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"THE REASONS" FOR LEADERSHIP EFFICIENCY IN BULGARIAN UNIVERSITIES[1]

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Abstract

Traits of personality and leadership styles have been studied in the current research when analyzing the effects of personality on organization behavior as variables. The major aim of the research is to trace the significant role of the personality at organizational level, as well as the different leadership styles as a factor in organizational behavior in the specific university environment. It is assumed that leadership styles characterized by initiative and commitment to the organization's activities should have a direct impact on the personality's behavior in the working reality. It is expected in this way to provide proof for the assumption that leaders play a significant role in the organization. It is also assumed that certain traits of personality are in a significant connection to a certain leadership style. The theoretical basis for this assumption is the meta-analysis of Zaccaro and his Model of the Four Leadership Styles (Zaccaro, 2004) and from this point of view the results of 717 studied respondents from four Bulgarian universities have been juxtaposed for the period between October 2015 and March 2016. Attached methodologies are leadership styles by Rosenberg SelfEsteem Scaleq Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and Mini BIG 5 model. Data have been processed by means of the software SPSS-21.

Keywords: leadership styles, Bulgarian universities, traits of personality

1. Introduction

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal and has certain personal qualities that enable him or her to exert influence on the group (Northouse, 2007). These qualities can be a manifestation of curiosity; creative thinking; sociability; strong character; courage; charisma; convincing manner; competence; common sense (Yakoka, 2007). In the organization the leader is crowned with high status, which in turn allows influence over the members' behavior (Aldac & Stearns, 1987). In search of "reasons" for leadership effectiveness and successful leadership style Zaccaro et al (Zaccaro, 2004) create a model based on leadership traits and their effect on the efficiency and productivity of the organization. The model shown in the figure below includes other models of leadership traits and efficiency / productivity (Mumford, Zaccaro, 1993; Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, 2000). Zaccaro

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(2001) claims that effective leadership comes from an integrated set of cognitive abilities, social skills, problem solving, experience and knowledge.
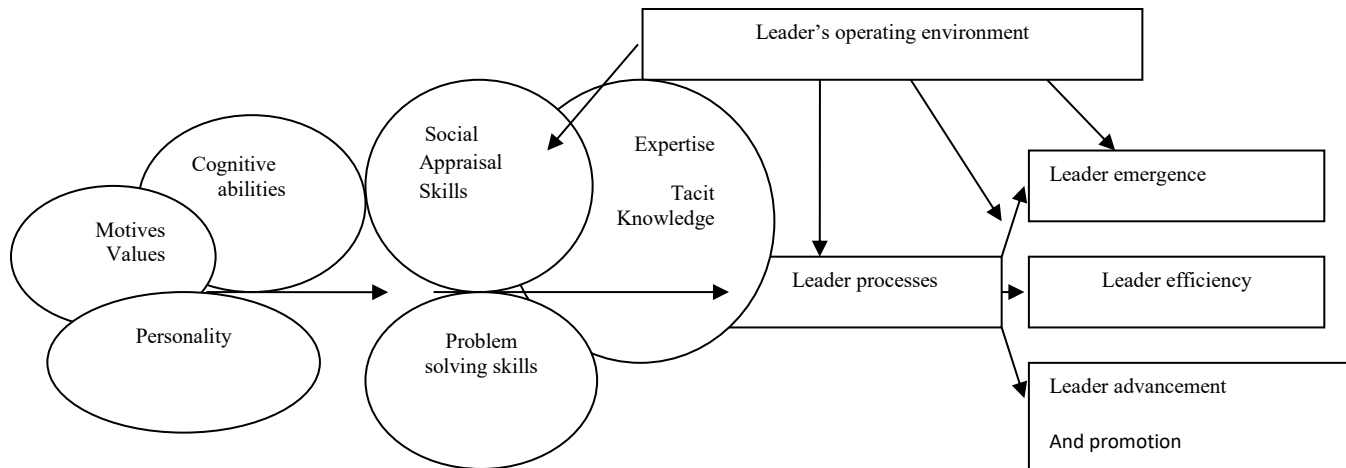

Fig. 1. Model of Leadership Style Traits (Zaccaro, 2004)

Source: Zaccaro, S. J., Kemp, C., & Bader, P. (2004). Leader traits and attributes. The nature of leadership. (pp. 101-124). Thousand Oaks, CA, US:Sage Publications, Inc.

It's a multi-stage model. (Ackerman & Humphreys, 1990; Barrick, Mitchell, & Stewart, 2003; Chen, Whiteman, & Kilcullen, 2000; Schneider, & Dunnette, 1996; Kanfer, 1990, 1992;. Mumford, Zaccaro, 2000). The model has been created on the basis of several complete examinations / a meta-analysis of the leadership trait in the last few years (Derue, 2011; Hoffman, 2010; Zaccaro, 2007), but it is not exhaustive, as the authors claim it to be. The traits/characteristics that a successful leadership style comprises have been extracted from studies with the so-called Big-Five Personality Model. Conclusion has been reached on the basis of a conducted meta-analysis (Judge, 2002), that several characteristics have influence on efficient leadership. Extraversion – i.e. the leader should be sociable, assertive, active, with a positive attitude, energy and drive, extroversion is significantly and positively linked to leadership (R = 0,31). Benevolence or courtesy, according to the results of the meta-analysis, is not closely linked to successful leadership as a factor of organizational behavior (R = 0,08), but conscientiousness, one of the dimensions of Big-Five Model, which includes aspiration for excellence and reliability is positively related to leadership (R = 0,28). Likewise, the relation between agreeableness and leadership (R = 0,24), i.e. the unconventional approach, novelty and creative attitudes. Neuroticism in its own right or the tendency to display weak emotional attitude and experience reflects negatively on the leadership efficiency because it works as concern, insecurity and hostility, neuroticism is significantly negatively correlated with leadership styles (R = -.24). Ambiguously, according to Locke and Hoffman's research (Locke, 1991; Hoffman, 2011) honesty establishes positive correlations with leadership efficiency (R = 0,29). Charismatic leaders are capable of influencing their followers through their tantalizing vision of the future, awakening commitment to organizational goals and an inspiring feeling of self-efficiency. Hoffman et al maintain that this type of leadership has a significant impact on followers (R = 0,57). According to Judge et al, (Judge et al., 2004) intelligence is regarded as the most important

trait in psychology and is also identified as one of the crucial ones to be held by all leaders. Creativity is defined as a significant component of efficient leadership. Hoffman et al have detected a significant link between creativity and efficiency of the leadership style (R = 0,31). Motivating followers through personal example also demonstrates a vital link (R = .23) (Judge et al., 2002). McClelland and Boyatzis (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982) discover that the necessity of authority based on the belief in common values influences positively the job satisfaction and is in sync with the success of the leadership style. Important to leadership are described also the social skills particularly the ability to maintain creative interpersonal contacts (Hoffman et al., 2011), including a wide range of behaviors linked to group management (Locke, 1991; Yukl, 2006). Conflict solving is one of the factors that correlate most strongly with effective leadership in the organizational environment (Hoffman et al., 2011). Considering the fact that basic leaders' responsibilities include work coordination, the ability to manage is probably of major importance to the efficiency of a leader. Expertise and skills are last but not least of the ingredients that make up a successful leadership style (Bass, 1990). Regardless of the proposed factors, the model authors take leadership style as a process.

In this research a comparative analysis is made of the preferred leadership styles in four Bulgarian universities. 717 individuals have taken part. It is assumed that any organization can register its own peculiar style imposed by the manager. The manager's attempts to combine several styles, i.e. to mix them would be successful depending on his/her experience and the situations in which they apply. In order to prove or disprove the drawn hypotheses differences are explored in leadership styles and traits of personality in specific research universities; relationships between leadership styles and traits of personality are established; analysis is made as to which leadership styles have the most significant impact on organizational behavior.

2. Methods

A combination of complementing research methods has been used. The basic idea of the 'New paradigm" is that leaders should be seen as "purposeful managers" and not as people who only influence their subordinates in dynamic situations (Bryman, 1996). The current research has applied one of the most popular models of the "New paradigm" developed by B. Bass (Bass, 1998), on how to measure leadership behavior. The focus is on interpersonal transactions of leaders and followers, as well as on the leader's personality. This justifies the use of the questionnaire on the traits of the personality – the Big Five. To analyze the influence of personal taits, the questionnaire of Donellan et al has been used (The Mini-IPIP – International Personality Item Pool), which contains 20 items with five Likert Rating Scale (Donellan, Oswald, Baird, Lucas, 2006). The scale is among the most popular and most often used tools in the world based on the so-called "five-factor personality model". This tool measures the personality characteristics and has proved its usefulness both in clinic and scientific studies. The full version of the questionnaire consists of 50 statements. In applying the questionnaire in the Bulgarian socio-cultural environment the five-factor structure and high internal consistency of each of the scales are fully confirmed (Karabeliova, Petrov, Milanov, Ivanova, 2012). The self-assessment of the respondents in high positions is measured with the help of Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale) (Milanov, Karabeliova, 2011). This version includes the self-assessment form of the Multi-factor leadership questionnaire, the Mini IPIP self-assessment scale, as well as Rosenberg's self-esteem scale. The chosen methodology comprises 51 questions altogether. The second version is a form of assessment where respondents in operational

positions perceive their supervisors. The test battery includes the assessment form of the multi-factor leadership questionnaire and the Mini IPIP assessment scale. Both forms of the questionnaire contain 9 final questions asking for demographic data – gender, age, total work experience, work experience in the current organization, education, place of residence, position in the organization (managerial or operational).

Bass and Avolio's methodology has been used as well (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire). The methodology has been standardized for Bulgarian conditions by S. Karabeliova (Karabeliova, 2011). The tool has demonstrated a high construct validity ($α=0.74$) and content validity ($α=0.94$). The internal consistency of the multifactor leadership questionnaire is also very good – $α=0.70$ for all scales (Bass & Avolio, 2004). This methodology can be used to study any change of this type of leadership styles and to identify trends in their development related to dynamic changes in the external environment. It is assumed that personality, situational and positional factors will determine leadership styles. The aim is to detect trends in their response to the future requirements of the external environment.

 The methods used make it possible to assess the degree of impact, the factors, and to identify those causes that have significant importance. Through statistical programs it is expected to bring to the fore those leadership styles and personality traits that have the greatest impact in a working environment. Respectively, it is expected to make the necessary for the research comparisons. The analysis and evaluation of the research results will help to draw the necessary conclusions and to reveal trends in the development and change of leadership styles.

The research results show significant correlations between each of leadership styles and traits of personality in Bulgarian universities presented in Table. 1. The correlation coefficient is high. The probable explanation for this may be sought in the strong orientations toward the charismatic style. The data obtained show that to build a picture of leadership styles a more thorough knowledge of the traits of personality and their impact on the individual events of the leader is needed. Thus, a clearer picture of possible behavior and the allocation of management decisions could be drawn.

Table 1. Correlations between leadership styles and personality traits (n = 717)

Traits / Styles	Extra-version	Agreeable-ness	Conscien-tiousness	Neurotic-ism	Open-ness
Idealized impact, charisma	0,201	0,446	0,408	-0,317	0,237
	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Inspirational motivation	0,13	0,399	0,318	-0,36	0,171
	0,001	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Intellectual motivation	0,222	0,36	0,334	-0,331	0,22
	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Personal attention	0,159	0,424	0,402	-0,416	0,174
	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Relative awards	0,067	0,346	0,353	-0,384	0,13
	0,072	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,001
Management of exceptions	0,188	0,252	0,171	-0,141	0,169
	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Liberal	0,204	0,38	0,302	-0,229	0,106
Leadership	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,004

Theoretically, the charismatic leader legitimizes his/her power through an attributive process based on perceptions of followers toward his/her behavior (Conger Kanungo, 1988, 1998). Thus charismatic leadership would be both a relational and attributive phenomenon and exists through the contact between a charismatic leader and his/her followers. In this sense, the relationships between any of the leadership styles with neuroticism as a feature of personality, as opposed to emotional stability would be of negative character. These data can be interpreted in light of the circumstances of neuroticism as a personality trait. The emotionally unstable personality type stands with tension, anxiety and exacerbation of the situation due to small and minor problems. Such negative correlations were seen in studies of Lazzaro (Lazzaro, 2004)

It is also assumed that while effective charismatic leaders appreciate the status quo, they identify the needs of their followers, appreciate the resources that are available and elevate exciting arguments to attract attention and increase interest of like-minded individuals. It is expected that interconnections with Extraversion and Openness are also high since self-control refers to active processes of planning and organizing activities, and the implementation of goals and objectives.

The proposed hypotheses have been partially proven. From the results in the current research it has been found out that extraversion correlates positively with each of the leadership styles but the highest of values have been registered with agreeableness and conscientiousness and the agreeableness with the charismatic style – idealized impact and intellectual stimulation as well as with liberal leadership. The positive correlation of extraversion with leadership styles has its explanation from the point of view of its characteristics and the description of extraversion points to that explanation, namely extroverts are open, sociable, expressive and lively. They enjoy other's attention they love social gatherings and find it easy to interact with others. Leaders of this type are energetic, active, raise a vision for the future which inspires people to an extent that they initiate actions in order to fulfill that vision. This leads to the identification and attachment to the leader because his/her ideas promise a future state of affairs that is valuable and desirable. Confidence and competence in relationship with assertiveness and optimism, demonstrate the conviction that the vision is achievable. Thus, by setting a personal example, leaders empower followers to take action. Going through these three stages, trust is built in the leader and enables the organization to achieve its goals.

Goodwill, cooperation as a personality trait correlates most strongly with the manifestations of the charismatic style. The connection to the enterprising style is strong and can be explained by poor comparability of these two dimensions. The cooperating personality type usually associates with warm attitude, concern for others, attention. Problems with goodwill appear when others take them for being 'meek' (Karabeliova, 2015). These traits come opposite to entrepreneurship and ambitiousness.

Between the personal characteristic conscientiousness and charismatic leadership once again the highest values are displayed. Both cooperation and openness show the strongest correlations with each of the leadership styles, particularly charismatic one. The conscientious personality type occurs in varying degrees of meticulousness and sensitivity to detail. This is often a sign of high control and restraint, but would cause reactions to the disorder and the lack of purpose. In this sense, the strong correlation between good faith, purpose and manifestations of transformational leadership is only logical. The focus here is on the concerns and welfare of interpersonal relationships.

The vision for future development built by the charismatic leader usually differs from the established one (Conger, Kanungo, 1998), which predisposes strong relations with the openness to new experience, innovation, active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, self-reflection to feelings, seeking variety, intellectual curiosity and independence of opinions and assessments (Costa & McCrae, 2003). Charismatic leaders can be seen as agents of change that promise better opportunities and better results for their followers. Their views are based on the basis that the organization now has not achieved its potential and that needs to change, and on the basis of a realistic assessment of the constraints and opportunities offered by the environment (Conger 2013; Conger, Kanungo, 1998). The greater is the discrepancy between the proposed vision on the part of the leader and the current status of the situation, the more likely it is that the leader can be seen as proactive. Realistic assessment of internal resources and constraints of the environment, as well as the constant commitment seems like an achievable vision. Those open to new experiences are usually described as creative people and act in an unconventional way. Also they enjoy the change and tend to struggle against the "old" methods of solving a problem.

On the other hand, the sensitivity of the leaders to the capabilities of their followers and the opportunities and threats that the environment offers correlate most strongly with the charismatic and transformational leadership, which corresponds with the results achieved in this respect in other pieces of research (Waldmann, Yammarino, 1999). Leaders largely build that trust through communication on the need for a new vision and how it can be achieved. An important element of this communication is how they assert the importance of change: they focus on the key drivers of change and explain how and why this situation would be unacceptable for the changes occurring in the environment. According to several studies in this area, persuasive arguments about the meaning of the new vision contribute greatly to detect the location of the organization in the context of a changing environment. (Conger and Kanungo 1987, 1998; Tichy and Devanna, 2014; Waldman and Yammarino, 1999).

In this sense, the results confirm the general picture of the interaction between leadership styles and personality traits. Positive correlations are established between Extraversion, cooperation, openness and agreeableness and negative ones with expressions of neuroticism. The results support the assumption of a link between personality traits of the model of the "Big Five" and manifestations of leadership styles in the context of the "new paradigm". Strong interactions between conscientiousness and openness with each of the leadership styles and especially the charismatic one stand out against the background of similar studies, where these correlations are weak or negative (Ackerman & Humphreys, 1990; Barrick, Mitchell, & Stewart, 2003; Chen, Whiteman, & Kilcullen, 2000; Schneider, & Dunnette, 1996; Kanfer, 1990, 1992;. Mumford, Zaccaro, 2000). Confirmation receives the significant positive interaction between openness to new experience and charisma and intellectual motivation. In this sense, it can be concluded that the traits of personality and leadership styles are not mutually exclusive - rather complementary and have some variation, probably caused by specific cultural context.

Leadership style and personal characteristics are closely related to collaboration in organizational conditions and directly influence the performance of the official functions and duties, respectively on organizational behavior. Leaders possess certain qualities that distinguish them from others such as the level of intelligence, activity, charismatic appearance, initiative, self-confidence, although this depends on the situation largely (Stogdill, 1974). A number of authors, including studies of students show that charismatic leaders, compared to other leaders, tend to achieve greater success both for themselves and their ideas, and the structures they work and no less for their followers (Avolio, 1999).

3. Conclusions

 The results of the research on leadership styles show that for the effectiveness of the organization what matters is the synergy between the different management styles based on inspiring and motivating people to apply new approaches in their work, as well as adherence to the rules of work.

In this sense, the comparison with the results of Zaccaro's meta-analysis can be found in the understanding of successful leaders, which fits into the concept of extraversion traits of personality, charisma, timely decision making and communication with many people. The results of the studies indicate synchronization in the manifestations of kindness, conscientiousness and emotional stability. The traits of personality establish a meaningful impact on each of the tested

leadership styles. It can be claimed that the result is only logical for the traits of personality are relatively independent. The strongest is the effect of cooperation on the charismatic style, followed by conscientiousness and extraversion. Neuroticism has once more a negative effect on leadership efficiency as it manifests anxiety and insecurity. Thus leadership styles in the researched universities are dictated mostly by the interrelations between the charismatic style with conscientiousness, agreeableness and emotional stability. In this sense it is concluded that leadership styles are manifested mostly with a demonstration of good social skills and agreeableness.

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