

## Transformational Leadership and the Public Administration Reform

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**Abstract:** Public administration reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the basic requirements in the process of joining the European Union and one of the six key priorities of the European Partnership established in March 2004 between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina. A severe stagnation in the process of public administration reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina requires research into alternative models of organizational redesign, innovative practices and management methods that gradually turn static and archaic public administration into a catalyst for socio-economic development.

Transformational leadership in public administration is an innovative model of bottom-up public administration reform that starts with human potential as a vital element of the organization, the basic administrative capacity whose engagement requires special leadership and sensibility. The research at the level of federal institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina examines new opportunities for the development of public administration, dynamic change management and an advanced human resources management policy that neutralizes bureaucracy. According to the research conducted in the federal public administration bodies, there are given guidelines and an offered model of public administration development based on the principles of transformational leadership.

**Key words:** change management; transformational leadership; strengthening of administrative capacities; public administration reform

**JEL code:** M1

### 1. Introduction

Managing a state administration body is the central management activity at the level of an individual administrative organization, an activity that has a direct impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. Management as a technique of administrative control is a consequence of a hierarchically established organization and its complexity, and involves directing, coordinating and controlling the entire work process. "The successful leadership in the public sector organizations will entail a change in the organizational culture from a purely hierarchical one to a culture of employee empowerment, without the risk of the manager losing control, because the internal raising of the employee rating will strengthen their leadership role. The

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process of evolving from a manager to a leader actually begins by replacing the command culture for a culture of empowering employees” (Blanchard, 2010, p. 67).

Leadership in public administration would imply the ability of the manager to exercise a constructive influence on the maximum engagement of human resources towards the realization of the organizational goals. Consequently, emotional intelligence is actually a prerequisite for understanding the real developmental vision, and especially its realization in the organizational reality (Pejanovic, 2012). “Regardless of the leadership style choice, which can be exclusively or dominantly autocratic, democratic or liberal, in practice the nature of the job and the personality of the manager influence the organizational orientation: either to people or tasks” (Šašić, 2017, p. 84). A good management and leadership basic premise is a clear idea of targeting activity of the public administration body in the area for which the body is established and competent, which would mean that the guiding vision is the determinant of transformation, because “if you do not know where you are going and why, you cannot even arrive to your destination” (Bennis & Biederman, 2009, p. 204). The leadership and management within an organization primarily influences the direction of the effect of the decisions made and steps taken, i.e., the manager acts solely within, and the leader inside and outside the organization. Leaders differ from managers by role, focus, approach, methods, style and outcome, which is particularly important in the context of the reformation role that a leader may have.

**Table 1 Leader VS. Manager in Public Sector Organizations**

	Leader	Manager
role	Vision/Strategy	Mission/realization
focus	Purpose/direction	Organizational structure/system, processes and procedures
approach	Creating/Ideas/Innovations	Creating Assumptions/Provision of Public Services
methods	Assessment/evaluation of capacity and needs/ introduction of quality	Organizing teams/planning finances/meeting deadlines/maintaining quality
style	Inspiration/encouragement of commitment	Potential development/finding solutions
outcome	Long-term perspective	Project management/efficiency/effectiveness

A highly effective organization is actually a “round of applause” for a proper leadership and the result of an adequate leader’s “care” about the internal and external factors influencing the organization. Human resource management, as a technique of particular importance for the advancement of the organization, transforms the organization into a social category, which, in order to be effective, requires from people as central elements, to see themselves as personification of the organization. Identification with an organization is a cohesion factor that ensures organizational success (Jakopec, 2013).

The represented values of the organization are not proclaimed, but accepted values of those who work, which necessarily match their personal values in order to be effective guidelines for working in the picture of the organizational future. Creating the basis for shared employee values is a continuous and long-term task of the leader (Northouse, 2018). Forming a vision is a path, not a step, making the natural characteristic of a good manager the rational boldness, i.e., courage in the framework of a proper perception of an employee’s capabilities.

### **1.1 Transformational Leadership as a Reform Technique — Challenges and Perspectives of the Introduction of Changes in the State Administration Bodies**

Innovations require a series of systematic changes within the organization, namely: a) ideological and

cultural changes — changes in relation to work, work discipline, work morale, efficiency/effectiveness and achievement of organizational goals; b) methodological — technical changes — changes in the approach, understanding and quality of public service delivery in the context of achieving efficiency in the work process; c) organizational changes — changes in the organizational structure.

The leader, i.e., the bearer of change has a critical organizational role to justify the perspective, realization, and consequences or effects of change. Change management is, in fact, a structured, systematic approach to transforming an existing, current into a future, desired state, which in the public sector organizations causes a tactical encroachment of “dynamics into static” in order to advance an individual administrative organization. An effective vision has the following characteristics: it is conceivable, desirable, enforceable, focused, flexible and explanatory. Primarily, a vision represents a conceivable image of how a change looks in the future in the organizational context, and subsequently, meets the long-term needs of the employees and service users, implies a series of decisions aimed at achieving realistic goals, allows initiative and alternative solutions and can be briefly and clearly outlined and justified. The transformational leadership is the process of gradually introducing changes that, according to preliminary research results, face the following obstacles: employee resistance, poor communication, employee incompetence, and the so-called “making the opponents of change”. Due to potential implementation problems, the obstacle is eliminated or degraded by strategic planning of a potentially viable and applicable type of change, degree of change, as well as the anticipation of the catalysts and barriers in the organizational structure. Innovative, transformational leadership is focused on achieving two goals:

- reduction/removal of administrative barriers,
- technological advancements.

The first aspect of orientation influences the simplification of procedures and de-bureaucratization in processes that fall within the remit of the administrative bodies, while technological changes affect the quality of service provision, which is a conceptual idea of civic orientation of the public administration.

**Table 2 Level of Change — Corrective or Transformative Actions**

Corrective actions	Transformational actions
Variational	Reorientational
Routine	Essential
Instrumental	Ultimate
Peripheral	Profound
Low risk	High risk

The functionality of leadership in management, as well as the functional work process depend on the quality of concrete leadership, which is significantly influenced by the degree of discipline in the hierarchy, especially towards the manager, which, according to Weber, is the main condition and characteristic of success of an administrative organization (Weber, 1922). By its nature, the entire administrative activity is not focused on prediction, but on a continuous and sequential adaptation of the actions to the response of the environment and other environmental signals (Pusić, 2002). Thereby, the personal qualities of the manager in the context of introducing changes, become a key factor for achieving discipline and recognizing the environment.

In the context of the perspective of transformational leadership in the field of public administration reform, the hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The leadership skills of managers have a positive impact on the transformation of civil

service bodies and public administration reform.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Wrong selection of managers and top management negatively affect organizational processes and contribute to stagnation in the development of administrative bodies.

## 2. Literature Overview

First conceptualized by a political scientist (Burns 2003), transformational leadership has become one of the most prominent theories of organizational behavior. Kotter (1982) asserted that management is about coping with complexity, particularly by setting goals and plans, organizing and staffing, and solving problems and monitoring results, while leadership involves coping with organizational change by developing a vision and strategy for change, communicating the vision, and motivating employees to attain it. The bureaucratic profile of public servants made the prevailing view that they are naturally followers and not leaders, so public managers have right and obligation to lead the administrative organisation so they could overcome a numerous governance failures (Mau, 2020). Traditional bureaucratic public managers and their methods and forms of control are facing continuous criticism as inflexible, inefficient and backward (Campbell, 2018) so new, contemporary paths are built on and around transformational leadership. Transformational leadership as a value-based leadership within the organisation may be affected by some internal characteristics or organisational structure derived by common bureaucratic stereotypes, mostly because of the limited use of performance management and its need for flexibility, but most findings suggest that transformational leadership within an organisation may not be affected by constraints imposed by external authorities (Bradley & Pandey, 2009), what strengthens the reform potential and the relevance of transformational leadership in circumstances of political instability and prolonged delays in the development of public administration. Transformational leaders foster acceptance of organizational change and encourage innovation and change-oriented behavior (Campbell, 2017a; Eisenbeiss et al., 2008; Jung, Chow, & Wu, 2003), thereby providing a normative context in which collaboration may be viewed as a privileged strategy for dealing with organizational challenges (Bass, 1985; Cha, Kim, Lee, & Bachrach, 2015). Although there have been a number of important studies on leadership in the field of public administration (Fernandez, 2005; Kim 2002; Wright & Pandey, 2010), compared with the mainstream organizational literature, leadership theory has generally received less attention. As a result, there are few large-scale empirical studies of public sector leadership and increasing calls to further embed public leadership research within leadership studies (Maurphy, 2016).

“The effective management during organisational change seeks specific behaviours and assignments of a transformational leader, but it mostly depends on the high level quality relationships with the employees” (Popescu, 2014, p. 77), so as on supportive organisational culture or “perceived organisational support” (Franken & Malinen, 2020, p. 93) which directly increases collective performance and outcomes. Those specific characteristics early constructed so called three domains of transformational leadership: *Idealized Influence (II)*, *Intellectual Stimulation (IS)* and *Individualized Consideration (IC)* (Hemsworth, Muterera & Baregheh, 2013). Transformational leadership is naturally inspirational and futuristic, because it goes beyond simplicity of “just work” and produces higher levels of morality and motivation especially needed for any kind of change and innovation (Suparjo, 2019).

## 3. Methods

Features and transformational role of managers in the administration bodies at the level of the Federation of

Bosnia and Herzegovina

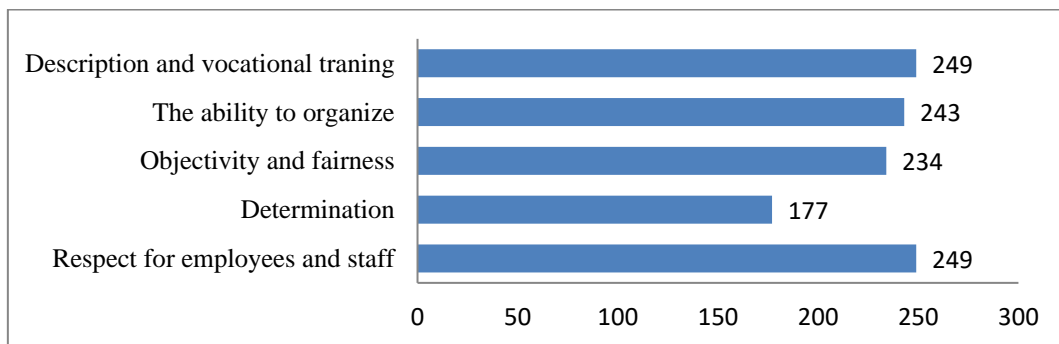
The aim of this research, defined in the introduction, is to examine the impact of leadership styles on the organizational changes and the applied approach to these changes on the professionalism of human resources and the effectiveness of administrative bodies. This study studied the effects self-efficacy of leaders in organizational commitment of employees. To examine the present circumstances and facts and the perspective of transformational leadership, this empirical research was conducted.

The case study was conducted in 30 of total 371 state administration bodies at the level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on a total of 300 respondents, between June and December 2019. According to the structure of the respondents, the survey was conducted: by category of employees in the state administration bodies of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: civil servants (80%), employees (20%); by age: 25-35 years of age (16%), 35-45 years of age (38%), 45-55 years of age (25%), 55-65 years of age (21%); by gender: men (39%), women (61%).

The research focuses on previous experiences, limitations and effects of changes in government bodies from the aspect of perception, adjustment and perspective of transformational leadership. Given the serious setback in the public administration reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was very important to examine the role, importance and capabilities of the transformational leadership in terms of promotion at the individual administrative organization level. With the necessary personal qualities of a manager, where the traits that are essential in the perception of the employee of the state administration body at the level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina should have been ranked and given preference, the research shows that the personality of the manager is recognized and respected primarily by education and professional competencies, as well as organizational capabilities in a leadership perspective. Secondly, in addition to the manager’s competence to perform management tasks, leadership in the state administration bodies is achieved through the proper attitude towards employees, where the respondents show that the sensitivity of the management in terms of recognizing their problems and needs is very important. It is very indicative that the research results show that the traits that support a strict hierarchical relationship in the administrative bodies (authority, determination, etc.) are the lowest in the list of desirable or necessary traits for transformational leadership.

#### **4. Research Results**

The results of the research are presented using descriptive statistics and regression. The results are presented below based on the analysis of the questionnaires conducted over all categories of civil servants in state administrative bodies in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



**Figure 1 Essential Personal Characteristics of the Leader in Public Sector/ Preferences/Ranking**

Furthermore, according to the research results, transformational leadership, i.e., the introduction of changes at the level of an individual administrative organization, is partially to completely based on the employee trust. Practically, the effective introduction of changes in public administration bodies implies that those who will directly participate in the implementation of new organizational processes believe in the justification and benefit of their introduction.

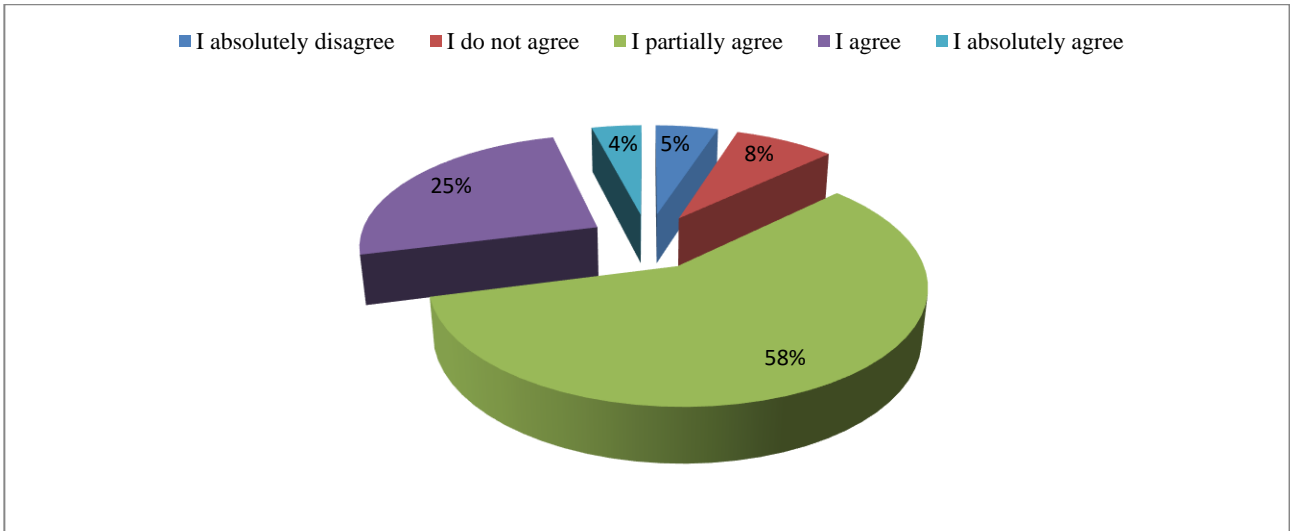


Figure 2 Transformational Leadership is Based on Employees Confidence (A1)

Furthermore, research show that in the practice of introducing changes at the federal level, employees are generally not involved, that is, in more than 50% of the cases the participation of key transformation players is not ensured. Employee participation, as a contributing factor to the effectiveness of the change at the organizational level, is the basis of organizational trust, acceptance, approval and constructive implementation of innovative processes.

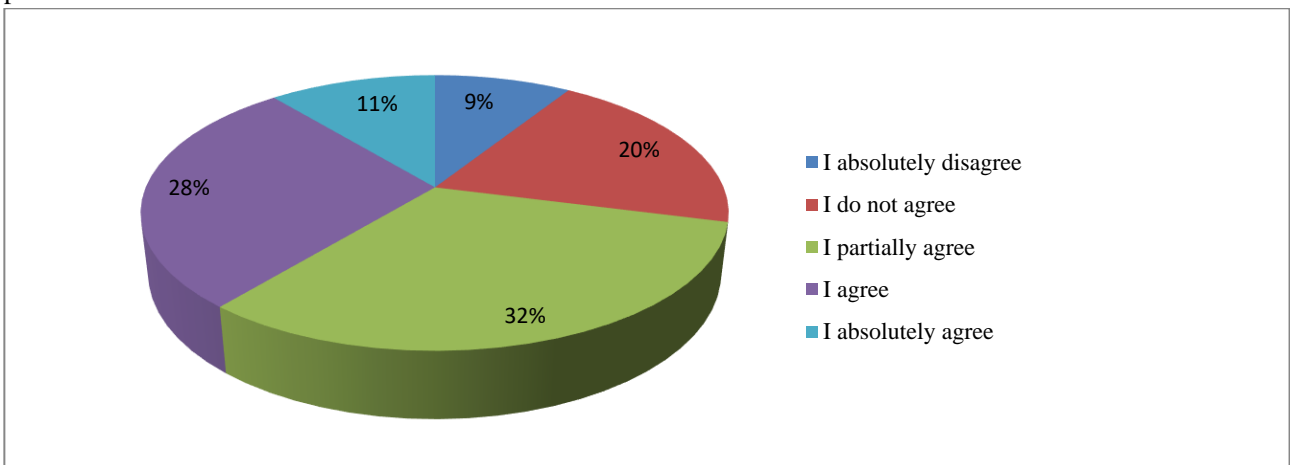
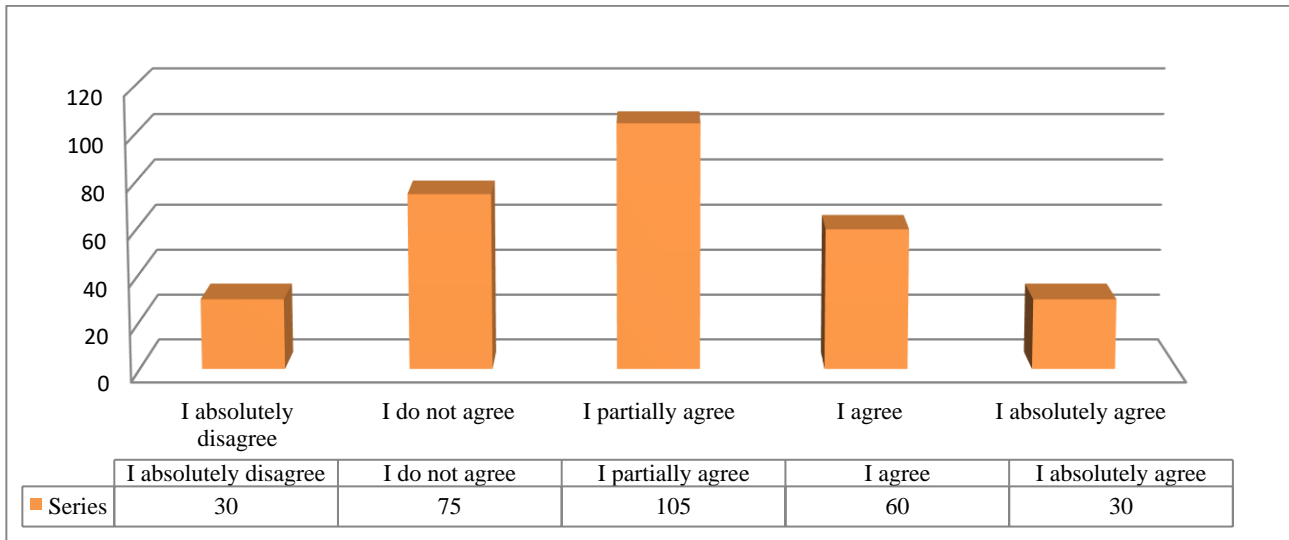


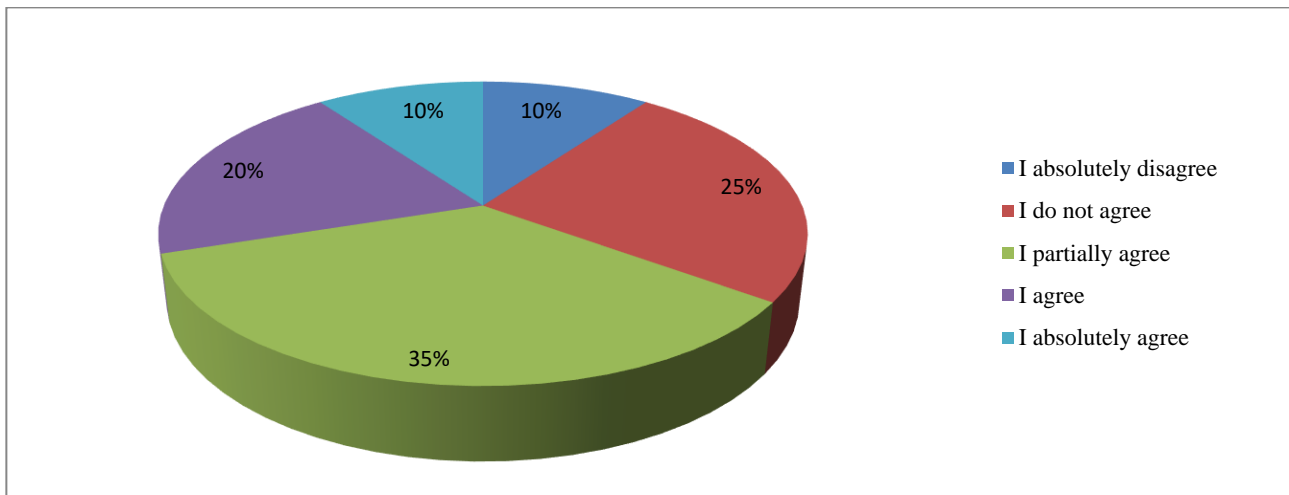
Figure 3 Introducing Changes Involved Employees Participation (A2)

The dominant number of respondents (70%) expresses doubts about the professional justification for the introduction of changes, that is, they think that the reasons for transformational leadership are mostly political in nature, thus not contributing to the organizational development but supporting the negative trend of politicization of the public administration.



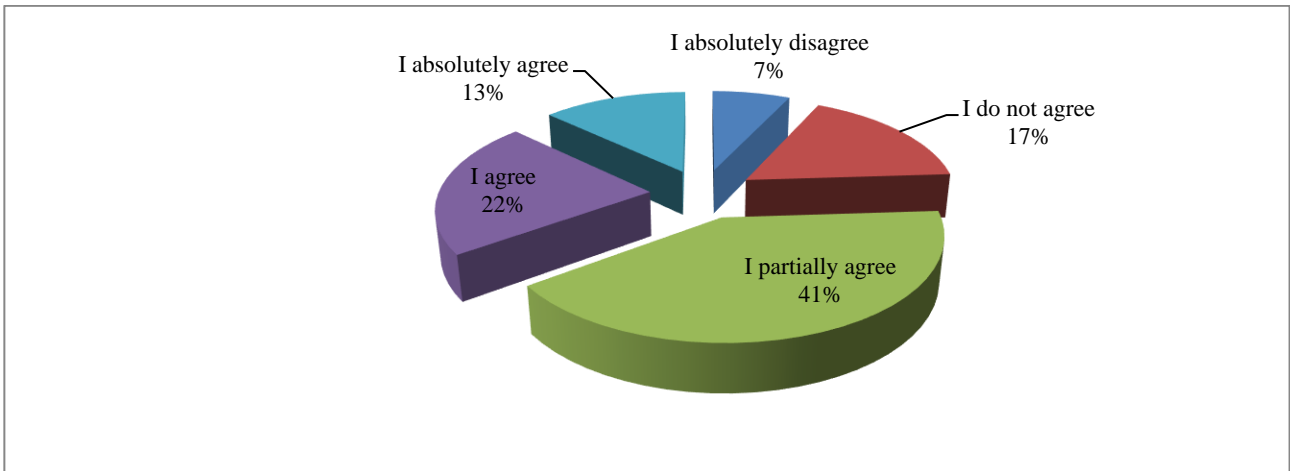
**Figure 4 Innovations are not Politically Based but Focused on Organisational Development (A3)**

Also, 60% of respondents believe that the introduction of changes to the organizational process is not adequately planned, i.e., does not include timely and strategic planning, which causes rigidity in accepting the changes by the employees as well as a long adjustment period. Furthermore, the slow process of adjusting to the “newly created situation” significantly affects bureaucracy, administrative barriers, etc.

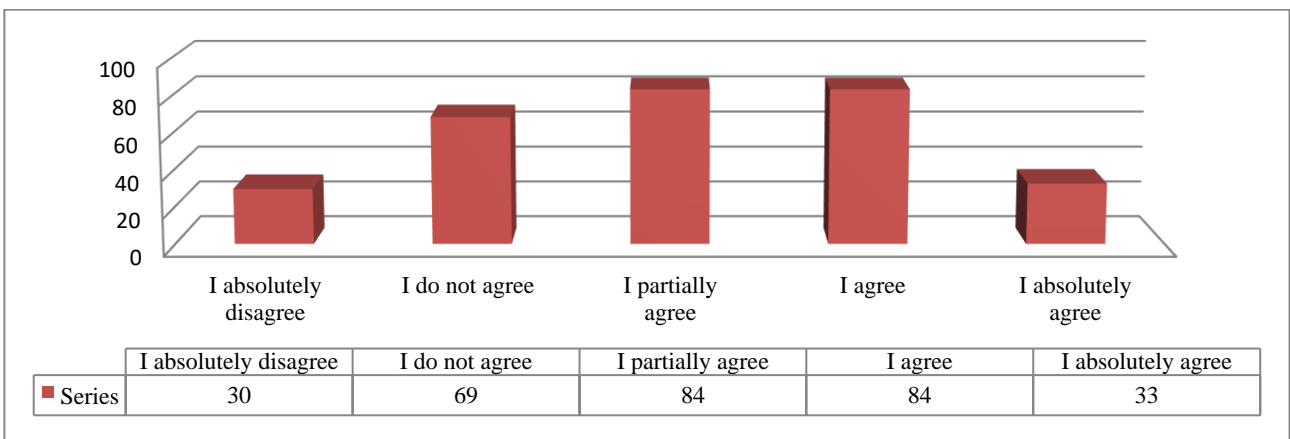


**Figure 5 The Changes Are Timely and Strategically Planned and do not Require A Difficult and Long Adjustment Period (A4)**

Experiences in introducing changes also indicate that 68% of respondents believe that innovative methods and processes have not ensured the personal and professional development of employees, nor have they promoted institutional communication, which is a crucial contributing factor to the efficiency in the internal processes. The majority of examinees believe that changes, specifically transformational leadership and decision-making, regardless of the type, basis and reasons for introduction, have a motivating effect on employees. The uniform and stagnant flow of internal processes is, in fact, demotivating regardless of the stabilization in terms of routine job performance, eventual specialization and security provided by repetitive work operations.

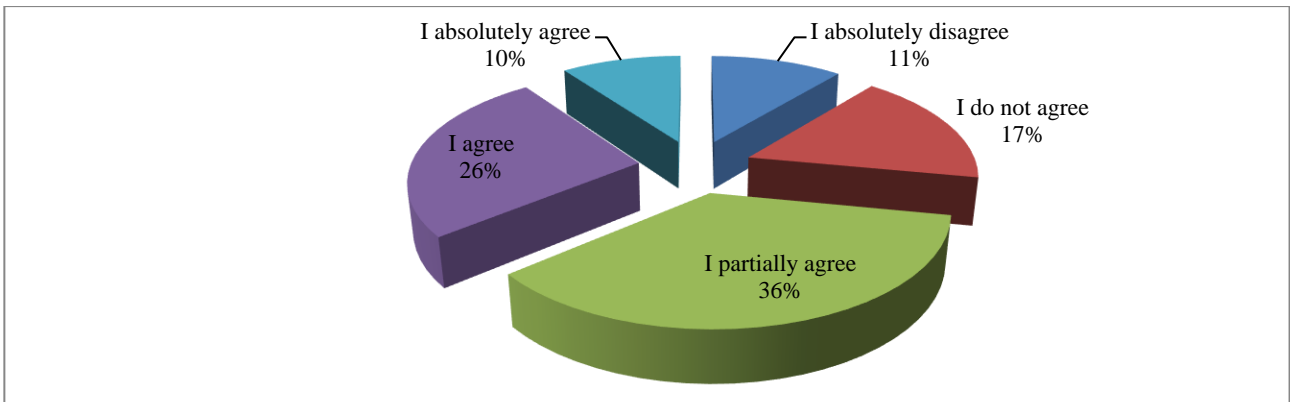


**Figure 6 The Changes Ensure Personal and Professional Development, Independence in Work and Better Communication Within The Organization (A5)**



**Figure 7 The Changes Have a Motivating Effect Because They do not Create an Organisational Climate that Serves Individuals, but Employees as a Whole (A6)**

Also, respondents generally believe that different aspects of internal reorganization, which falls within the authority of the manager, would contribute to an increase in the individual work performance. Uneven workload, changes in the type and complexity of jobs, changes in special requirements for the recruitment of new employees.



**Figure 8 Staff Changes and Job Reassignments Ensure Greater Individual Performance and Contribute to Efficiency (A7)**



The assumption of linearity for 300 respondents in 30 federal administrative bodies and organizations was verified by analyzing P-P charts for normally distributed residuals:

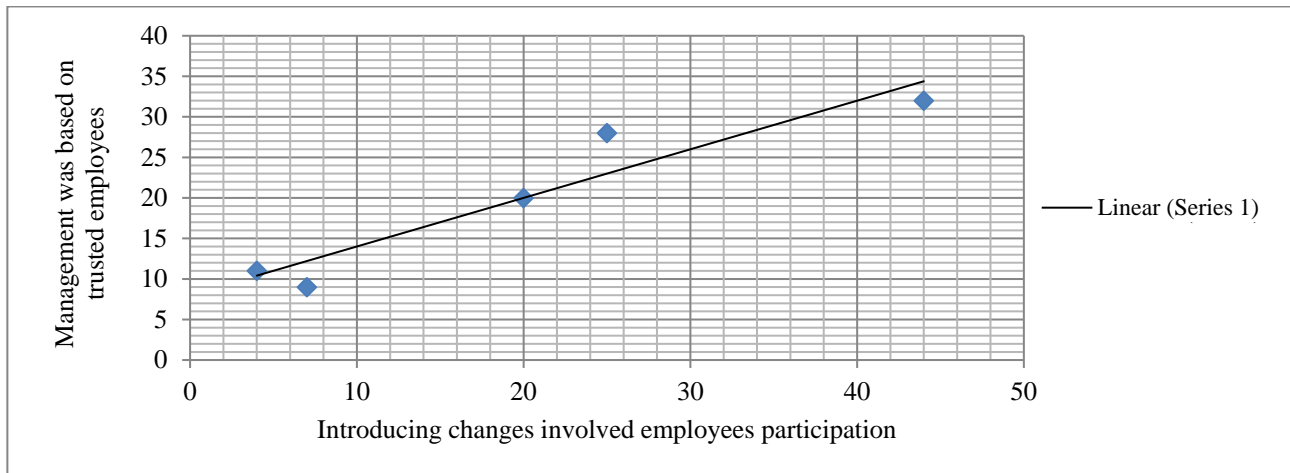


Figure 9 P-P Charts for Normally Distributed Residuals

Since we obtained a normal data distribution, we approached linear regression. The linear regression results (pictured above) show that there is a positive correlation between the variable “management was based on the trust of employees” and the variable “when introducing change, employee initiative and participation was implied” and it gives 81.5% contribution (linear regression coefficient is  $r = 0.815$ ) in explaining the variant effective change in an organization. In those organizations where the trust of the employees’ manager towards the employees was present, we also notice a greater degree of employee initiative and participation in the context of innovation, work improvement and work efficiency in general.

Table 3 Linear Regression for a Method Where All Predictors Enter the Model at the Same Time (B1: Changes Ensure Personal and Professional Development, Independence in Work And Better Communication Within the Organization)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.815 <sup>a</sup>	.670	.860	4.452	.670	40.817	1	53	.000	.350

a. Predictors: (A1-A7)

Therefore, based on the results in the upper table it can be concluded that for those organizations that have a higher degree of agreement on questions (variables A1 to A7), there is a greater degree of changes that ensure personal and professional development, independence in work and better communication within the organization. These changes account for 81.5% of the change effectiveness variance and are valid in 67% of cases (R Square = 0.670). In order to determine whether there were differences in respondents responses and to identify differences between leaders in public sector organizations, we used Pearson’s statistics and Chi-Square. The value of Pearson's statistics has a value of 5,005 with an associated significance level sig. .000 which is less than 0.05, and indicates that there is a difference in attitudes between respondents when it comes to the representation of managerial trust in employees, which was confirmed by the Kruskal-Wallis test in the tables below (p is less than 0.05 and amounts .003). Namely, a number of respondents (20%) do not agree with the statement that the

representation of managers' trust in employees initiates a greater degree of initiative and employee participation in the context of innovation, work improvement and work efficiency in general.

All of the above indicates that different leadership styles (so-called situational leadership) are necessary according to the condition and characteristics of employees.

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	<b>5.005<sup>a</sup></b>	3	<b>.000</b>
Likelihood Ratio	7.920	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.606	1	<b>.003</b>
N of Valid Cases	1110		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.08.			
	Representation of managers' trust vis-à-vis employees initiates a greater degree of initiative and employee participation in the context of innovation, work improvement and work efficiency in general		
Chi-Square			.957
Df			1
Asymp. Sig.			.003
a. Kruskal Wallis Test			
b. Grouping Variable: Representation of managers' trust in employees			

## 5. Conclusions

Robertson and Seneviratne claim that innovations and “change strategies” have similar implications in private and public sector (Robertson & Seneviratne, 1995). Also, according to Gagliardi (1986), innovations in organisation seeks for a new influence by the top management, so for any kind of a “core change” and improvement leader is a organizational need so as the continuous strategic thinking (Ohlson, 2007).

But introduction with the organizational changes is mostly grounded on two problems: low level of communication (Nonas, 2005) and poor interaction (Beer, Eisenstat&Spector, 1988). Top management and a leader of the organisation are the holders of powers and authorization to intervene any part of organizational structure and culture, so as the major organizational factors that impacts the progress like structural facilitators and barriers of change (Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005). Also, according to social models of organizational behaviour, institutionalization is rooted in conformity, which is capable to produce only common results (Pfeffer, 1997).

The change of working methods and organizational aims, as well as the leaders introduction to the new processes means long-term organisational success, and the new way to overcome huge administrative barriers. Organisational change and improved performance of state administration brings quality and benefits in the area of administrative delivery. Adapting to transformational leadership, as an innovation in public administration, produces effective impact on business environment due to the administrative procedure needed (permits, starting up a business, investments etc.). The major challenges of transformational leadership are the crucial advancing methods, needed in public sector to follow social and business environment, especially in conditions of serious reform deadlock existing in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The complex and “big” state administration in the context of the complex state structure of Bosnia and

Herzegovina represents a problem both for potential and real legal fragmentation at all levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and within certain levels of government, especially the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as a political problem of the insurmountable expansion of the administrative authority, high disintegration and poor coordination in performing all social affairs. For all structural, systemic reforms, and especially for the public administration reform, political consensus, funding and a timeframe need to be ensured. On these grounds, political actors in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina must express a very clear reform intent and priority setting, political leadership, determination and a clear vision, high level of political power, cohesion and a stable government concentration, a suitable institutional environment, structures subject and open to a reform (Tanović, 2018). The absence of one of the cumulative assumptions for the evolution of reform processes will create a deficient basis for turning a “political decision into a legal norm”. The slowness of all reforms has a backdrop for firm rooting of undemocratic values and behaviors in an environment of full politicization of the public administration.

The introduction of managerial forms and standards into the public administration system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the key requirements envisaged by the SIGMA principles of public administration in the reform area of public services and human resources management. The socio-political and normative-legal status quo caused by the lack of reform political will and the presence of political instability imposes the idea of expert-analytical review of the possibilities and perspectives of transformational leadership in the function of contributing to the advancement of an individual administrative organization. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the second worst-ranked European country on the Ease of Doing Business 2020 list, with the worst ranking in the region, which needs improvements and regulatory changes for less administrative boundaries. The purpose of this empirical study is to provide a deeper understanding of how transformational leadership relates to innovative and effective public sector follower behavior in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A successful administrative organization is especially characterized by the leadership abilities and competencies of the manager and managerial civil servants, i.e., the top-management of the administrative organization.

The rights, obligations and responsibilities of the manager need to be modified into the process of constructing effective leadership, as a key determinant of public administration reform in limiting legal frameworks.

A wide range of normative powers of managers creates basic preconditions for key changes at the level of the administrative organization, as well as its improvement. The head of the administrative body defines, establishes and restructures the internal organization, plans and implements the human resources management policy.

In conclusion, leadership skills of managers would have a direct impact on the reorganization, functioning and methods of work as a whole. Strategic planning of leadership practice in public administration, through the appointment of managers, creates a trend of change management, innovative concept in the process of public administration reform, which was previously neglected and neglected, because it was empirically examined only in the area of the private sector.

Managing change in state administration bodies depends on a number of external and internal factors, and in particular from linking structural elements of an organization, an effective human resource management system, a personality of a leader, and choosing a leadership style, which cumulatively affects the future and “fate” of the administrative organization. Successful management as a key management function requires a special level of knowledge, skills and competencies, as well as the individual characteristics of leader’s personality who achieves

an evolutionary influence on the organizational environment, initiates the development of organizational culture and gives motivational incentives for innovations and changes.

Human potential, as an element of the administrative organization, dominantly affects the realization of other organizational assumptions. However, if the “system” is burdened with the negative social environment of politicization, corruption or symptoms of so-called “closed society” it will equally affect the core and quality of human resources in public administration.

The research seeks to demonstrate the negative influence of political-executive power on the constitution and functioning of state administration bodies, with particular emphasis on the underutilized reform potential in the existing areas of leadership.

After analyzing the legal regulations, content of reform strategies and documents which confirm the demands for urgent public administration reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on the results presented in the paper, elaboration of values and confirmation of hypotheses, there is proven positive correlation between transformational leadership and aspects of improvement in state administrative bodies, as a basis of wide national public administration reform and applicable innovative model for making significant changes in bottom-up system starting on the level of individual public organisation (functioning of e-government, service delivery and improvement of quality management system).

The main aim of this research, with the results obtained by analytical - synthetic methods and research, would imply the imperative of introducing the so-called entrepreneurial spirit of leaders in the institution of management of state administration bodies, both at the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as other levels of government. The entrepreneurial characteristics of leadership, management and governance would free the public administration of the stereotypical bureaucratic stuffiness (Pusić, 2002), average results, but also formalism, corruption, politicization, etc., but under the key condition which would be a high degree of the managerial independence

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