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**WEB OF SCIENCE™****Crossref****LEADING CHANGE: A MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES**D. Sucozhanay, R. Arcentales, L. Siguenza-Guzman

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Universities have to develop in a highly complex environment, which shapes their structural and organisational characteristics. In this context, academic leaders not only have the challenge to forecast future trends but also to implement the changes needed to achieve this future. The specific causes of change success or failure have been a topic of much debate in the organisational literature. One of the lessons learned by researchers related to effective change is that leadership is a key element to achieve successful change. Although the effects of leadership on the results of change initiatives are still not well understood, research provides support for a positive link between leadership and effective implementation of change. In fact, some researchers posited that good management is a sine qua non condition to get a successful change, but leadership is what really makes the difference between the success and failure of change. However, more empirical research is needed to understand the actual practices performed by leaders.

The article analyses what leadership practices perform the leaders and which of them contributes to successful leadership in university change processes. To this end, a qualitative multiple-case study was utilised. A multiple-case study design has all the advantages of a single-case design; but using several case studies, this replication enhances the validity and credibility of the findings. Six change processes in two universities were analysed. Data collection, in each case, was accomplished through direct observation, analysis of secondary documents and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was carried out in two steps: first, a within-case analysis, and then a cross-case analysis. Matrixes were built in order to organise and summarise the data. To ensure the quality of the research, member checking, and data and researcher triangulation were performed.

The results showed three important aspects of successful leadership. Firstly, leaders have to maintain good relationships with the stakeholders, which could be achieved by transformational leadership behaviours. Secondly, they have to be able to manage the administrative aspects. And finally, they have to hold the capacity to implement changes that solve the "wicked problems" of the university. Nevertheless, it was also found that leaders, most of the time, have 'no room to lead' and/or to learn how to make desired changes work. They are so busy complying with bureaucratic procedures that they have little time left to lead. Besides, most of the time, they are appointed without having the leadership qualities required and are rarely trained in the management of change in complex organisations such as universities. Taken together, these findings contribute to a better understanding of the leadership role to promote successful change in Latin American Universities.

**keywords:** leadership practices, organizational change, universities, latin america.