



Personality, behavior and effectiveness: The case of Presidents in German Universities

*Some key points from the research study: "The impact of German university president's characteristics and behavior on leadership emergence and effectiveness",
by E. Lehmann and S. Stockinger*

What and why?

- **Motivation:** age-old question of “Who becomes a ruler” and “Who rules (good)?”
- **Research questions:**
 - ✓ Which personality traits influence the perception of university leaders?
 - ✓ Does leadership behavior contribute to perceive them as good leaders?
- **Contribution:** analysis of leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness; evaluation of leadership traits and behavior in the Higher Education context

Leadership traits and behavior

- Leadership emergence dependent on **leaders' personality traits**. Does one of them prevail?
 - ✓ Openness
 - ✓ Conscientiousness
 - ✓ Extraversion
 - ✓ Agreeableness
 - ✓ Emotional stability
- Leadership effectiveness dependent on **leadership behavior**
 - ✓ Consistent, context-dependent relation
 - ✓ Consideration and Initiating Structure (which is strong when a structure-giving behavior prevails. On the contrary, it is low when a decisional autonomy-approach prevails)

Dataset

- Hand-collected data of 93 Presidents in 73 German Universities from 2009-2012

- Sources
 - ✓ Ranking Deutsche Hochschulverband – DHV (German Association of University Professors and Lecturers)
 - **Evaluation of performance** of University Presidents
 - Minimum of 30 evaluations by DHV members
 - Around 3,000 completed questionnaires per year

 - ✓ Other sources: Destatis, Eurostat, DFG, Scopus, own elaboration

Leadership emergence

- Among academic leaders' traits, **emotional stability** is the most closely related to the choice of a leader

Leadership effectiveness

- The most effective leaders have steady direction-setting either with regard to strong structure-giving behavior or to strong decisional autonomy

Implications

- **Emotional stability** raises probability to be perceived as leader (it slightly rises with age)
- Leaders that want to be considered effective should
 - evaluate the specific University setting and
 - correspondingly choose **low or high structure style of setting up** internal bureaucratic processes (strong structure-giving behavior, or strong decisional autonomy)
- Leaders should be trained in the respective leadership behavior to increase processes and follower satisfaction