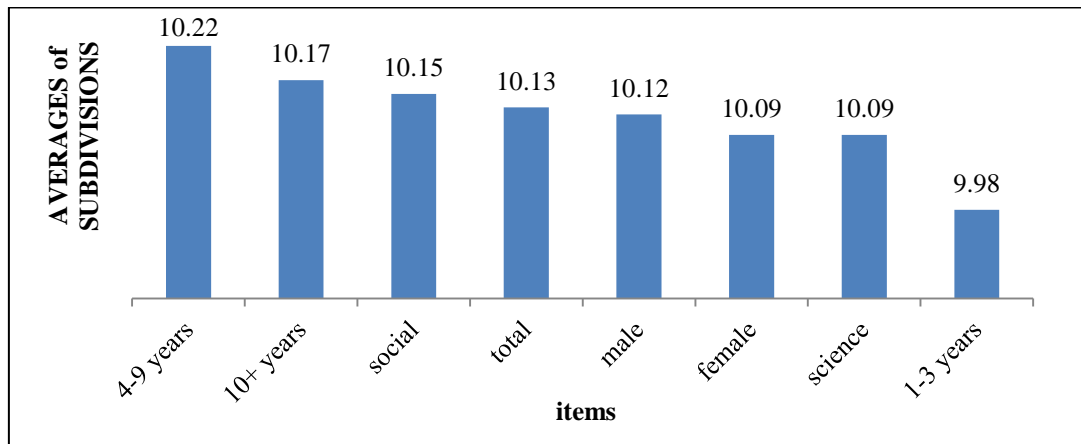

Figure 2: Averages of subdivisions

Table 5: School leaders' strongest and weakest points according to subdivisions.

	Male	Female	Science	Social	1-3 Years	4-9 Years	10 & 10+ Years
Weakest	Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them	Manage your time - handle multiple priorities	Ask others to assess your work performance / Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them	Manage your time - handle multiple priorities	Manage your time - handle multiple priorities	Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them Manage your time - handle multiple priorities	Handle job stress
Strongest	Obtain a mentor	Follow technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development	Obtain a mentor	Obtain a mentor	Balance work life with home life	Obtain a mentor	Obtain a mentor

It is vivid from the Table 5 that school leaders evaluate 'managing their time - handle multiple priorities' and 'setting their own self-development targets and plans and follow them' as weakest points while evaluating 'obtaining a mentor' as their strongest point. It is the author's personal point of view that although none of the school leaders involved in the face-to-face survey had a personal mentor, they pointed out 'obtaining a mentor' as their strongest point. One reason behind that can be that all school administrators had regular meetings with their colleagues at least once a week or every two weeks. It seems that they consider the meetings with their colleagues a practice of obtaining a mentor although they are not personal.
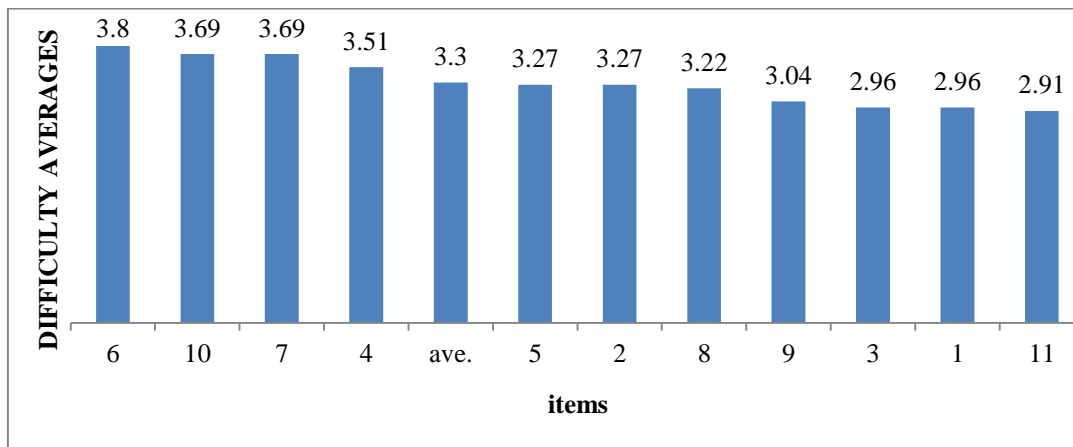

Figure 3: Difficulty averages of private school leaders in Albania by items

According to the difficulty averages in Figure 3, private school leaders in Albania find 'developing their educational/training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (item 6)', 'following technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development (item 10)' and 'asking others to assess their work performance (item 7)' the most difficult. These are the most direct items for self-development and some precautions should be taken to set self-development on the right track since from this point of view the picture is quite gloomy. They consider 'taking up a new activity or hobby that is not their organization's requirement (item 11)', 'assessing their own work performance (item 1)' and 'handling job stress (item 3)' as the easiest of all. All these items may be a sign of self-confidence. When the averages in Figure 1 and Figure 3 are taken into consideration as they show private school leaders in Albania have problems of taking self-development actions, it can be a dangerous psychology to trust themselves without direct actions or efforts of self-development.

According to Table 6 above, all subdivisions - except for science and social - find 'developing their educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' as the most difficult task to be fulfilled while they all – except for school leaders with 1-3-year experience – find 'taking up a new activity or hobby that is not their organization's requirement' as the easiest. It is quite interesting that school leaders with 1-3-year experience find 'handling job stress' as the easiest. One reason could be that they might feel enthusiastic to work as they are in their first years of career. The averages in brackets show how many percent of them chose the most difficult one as 'very difficult' and the easiest one as 'very easy'. For instance, as the highest of the difficulty range, % 40.9 of school leaders with 1-3-year work experience stated that they find 'balancing their work life with home life' as very difficult while % 37.5 of school leaders with 4-9-year experience stated that they find 'taking up a

new activity or hobby that is not their organization's requirement' easy. As the highest and most common one, % 31.9 of all school leaders find 'develop their educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' very difficult. % 18.8 of all school leaders find 'taking up a new activity or hobby that is not their organization's requirement' as easy. This item is also the item that was chosen as easy by most subdivisions.

Table 6: Table of Difficulty for Private School leaders according to Subdivisions in Albania.

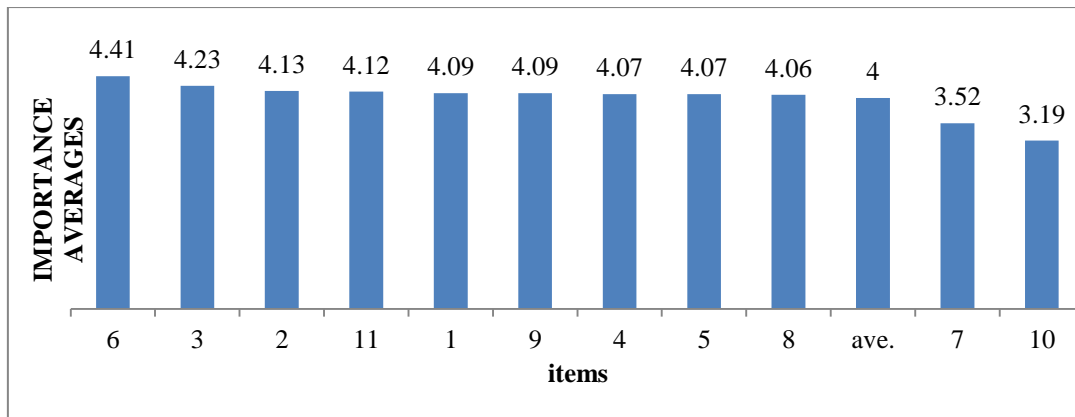|	Male	Female	Science	Social	1-3 Years	4-9 Years	10+ Years
The MOST DIFFICULT	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%31.6)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%33.3)	Ask others to assess your work performance (%36.7)	Manage your time - handle multiple priorities (%17.9)	Develop your educational / training leadership … (%27.3) Balance work life with home life (%40.9) Follow technological improvements and products (%31.8)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%33.3)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%34.8)
The EASIEST	Take up a new activity or hobby that is not your organization's requirement (%22.2)	Take up a new activity or hobby that is not your organization's requirement (%12.5)	Take up a new activity or hobby that is not your organization's requirement (%23.3) Handle job stress (%6.7)	Take up a new activity or hobby that is not your organization's requirement (%15.4)	. Handle job stress (%4.5)	Take up a new activity or hobby that is not your organization's requirement (%37.5)	Take up a new activity or hobby that is not your organization's requirement (%8.7) Inform your staff about your self-development efforts (%0)

152

Figure 4: Importance averages of private school leaders in Albania by items

According to Figure 4, school leaders in private schools in Albania take 'handling job stress' and 'developing their educational/training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' as the most important whereas 'following technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development' and 'asking others to assess their work performance' as the least important ones. It is a conflicting result as they do not see consulting others as very important self-development aid. The reason for technological issue can be that in every school there is some staff with a good understanding of technological developments and tools, such as teachers of computer studies, and school leaders leave these topics to them.

Table 7: Table of Importance for Private School leaders in Albania

	Male	Female	Science	Social	1-3 Years	4-9 Years	10+ Years
The MOST IMPORTANT	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%73.3)	Assess your own work performance (%70.8)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%70)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%69.2)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%59.1)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%75)	Handle job stress (%65.2)
The LEAST IMPORTANT	(%17.8)	(%12.5)	(%23.3)	(%10.3)	(%9.1)	(%20.8)	(%17.4)
	Follow technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development						

Table 7 shows that female school leaders place 'assessing their own work performance' as the most important one while school leaders with 10 or more years' find 'handling job stress' the most important one as different from all the other subdivisions. Table 6 and Table 7 indicate that the school leaders with most work experience declare more job stress than the least experienced ones. All the subdivisions agree on that 'following technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development' is the least important value

for school leaders' self-development. According to the averages in brackets % 75 of school leaders with 4-9-year work experience find 'developing your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' extremely important while % 23.3 of school leaders with science background find 'following technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development' minimally important.

Overall average of 'developing their educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' is % 69.5 as the highest and the most common for all school leaders. On the other side, % 15.9 of all school leaders find 'following technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development' the least important.
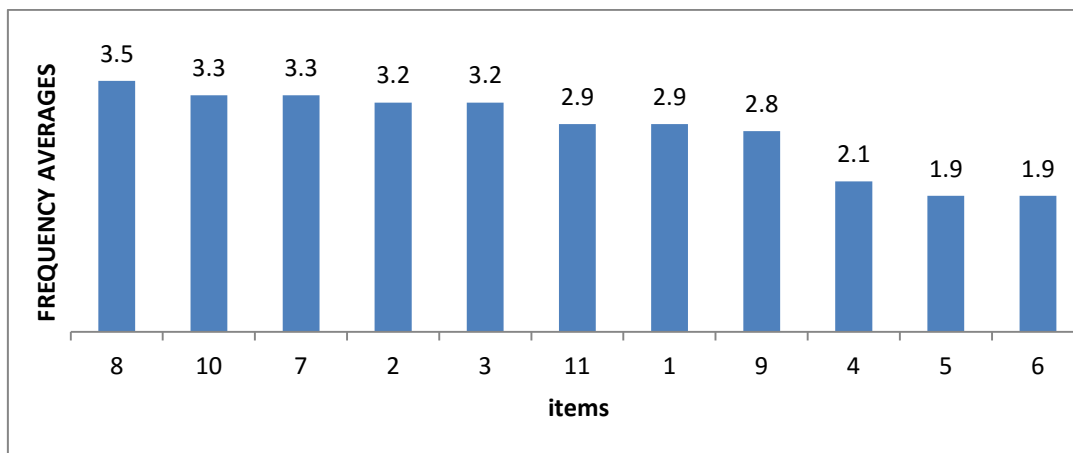

Figure 5: Frequency averages of private school leaders in Albania by items

According to Figure 5, school leaders in private schools in Albania apply 'setting their own self-development targets and plans and follow them' as seldom as every six months as the least frequent one followed by 'following technological improvements and products from the point of leadership development' as the second least important means of self-development. On the other hand, they apply 'obtaining a mentor' and 'developing their educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' as often as every week. They place more importance on the development of their leadership skills than technological developments.

It can be derived from Table 8 that private school leaders in Albania try to 'develop their educational/training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' without paying much attention to 'setting their own self-development targets and plans and follow them'.

It seems that they place more importance to their leadership development that personal development in general. According to the averages in brackets % 58.3 of female school leaders try to 'develop their educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' as often as every day while % 41.7 of school leaders with 4-9-year work experience never 'set their own self-development targets and plans and follow them'. As the most common the least frequently applied item for all subdivisions, % 23.3 of all school leaders stated that they never 'set their own self-development targets and plans and follow them'. On the other side, % 50.7 of all school leaders claim that they daily apply to 'a mentor' and % 49.3 of them try to 'develop their educational / training

leadership skills, knowledge and abilities' daily.

Table 8: Table of Frequency by Private School leaders in Albania

	Male	Female	Science	Social	1-3 Years	4-9 Years	10+ Years
MOST FREQUENTLY APPLIED	Obtain a mentor (%53.3)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%58.3)	Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%50)	Obtain a mentor (%48.7)	Obtain a mentor (%59.1)	Obtain a mentor (%45.8)	Obtain a mentor (%47.8)
					Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%45.5)		Develop your educational / training leadership skills, knowledge and abilities (%56.5)
LEAST FREQUENTLY APPLIED	Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them (%17.8)	Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them (%20.8)	Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them (%33.3)	Manage your time - handle multiple priorities (%12.8)	Ask others to assess your work performance (%22.7)	Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them (%41.7)	Set your own self-development targets and plans and follow them (%8.7)
		Manage your time - handle multiple priorities (%8.3)					

5. Limitations

The author of this research could not find any results of self-development assessment on neither private nor state school level. The MASH website, the official website of Ministry of Education and Science in Albania, does not provide any results of school leadership assessments either, let alone on a specific area such as self-development. One of the main ideas behind this research was to encourage self-assessment applications in Albania. Not only assessment practices, even some vital items of TELSA self-assessment tool from the point of school leadership have seemed obscure to many assessees. One of two main ways to persuade people to apply assessment tools is to inform them about the importance and benefits of assessment practices. However, the one

who applies the practice is not always in the position to persuade people. The other way is to apply the assessment with brief but well-prepared introduction. In the second way people get their first impression/ideas about the assessment. The latter is the case of this research. Yet, assessment should take place in some intervals to be made more acquainted and effective. During the assessment procedures, it was noticeable that for most of the school leaders it was the first time they had done an assessment.

As the author of this research had no element to make the assessment compulsory and the collection of the results heavily depended on persuasion, the author had to select an instrument which would be easy to complete and concentrate on a specific area. Secondly, all assessment tools have some peculiarities along with some drawbacks. It could be more fruitful to have more subdivisions in depth to find correlations between them. These subdivisions could be as 'female school leaders with science subject background and 1-3-year work experience' or 'male school leaders with social subject background and 10-year or more work experience. However, this type of work requires more assessees.

6. Discussion

Learning environment, desired/planned type of learning and students' outcome should be taken into consideration while selecting the right assessment tool as different tools may have their own specifications. For instance, TELSA assesses school leaders from the point of technological advances as well. Furthermore, assessees should be well-informed before the assessment process. It could be a remarkable research to see how much the pre-assessment information changes the results.

It is impossible to find the perfect assessment tool since school leaders as individuals have their own qualities, level of commitment, understanding and practice of leadership. For instance, according to Klein and Wasserstein-Warnet [19:448] effective leaders present a dynamic vision rather than a static one to face various issues. Thus, excessively standardized assessment applications may not mirror the reality or the practice. Finally, a comparative analysis of self-assessment results with the help of assessments results of other members of the organization will be more meaningful to see the matter from different aspects and compare.

7. Conclusion

TELSA results in this research show some warning signals. Firstly, private school leaders in Albania mostly have problems in managing time, handling job stress, setting development targets and asking others to assess their performance. Managing time and stress are sources of dissatisfaction and unhappiness for many people in any work and unhappy people find it difficult to continue their career, let alone develop. Setting own development targets and plans, and asking others to assess your own performance are almost the key concepts and practice for development. In addition, they claim that obtaining a mentor is their strong point which is surprising about the people who have problems in being assessed by others. They might consider their supervisors and colleagues as mentors. Here lies the above-mentioned problem of lack of basic concepts of schooling and school leadership as there are no formal standards for schools and their leaders and consequently no self-development plans for private schools in Albania. In fact, these kinds of assessments should start from

the people in the highest positions in educational institutions to persuade them for the use of standards and assessments.

On the other side, none of the overall averages fall into the third group in Table 1 although the results were closer to the third group than the first one. An important result was that school leaders with less work experience proclaimed less stress than the more experienced ones.

The author of this paper could not find any self-development assessment results for school leaders in private or state schools in Albania. Furthermore, during the research it was visible that most private school leaders experienced an assessment for the first time which might have influenced the results to some extent. Although having a self-assessment, even any assessment, has its own drawbacks such as not being acquainted or familiar with some basic theoretical concepts of school leadership, it served as the purpose of this research since one of the aims of this research was to introduce educational leadership standards and assessments to private school leaders in Albania.

Private educational institutions have effects on many aspects of schooling from standardizing school uniforms to books used at schools in Albania. They could also take initiative role to help Albania to build school leadership (development) standards and apply assessment tools. Private schooling, consequently competing in the field of education, has become a challenge in business. One of the most important tools to survive and to be successful is development and without standards and regular assessment practices, schools can lose the track of improvement.

8. Recommendations

Private schools in Albania should try to find out the strengths and weaknesses of their school leaders and try to build environment for them to develop their leadership knowledge, skills and practice as they have important contributions to students' outcomes. Finding out strengths, weaknesses and needs of school leaders should not be left only to oral conversations and personal feedbacks as assessment tools may show some surprising results to uncover some hidden concerns. It can also be recommended that headquarters of institutions should use different assessment tools in some intervals to compare the results and to introduce new leadership concepts.

In addition, assessment tools should be accompanied by (inter)nationally accepted standards. One suggestion could be that private educational institutions can use a widely accepted set of standards from different countries and select one of the most suitable tools for the current educational circumstances, culture and environment as the starting point. Having applied the chosen standards and assessment tools, the standards and assessment tools can be reshaped according to the results, feedbacks and student outcomes. A good example is the ISLLC and its variations in the USA. Furthermore, awareness and motivation play crucial roles in success. Having applied a regular assessment and analyzed the results, schools should arrange systematic seminars and discussion sessions to raise the levels of awareness and motivation. Private schools can share their assessment experience with local and national authorities in education to spread standardization and assessment concepts and practice nation-wide.

Finally, although administrators should find and apply a suitable assessment tool in their institutions, a different assessment tool from the regularly applied one can be used once a year to assess various aspects of school leadership as one tool cannot cover all and any assessment tool can have its own drawbacks. A different application once a year can also harvest unexpected results, put a light on hidden concerns and revive the interest.

Acknowledgements

References

[1] B. Portin, S. Feldman, & M. Knapp. Purposes, Uses, and Practices of Leadership Assessment in Education. New York, The Wallace Foundation, 2006 as in T. Huang. "Effective School Leadership Competencies: A Psychometric Study of the NASSP 21st Century School Administrator Skills Instrument." PhD dissertation, Lehigh University, USA, 2013, pp. 8.

[2] R. Ginsberg, & T. Thompson. "New Ways to Assess the Performance of School Principals." *Peabody Journal of Education, v*ol. 68, No. 1, Part 1, pp. 58-74, (Autumn, 1992).

[3] G. Darden. "Videotape feedback for student learning and performance: A learning stages approach." The Journal of Special Education, Recreation, and Dance, vol. 70(9), pp. 40–54, 1999.

[4] H. Stolovitch, & E. Keeps. "Human performance technology: Research and Theory to Practice." Performance Improvement. vol. 39(4), pp. 7-16, 2000.

[5] A. Ericsson. "Deliberate Practice and the Acquisition and Maintenance of Expert Performance in Medicine and Related Domains." Academic Medicine, vol. 79(10), pp. 570–581, 2003.

[6] R. Chatham, & J. Braddock. Training Superiority and Training Surprise. Washington, D.C.: Defense Science Board Task Force, 2001, pp. 5.

[7] J. Bransford, A. L. Brown, & R. R. Cocking. How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School. Washington, D.C.: National Research Council. 2000, pp. 190-206.

[8] J. D. Brown, Testing in Language Programs. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents, 1996, pp. 231.

[9] National Association of Elementary School Principals, Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able To Do (Executive Summary). Alexandria, VA, 2008, p. 2.

[10] A. Russo, "Evaluating administrators with portfolios." School administrator, vol. 61(1), 2004, pp. 34.

[11] Council of Chief State School Officers. Leadership Issue Group on Assessing Leadership Effectiveness: Interesting Practices and Lessons Learned, Washington, D.C.: 2007, pp. 2.

[12] W.L. Hoy, & C.G. Miskel, Educational administration. Theory, research and practice. (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008, pp. 417-58.

[13] E. Goldring, A. Porter, J. Murphy, S. N. Elliott, & X. Cravens. Assessing Learning-Centered Leadership: Connections to Research, Professional Standards, and Current Practices. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, Learning Sciences Institute, 2007, pp. 11.

[14] P. Gronn. (2002). Distributed Leadership. In K. Leithwood & P. Hallinger (Eds.), Second International Handbook of Educational Leadership and Administration: Part 2, Great Britain: Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 2002, pp. 613-696.

[15] J. Mongan, & L. Ingvarson. "Managing Performance: A Review of the Performance Management Programs for Principals in Victorian State Schools." Leading & Managing, vol. 7(2), pp. 181-197, 2001.

[16] I. C. Korkut. "Self-Development Assessment of Private School Leaders in Albania", unpublished M.A. thesis, Epoka University, Albania, 2012.

[17] TELSA, Westinghouse, "Training and Educational Leader Self-Assessment", http://www.e-lead.org/library/tesla_westinghouse.pdf   [March 13, 2012]

[18] NCPEA yearbook 2004, edited by L. Fulmer, & S. Carl. Educational Leadership: Knowing the Way, Showing the Way, Going the Way, 2004, p. 324.

[19] J. Klein, & M. Wasserstein-Wamet. "Predictive Validity of the Locus of Control Test in Selection of School Administrators." Journal of Educational Administration, vol. 38(1), pp.7-25, 2000.