
ECONOMICS

Sociology

Andrea Jankurová,
Danubius University,
Sládkovičovo, Slovak Republic,
E-mail:
andrea.jankurova@vsdanubius.sk

Ivana Ljudvigová,
University of Economics in
Bratislava,
Bratislava, Slovak Republic,
E-mail: ivana.ljudvigova@euba.sk

Klaudia Gubová,
University of Economics in
Bratislava,
Bratislava, Slovak Republic,
E-mail: klaudia.gubova@euba.sk

Received: July, 2016
1st Revision: October, 2016
Accepted: December, 2016

DOI: 10.14254/2071-
789X.2017/10-1/10

JEL Classification: M20,
M21, M29

Keywords: leadership, leader, leadership activities, followers.

RESEARCH OF THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES¹

ABSTRACT. Professional literature on leadership mostly states that a leader should be like (personality traits) and describes different leadership styles and types. However, very little is known about what leaders do in their everyday practice, or how they do it. Leadership should be seen more widely and should be explored along the characteristics and style of leadership and how leaders are manifested externally through their work, which means to explore the nature of leadership work. The aim of the research project was to gain more knowledge about the activities undertaken by leaders to answer a simple, but yet not too clearly answered question: „What does a leader really do?“ This finding will help reveal important activities on which best leaders focus and determine which elements are really important for leadership. The research project was managed as a combination of interviews conducted with leaders, people on senior management positions along with a questionnaire survey.

Introduction

Leadership is a topic that is now a matter of high interest and attention, as reflected in a large number of books and articles on the subject (Yukl, 2010). Despite the enormous amount of professional and popular literature, the concept of leadership is associated with many unanswered questions and controversial conclusions. One of the most important theoretical problems is the lack of uniform definitions of leadership as such, resulting in a lack of practically applicable characteristics of leadership activities. Findings presented in literature mostly talk about how to act like leaders, emphasizing their personal characteristics, or describing different leadership styles and types of leaders. A leader is mostly seen as a complex entity equipped with features that make him/her ideal for the role of a leader. Excessive research on characteristics carried out in the past decades, however, did not reveal which features guarantee leadership success (Northouse, 2010). Practical examples also show that the personality that does not have the selected features, still may be

¹ Supported by Grant no. ITMS 26210120047.

an effective leader too (Ulrich *et al.*, 2009). On the other hand, it cannot be explained why leaders even though they possess leadership characteristics based on the research, unexpectedly fail.

Looking back on the extensive research concerning the characteristics of leaders, we know very little about what leaders actually do in their daily work, or how they do it. Comprehensive studies on this topic exist, resulting in a completely non-specific and metaphorical understanding of the whole concept of leadership based on personality, charisma or holding certain positions. Leadership should be seen more widely and same applies to the characteristics of leadership and leadership styles, as well as how are leaders manifested outwardly through their work, what is the nature of their work. Comprehensive understanding of leadership involves not only understanding the personality of a leader, his/her value orientation, properties and characteristics, i.e. "Who is a leader?" and a style of leadership used by a leader, that is, "How does he/she lead?", but also actions that a leader performs, i.e., "What is he/she doing in fact?"

1. Literature overview

Leadership is a concept that in managerial language, despite more than half a million books about leaders did not have a clear and unambiguous interpretation. According to Crainer (1995) there are about 400 definitions of leadership – "it's a real minefield of misunderstandings and differences, through which theorists and practitioners have to walk". The definition of leadership is arbitrary and largely subjective. Stogdill (1948) after a comprehensive review of the literature on leadership concluded that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as those who have tried to define this concept". Confusion is caused mainly due to using other misleading terms such as management, administration, power, authority and control to describe similar phenomena. "It seems that the concept of leadership has always escaped from us, or appears in a different form to mock with its sliding properties and complexity. That's why we invented endless definitions to deal with it ... and now this concept is yet not well defined", says Bennis (1959).

Leadership is defined in different ways. First, leadership occurs in groups. Leadership is „the behavior of an individual directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal.“ (Hemphill, Coons, 1957) Similarly Northouse (2010) says that „leadership involves influencing a group of individuals who have a common purpose“. Second, leadership is a process or transactional event that occurs between the leader and the followers, it is not a trait or characteristic of leader. „Leadership is realized in the process whereby one or more individuals succeed in attempting to frame and define the reality of others“ (Smircich, Morgan, 1982) Jacobs and Jaques (1990) pointed out that „it is a process of giving purpose to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose“. Similarly Drath and Palus (1994) define leadership as „the process of making sense of what people are doing together so that people will understand and be committed“. „Leadership then has a role to further develop internal policies of the organization and procedures within the workplace and to ensure such effective and ethical practices in the workplace that will reflect the values, mission and purpose of the organization / company through a clear set of values and principles in the context of employers and employees with respect to a particular set of attitudes and habits of interested individuals or groups“ (Děd, Jankurová, 2015). Third, leadership involves influence. Leadership is „the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization“ (Katz, Kahn, 1978) House *et al.* (1999) say that it is „the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization“. Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that "it involves a process whereby intentional

influence is exerted over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization“ (Yukl, 2010). For example „in the context of regional development also raises the question of what types of institutions and stakeholders should form a so-called top management with right leadership in the process of implementation of the strategic goals and objectives“ (Čajka, Rýsová, 2008). Within that view to the forefront of regional development also receive such aspects as regional identity of actors active in the regional context (see more Dušek, 2007, 2014 and 2015). Similarly Northouse (2010) defines leadership as "the process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve common objectives" and Rauch and Behling (1984) as „the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement“. The increase of organized group's innovative capacity can only be achieved by means of supporting intelligent investment. Investment into education, research and development will manifest itself positively in the sustainability of total growth of organization (Terem, 2013; Čajka *et al.*, 2012).

On the other hand, the interpretation of leadership differ mainly in defining how a leader carries out its influence and determining what is the result of effort to influence. The issue of leadership is analyzed by Weber in the political sphere. „Weber's concept highlights the power of political elites who rule and are a major pillar of stability of the company, which in the case of establishing direct democracy faces extinction“ (Kováčová, 2014).

Very often definitions appear which have a historical, psychological and sociological importance, however, are not applicable to modern business and management, for example leader as a servant, leader as a media product. Some definitions are therefore more useful than others, but there is no definition that would capture the essence of leadership and would be sufficiently general to all situations. Theoretical knowledge of leadership shows the necessity to perceive the function of management and broad experience proves it. Under these circumstances, it is preferable to use different concept of leadership as a source of different perspectives on this complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Karmel (1978) also recommends: "Whenever feasible, leadership research should be designed to provide information relevant to a wide range of definitions, so that in time it will be possible to compare the usefulness of different approaches and come to some kind of conformity in this case".

While several similarities and differences surround the ideas of two theorists leadershipstyles, the most obvious comparison is that they both deal with perceptions and assumptions about people. These perceptions tend to take the form of how management views employees, while Ouchi's Theory Z takes this notion of perceptions a bit farther and talks about how the workers might perceive management. Jasaňová (2002) shows a comparison and contrast of the two theorists, and how they might apply the concepts shown to their particular management theories.

Part of the answer to the question of what leaders actually do, can be found in an unlimited number of definitions of leadership. Northouse (2010) states that during the past sixty years more than 65 different classification systems were developed to define the dimensions of leadership. Burns (1978) defines that "leadership is exercised when persons mobilize institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers“. Richards and Engle (1986) consider that "leadership is a formulation of a vision, embodied values and creating an environment in which things can be done". House *et al.* (1997) define leadership as "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute effectiveness and success of an organization". Donnelly *et al.* (1997) talk about leadership as "the ability to persuade others", the definition Kotter (1992) points out is that "a leader inspires to achieve vision, regardless of the complications". Schein (1992) says that leadership „is the ability to start evolutionary change

processes that are more adaptive“. Nowadays, it is necessary to examine the definition of leadership as knowledge-oriented leadership – in the field of knowledge management as a deal for example Donate and Sánchez de Pablo (2014)

Based on definitions above, we can state that leaders influence, formulate a vision, motivate, inspire, mobilize, leading change etc.

In carrying out the research project, we assumed that leaders in their leadership activities affect their employees, but are also used at the same time, inspired by their surroundings, but also affect people through their charisma, encouraging their colleagues, but in some situations before they mobilize, inspiring trust, but their relations with staff are also based on undertakings made up of followers, while raising their successors.

2. Aim and research methods

The inspiration for the research project was the study of Henry Mintzberg, one of the leading academics who have studied management. Mintzberg conducted research and its aim was to find out how managers actually do their jobs. His findings were published in 1973. The results were surprising. Mintzberg concluded that managers do not perform traditional management functions, namely planning, organizing and control, but carry out interpersonal, informational and decision-making activities. This means that most of the time managers work at representative roles, the roles of spokesman, resource allocator and negotiator. Supplemented and more complex model of managing (model of the manager's job) H. Mintzberg published in 1994. Same as Henry Mintzberg looked at managers, we decided to explore the leaders and find out what activities do leaders really perform whether these activities are consistent with what is suggested by the literature.

Research of leadership activities is rare and does not have complex nature. Mission of submitted article is to clarify this a little researched area of leadership and to contribute a little to the set of knowledge about leadership activities, which will create conceptual knowledge. Presented research project is a „snapshot“ study that explores the most important (basic) leadership activities. The main objective of the research project was to learn more about the activities undertaken by the leaders and by experience to answer a simple, but yet not too clearly answered question: "What really makes a leader?" This finding helps us to reveal important activities that the best leaders focused on and determine which elements are really important for leadership. These findings further help and guide in training of successors to leadership roles, and so to improve the next generation of leaders.

The result of the main objective are the following sub-objectives of the research project, based on a complex characteristic of leadership:

- to explain how a leader use their power and influence in practice, how they influence events in the business and what tools they use,
- describe the ways and means used by a leader to inspire followers,
- deepen and broaden the knowledge of when and how a leader mobilizes and encourages their employees,
- clarify what makes a leader, to enhance people's confidence towards them and used obligations in their work with people.

The research project was conducted jointly by Department of Management, University of Economics in Bratislava and recruiter KINGFISHER Executive Search in 2014-2015. The research project was attended by leaders at the top level in the organization (top management). Research sample consists of top leaders (CEO, chairman of the board) of big companies, that have hundreds of employees, so we assured consistency across the subjects of research. Survey sample consists of leaders from different sectors (IT, financial sector, food industry, construction industry...). The research sample consists of leaders from Slovak

enterprises (leaders have Slovak nationality) with academical education aged 30-65 years. The research project was attended by 92 percent of men and 8 percent of women. In the research project, to be ensured of the anonymity of respondents we do not mention their names, but involved leaders are marked with letters of the alphabet from A to Z.

The research project was carried out by controlled interviews and questionnaires. This questionnaire contains a list of statements that describe the activities performed by leaders in the fields, which are power and influence, inspiration and charisma, encouragement and mobilization, trust and commitment. Through the study of literature we identified a list of basic leadership activities that constitute research project scheme. Each of these claims was evaluated by two leaders of the prescribed scales, and the *frequency* (never, rarely / about once a year /, occasionally / about once a month / often / approximately once per week / and very often / daily /) and the *importance for the enterprise* (small, moderate, substantial or critical impact on the efficiency and prosperity of the company, or has no effect on the efficiency and prosperity of the company).

Contents of personal meetings with selected leaders were not only to complete the questionnaire, but mainly extensive and thorough discussion of the eight basic leadership actions that have been formulated as *power and influence, inspiration and charisma, encouragement and mobilization, trust and commitment* in order to determine whether the activities are carried out by leaders in practice and how goes on their practical implementation in the process of leadership. The credibility of a research project was supported by just concrete and personal contact with the studied leaders. The results of the meetings were the views and insights that leaders put in their responses, thus contributing to the deepening and broadening of knowledge about leadership. During the interview, it was also possible to observe their non-verbal speech and behavior and to learn more about how other people act. This invaluable experience and personal contact with leaders contributed to a deeper knowledge of the issues and a higher quality of research findings. The questions used in the interview were, for example: *What methods, instruments and concepts of influencing do you use in your job? When do you influence your employees and when and how do you use tools of power? What methods and instruments do you use to inspire your followers? Do you have charisma? How do you define charisma? When and how do you encourage and mobilize? What do you do for increasing people's trust to you? How do you define the commitment?*

Research project has empirical nature. Given limited research sample and excellence of leaders we think that is not suitable to make quantitative conclusions. The statistical processing can erase the originality of individual leader's statements. Leadership is always individual, the average value is not standard.

Research was conducted on a basis of combination of selecting random businesses.

Critical area: $\chi^2_P > \chi^2_{1-\alpha} [(r-1).(s-1)]$ when α is level of importance, or $(1-\alpha)$ is credibility. $\chi^2_{1-\alpha} [(r-1).(s-1)]$

At level of importance 0,05:

$\chi^2_{1-\alpha} [(r-1).(s-1)]$

With credibility 0,95 or at the level of importance 0,05 we accept the hypothesis that there is statistically important dependency between coefficients.

Calculation for chi-quadrat: $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$

H1: Chi -quadrat = 80,786

Calculation for degree of freedom: $df=(s-1)*(r-1)$

$p= 0.00000106$

H1 was confirmed as the value of $p < \text{than } 0,05$.

H2: Chi -quadrat = 35,858

Calculation for degree of freedom: $df=(s-1)*(r-1)$

$p = 0.15321312$

Hypothesis H2 was not confirmed as the value of $p >$ than 0,05.

H3: *Chi -quadrat* = 19,971

*Calculation for degree of freedom: $df = (s-1) * (r-1)$*

$p = 0.00284073$

Hypothesis H3 was confirmed as the value of $p <$ than 0,05.

H4: *Chi -quadrat* = 19,971

*Calculation for degree of freedom: $df = (s-1) * (r-1)$*

$p = 0.044073$

Hypothesis H4 was confirmed as the value of $p <$ than 0,05.

Method of analysis was used in scoring questions of a research and formulation of results emerging from the research.

Another singular method used to process collected data, score gained data, and realisation and verification hypothesis was mathematical-statistical method.

As these data are categorical data, we used the field of statistical analysis of categorical data. Alteration of questions asked is two for each question (yes/no). Adequate test for mentioned type of variables is Pearson Chi quadrate test of independence. The core of the test is to compare compliance of theoretical frequency with actual frequency and appraisal of importance between them.

H1: The more leaders use influence, the less power used.

H2: Relations with the followers of a leader is based on trust rather than on commitments.

H3: Growing importance of mobilizing successor in crisis situations.

H4: Leaders in the exercise of its activities rely solely on its charisma.

Tab. 1. Denomination of coefficient correlation and p – denomination of statistical importance dependency between individual pairs of variables

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 25				
	Leaders use influence, the less power used	Relations with the followers of a leader is based on trust rather than on commitments	Growing importance of mobilizing successor in crisis situations	Leaders in the exercise of its activities rely solely on its charisma
Leaders use influence, the less power used	1.0000	-0.2301 <i>0.2905</i>	0.1454 <i>0.5503</i>	-0.3333 <i>0.1035</i>
Relations with the followers of a leader is based on trust rather than on commitments	-0.2301 <i>0.2905</i>	1.0000	0.1573 <i>0.4628</i>	0.4180 <i>0.0376</i>
Leaders in the exercise of its activities rely solely on its charisma	0.1454 <i>0.5503</i>	0.1573 <i>0.4628</i>	1.0000	-0.2879 <i>0.1629</i>
Growing importance of mobilizing successor in crisis situations	-0.3333 <i>0.1055</i>	0.4180 <i>0.0386</i>	-0.2879 <i>0.1629</i>	1.0000

Hypothesis 1: Slightly above the level of importance 0,1, specifically (0,1055) is importance of dependence between variables is the lower responsibility e.g. 0,85 could prove dependence between given variables, specifically on a base of coefficient correlation (-0,3333) slightly strong indirect dependence.

Hypothesis 2: At a level of importance 0,1 and 0,05 or with reliability 0,9 and 0,95 we can say that in-between variables there is statistically important dependence (p-denomination = $0,0386 < \text{level of importance } 0,1 \text{ or } 0,05$) based on the denomination (0,4810) – medium strong direct linear dependence.

Hypothesis 3: Slightly above the level of importance 0,1, specifically (0,1629) is importance of dependence between variables is the lower responsibility e.g. 0,85 could prove dependence between given variables, specifically on a base of coefficient correlation (-0,2879) slightly strong indirect dependence.

Hypothesis 4: Indirect dependences further appeared between pairs of variables: there was no proven statistical importance of these dependences, and therefore we cannot refer to these dependences.

3. Findings

3.1. *The research results of power and influence*

In this part of the research, we assumed that the leaders in their daily work are using not only power tools which they have because of their position held in the company, but also their influence, which is not linked to a formal position. We wondered which of the components of leadership, *power* or *influence* dominate in the work of a leader and what are the reasons for their use in daily practice.

The research has shown that leaders use power when there is a little time to take a decision and also the lack of adequate resources, associated with the problem. Then the leader's decision is authoritative. Leaders use power when it is urgent to decide, or, it is necessary to correct previous decision (Koper, 2003), but in a team of workers who are charged with taking the decision in a particular case, there is no common view on a clear way to solve the problem. It is necessary to say the final word, and this privilege, but also an obligation, has the right leader. Leaders use power to speed up things, if it is necessary to adopt a critical decision. In this case the importance of leadership in the organization also increases. The power tools are also used when a team departs from achieving the goal and the process of realization of the project has substantially different direction than planned. Leaders use power when they need to enforce measures that employees perceive as unpopular, or is necessary to clearly define the rules for the entire company, mostly at its establishment. Then it is necessary to describe the processes exactly and on pursuance of that release organizational standards from the positions of power.

Sixteen percent of leaders stated that they do not use power at all. The leader X said, *"I do not follow from a position of power I use power only in decision making. I do not need much, because our relationships are based on respect and everyone has the space to realization. If a leader uses only commands and power, an employee becomes a machine and a leader destroys his space dedicated to creativity"*. According to the leader E, if a leadership has to work only on orders, the leader should give up his position. It emphasizes that the leader is holding his position base on trust and asks: *"How can a leader do something based on power when he is in his position of trust?"* Contrary the leader CH says that power is not a natural part of a leadership role, but also adds that *"formal authority alone is not enough, and especially should not be misused"*. Eight percent of leaders said that power and influence are used in a ratio of 10 to 90 and just 8 percent of others in the ratio of 20 to 80. Four percent of leaders said that he uses the power in 30 percent and influence in 70 percent of cases. Remaining answers of 64 percent leaders oscillated in evaluating the use of power and influence in the ratio of 40:60 to 50:50. None of the leaders use power more frequently than the influence in their daily work. Most of the leaders said that first they try to use their

influence and then they use power tools. Leaders use power and influence approximately the same with a slight dominance effect.

Although most experts dealt with leadership recognizes that influence is one of the essential components of leadership, there is no clear definition of influence, or characteristic what an influence by a leader actually means in practice. Based on research, we found out that leaders perform their influence mainly through explanation, discussion, providing examples, speeches at meetings and presentations, as well as identifying and awarding meaningful goals. Interference happens according to the words of the leader T *"to get the people on your side"*, or according to the leader R *"to inspire employees to a particular thing and want them to make it the same way as me"*. According to the leader J, *"each situation is dealt with easily if you convince people and get them on your side"*. Influencing is primarily understood by leaders as an explanation and convincing.

Leader differently influences their direct subordinates and other employees at lower levels of management, who are hierarchically distant from him. The influencing of direct subordinates occurs more frequently, from a daily impact to an influence at about once a week. Leaders influence other employees on average a few times a year. The different need of influencing people is also related to the duration of an employee in the company. New leaders influence people frequently. With increasing time of duration in the business the frequency of influencing decreases.

In practice there is an overlap between the use of power tools and influence. While leaders perceive influencing as the function performed continuously through their daily work, they use power tools only in certain situations. They highlight that power should be taken openly, reasonably, in a mature manner and with an appropriate level of self-control.

3.2. The research results of inspiration and charisma

The second part of the research project focuses on the use of inspiration and charisma in making leadership roles. We were very interested in what resources do the leaders use to inspire their followers and whether they rely on their charisma in their everyday life. We discovered that leaders inspire their collaborators, especially if the preparation and implementation of a particular change is prepared and the staff is required to leave the routines and stereotypes of behavior and replace them with new ones. A leader again, like in influencing, explains the importance and consequence of changes to the enterprise. The aim is to make the employee to identify with a new idea more easily. To be inspired by leaders means to explain and support staff in positive thinking. The leader G notes: *"Employees need to know exactly what to do and how to do it. But the role of a leader is also to inspire them – to refill the petrol that will drive them forward"*. According to leaders, inspiration is also needed in times of crisis, when people tend to give up, lose the sense of a particular activity, work or project are negatively attacked by the competition.

Participating leaders agreed that while inspiring a personal example of leadership is important. Employees must feel that leaders care about them, even in difficult situations they are with them and they must consider them as models. Employees see how a leader acts and perceive whether the leader is internally excited for a particular thing. If the leader is not excited, they cannot inspire others. The leader R said that *"a leader is the one who has to deliver enthusiasm"*, literally *"the fuel of the project"*. According to the words of the leader N: *"People need to be drawn into the process"*. If a leader has to become an example for other workers they have to be in touch with their people and develop an ongoing dialogue on an individual and collective level, while a leader and an employee have to act as equal partners, who speak directly and honestly together. The leader T points out, *"if a leader wants to inspire others, he has to be the bearer of values and goals to which he wants to get people*

and employees must trust him“. The leader N said in an interview that *"he cares about inspiring people"*. Inspiration is in his opinion *"based on an individual basis, a leader must know the motivation, past experience of an employee. It is important to talk to people. Otherwise, the inspiration is only superficial"*.

Leaders inspire also by using past experience. They try to find a model situation when the realization has been successful. They show employees examples of successful decisions and projects that were realized in the past and encourage them to participate in solving by using their own thoughts and ideas. While inspiring, leaders came out with the assumption that most people like new things, so the best is to inspire by objectives and an employee has to think about the way, the manner in which he will realize these objectives. Achievement and success inspire to the next job. Leaders inspire through discussions, performances and presentations at meetings, delegation of competences to colleagues who represent them at the time of absence or send an inspiring e-mail to subordinate or recommend an interesting literature (Masár, Kollár, 2015). The leader has to evoke an atmosphere in the workplace, where people will be able to make new decisions and challenges.

Personality of a leader plays an important role for inspiration, we detected how big importance do the leaders attribute to charisma in leadership. Charismatic leaders have some exceptional personal characteristics and exhibit a specific type of behavior. Two-thirds of surveyed leaders are aware of their charisma, but they do not work purposefully with it. Only four percent of leaders said that they try to "grow" charisma. The leaders in the studied companies have the opinion that the charisma is essential for leadership. Charismatic leader is able to attract, persuade and get people to their side in a natural way. He acts positively, build trust, and therefore people follow them. If a leader is not charismatic, they have to use power. Leaders often perceived charisma as a fluid. Interesting is that the term fluid was used originally in the older physics and means "a presumed invisible substance of radiating energy". Participating leaders thus perceive charisma as a radiation of a person and it creates an atmosphere.

We examined whether leaders use more inspiration or charisma in practice. More than half of the participating leaders said that they utilize a combination of them in ratio of 50 to 50. Twelve percent of leaders said that they use only inspiration in their work. Eight percent of leaders use charisma and inspiration in the ratio of 20 to 80. Four percent of leaders use charisma and inspiration in ratio of 30 to the 70. No leader stated, they do not use the inspiration at all, or that they solely rely on their charisma.

Although most of the leaders who participated in the research project, believe that charisma is a precondition for leadership, there have been some suggestions that *"charisma is a highly overrated attribute or the manner of appearance, which does not really has to bring anything to working environment"* and it can be misused by a leader to manipulate their colleagues.

Based on interviews with the participating leaders, we found out that the most important factors that crucially influence the creative climate in the workplace are friendly interpersonal relations, interviews, informal discussions, which can be a source of productivity growth and new ideas through creative exchange of ideas, challenging questions asked by leaders but their effectiveness depends on questioning techniques and a leadership style applied by a leader but the mandatory style of leadership does not create climate.

3.3. The research results of encouraging and mobilizing

The third part of the research on leadership questioned under what circumstances, and how leaders in practice, encourage and mobilize their colleagues. Although leaders perceive encouraging as continuous activity, they pointed that there are situations in which it is

extremely impressive, for example when an employee is failing or he has a fear of competition or has disagreements with colleagues or private problems. A leader encourages their employees, because they feel, even if they fail that they have the potential and preconditions to handle challenges. Leaders then point out to their people that they also have another chance, because in business usually one project out of ten is successful. Encouragement is important if employees are from various reasons exposed to negative attacks from the public, it is related especially to companies that provide paid services to public. The leader M in stress situations *"talks to employees about the reasons for their uncertainty and explains or denies if a matter of concern are misleading reports about the company in the media"*.

Leaders encourage employees mainly through interviews and praise. When encouraging they use positive characteristics, values and abilities of a person and are try to create a partnership and lead a fair interview. The leader CH says that *"people must feel that the leader believes in their abilities based on their behavior and performance"*. Encouraging is considered by leaders as a daily mater. The leader R says that *"he encourages constantly, stops at employees in the office and is interested in them"*. Leaders encourage so that employees informally talk about ordinary things, such as family or sport, they go through all the offices in a company and threw a few words with people, ask them for what they're doing and how they thrive, or how they were able to solve a particular problem. It is important that a leader should be interested in their colleagues. Leaders in interviews highlighted the importance of informal discussions directly in the workplace in encouraging co-workers. The leader K is aware of the importance of encouragement, because he *"stresses the importance of hearing and the feedback from the leader in encouraging as one of the main leadership activities"*. The leader S adds that *"people often do not believe in his abilities"*. The leader S then provides examples of difficult tasks, challenges to his subordinates, *"which they have successfully managed in the past themselves or by their colleagues"*. The leader M often encourages by *"describing his own experience of the past"*.

Based on the findings of the research can be stated that leaders encourage employees to voice their ideas and thoughts. They use resources and attitudes, which are tolerance to errors and unconventional ideas, provide rewards for active work, support informal atmosphere, especially informal discussions between the workers, asking challenging questions by leaders, creation of company culture that encourages creativity among employees. Trust between leaders and employees also play an important role.

In the literature about leadership occurs a mobilization as a leadership activity only very rarely. Research aim was to determine whether leaders use mobilization in their everyday practice, how they perceive this practice and under what circumstances they mobilize their employees. The results showed that while encouraging perceive leaders as a continuous activity of a leader, mobilization is necessary only in exceptional circumstances.

We found out that leaders mobilize their employees especially in setting non-standard goals, or in non-standard situations, when setting new tasks or in crisis situations. Leaders in mobilizing set a sufficient and ambitious goal which has to be fulfilled in time frames that are not standard. Thanks to these employees they learn something new and make progress in their skills and careers. If the goals are standard, a leader does not have to mobilize employees, simply encourages them. Leader also mobilizes their subordinates to handle the new challenges in front of which employees have often respect. In these exceptional circumstances, the role of leader is to remove anxiety of their subordinates and deliver a feeling of security. While mobilizing in crisis situations a leader can show that he stand in the middle of a team, help a team and look for solutions. As a result of this, people are willing to do more on their own initiative and offer a lot more than they must, or as is expected of them.

Leaders mobilize their employees, even if the results are worse or below average. In interviews they indicated that these situations occur rarely. These are usually problems with the implementation of a specific project and the correction consists of maximizing job performance. Leaders agreed that they cannot mobilize all the time. Either the employee "bestirs oneself" or they have to leave the company. Leaders, according to Kazansky (2015) also mobilize in conflicts between employees, if the party which is overplaying needs to encourage to further work.

In the analysis of this part of the research project on leadership, we found out that 12 percent of the participating leaders use encouraging in their everyday practice, but mobilize rarely, their ratio in encouraging and mobilizing is around 80 to 20. One quarter of leaders encourage approximately in 60% of situations and mobilizing in 40% of cases. Seventeen percent of leaders often use encouraging and mobilization in their work. Twelve percent said that the proportion of encouraging and mobilization in their work is 70 to 30. Six percent of leaders are mobilizing only in ten percent of situation (90/10) and 6% of leaders stated that they do not mobilize at all.

3.4. The research results of the trust and commitment

The leaders of the most successful companies are characterized by systematic and diligent building of the atmosphere of trust. Various leadership researches have shown a relationship between trust and performance of employees. The purpose of the research project was to investigate whether the effective leadership is based on the trust or whether it functions upon/on the ground of written or other commitments between a leader and his employees, for instance "I will give you this if you do that". We were also interested what leaders do to strengthen people's trust towards them.

The results of the research have shown that leaders consider trust to be one of the most important factors of a successful leadership. The employees trust those leaders that are consistent, so that people are well aware of what they can expect of their leader. We can explain the consistency by these words: Try to keep a steady direction. This way people will know what to expect. If a leader wants to strengthen trust towards them, they have to keep their promises and deals, they have to find time to listen to people, they should be interested in their employees and they cannot humiliate them. According to McElhaney (2008) "in its simplest form, trust comes from an unbroken promise". The leader U indicated in an interview that trust has to be built because it is a long-run path. He emphasized that "*trust cannot be gained by explanation, it can only be built by acts. Not what leader says, but what he does, shows his character. Competence and proficiency are the shortest paths to trust*". Leaders think that employees trust them only when they gain achievements, so people can see that a leader is successful, they achieved something and have a successful career behind. For building the trust, it is important for a leader to communicate with their employees about any change in a company. A leader has to be an example of following the principles and rules that they requires from his employees to be followed. A leader cannot expect from their employees a behaviour that they themselves cannot obtain. The leader Y has a very simple manual for creating trust between him and his employees: "*A leader tells what he is going to do and he will do it. If this happens several times, people will trust him*".

From the interviews with leaders we have discovered more relevant facts about relationships between leaders and subordinates. Even though the majority of specialized literature about leadership emphasizes that a leader must treat each employee individually, this approach does not always work in practice. Leaders agreed that individual approach is possible only towards immediate workers and not even on a daily basis. As the leader Y said: "*To treat every worker individually is energetically very demanding and slow-paced*".

Similarly, the leader T declared that "*a leader must have a certain standard approach towards his employees*". A common assumption that a leader approaches his workers as equal was not confirmed either. Leaders are aware that position and responsibility that they possess creates a natural barrier between them and their subordinates. The leader CH thinks that "*a certain distance is natural, because a leader has a different responsibility than his subordinates*". According to leaders, this barrier doesn't have to cause negative influence on the relationships in a company or on the creative atmosphere, but it implies a certain departure in understanding the leadership in the theoretical manner and everyday practice. Even the image of a leader is seen as "a hero with superhuman power" who knows everything, resolves everything and helps everyone is not true in practice. Even though leaders try to help their employees in work as well as in private lives, they do not have much time for this next to their other leadership activities. The finding that according to leaders it is not necessary for a leader to always control his emotions and moods is also surprising. The leader R thinks, that "*emotions are powerful tools and if they are used properly they can help a leader to get people on his side*".

The leader V uses only minimum commitments, because his relationships with his subordinates are based on trust from the beginning of the business. Similarly, the leader E thinks that "*leaders do not need written commitments*". The leader N indicated in an interview: "*Trust is something that I care about. Without trust there cannot be a commitment, without trust, nobody can sit on a chair*". Likewise, the leader CH has the opinion that leadership cannot exist without trust. According to him: "*relationships that are based on trust are the most stable ones and have the biggest value for the leadership*".

On the other hand, the leader F has the opinion that "*a leadership cannot be just about trust*". In a company there are both written and non-written commitments, and the combination of trust and commitments is important. The leader G also perceives trust and commitment as very tightly connected. He defines commitment as "*defining the rules*" and trust is according to him "*a result of constant fulfilment of the commitments*". The leader T even declared that "*the formal commitments represent the necessary instruments in the company*". He perceives trust as an ancestor of the commitment, because upon this a leader can estimate whether the employee is able to handle the given project or task. The leader P indicates that "*relationships between him and his co-workers are from the beginning based on commitments, trust comes later, so the building of trust is gradual*".

4. Discussion

The results of the research project imply that **power** and **influence** are two components of leadership, which mutually complement each other in the common business practice, even though they differ in their content. We have found out that their usage depends on the particular situation. If there is a little time to make some decision or the company does not possess the adequate resources which are related to the given problem, the usage of power influence is as natural for the leaders as the assertion of the informal influence in the organization. Leaders, however, agreed that every situation is solved more easily if a leader gains employees on their side by convincing them to help and support them. Influence is a much more effective way to involve the workers to the process of achieving the specified goals than the usage of power influence. Influencing people is one of the central and decisive components used in characterizing the nature of leadership. For example Yukl (2010) defines leadership as follows: "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree what needs to be done and how to do it, and at the same time it is also a process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to achieve meaningful tasks and common objectives". Leaders themselves perceive the influencing as a continual process, as a continuously performed function by means of everyday work. On the basis of the research we

have found out that leaders perform their influence in practice mostly by explanation, discussion, by providing examples, acting on the meetings and presentations as well as determining meaningful goals. The previous research results indicate that successful influence of employees by a leader gives them these requirements: ability to analyse the given problem, ability to explain, to introduce their own opinion and support it by an adequate logical and emotional argument, to perceive wider connections of problems and decisions, ability to convincingly act on meetings and presentations. We assume that stated requirements for leadership function can be learned, which discredits the common idea that the leadership is birth given and can't be learned. Armstrong (2005) believes that while a leader may have conferred power and authority, it does not ensure that he will be able to achieve results, especially if it means the involvement of his colleagues or superiors. The role of a leader is to convince other people to help them and support them. People go the direction that leaders wish only if their leaders will be able to effectively influence them.

Many experts consider the ability to inspire as one of the key activities, or qualities of a successful leader. Kotter (1992) believes that "Leadership defines what the future should look like, brings people with vision together and inspires them to achieve it, regardless of the complications". According to Adair and Reed (2009) "leadership is associated with inspiration when the leader can with his words and by his personal example inspire other employees and achieve their maximum motivation". Investigated leaders are using combination of **inspiration** and **charisma** in their practice. They accredit appreciable meaning to inspiration and creation of creative environment on workplace. The inspiration is needed mainly in realisation of changes and in crucial situations. The importance of inspiration is also highlighted by ascertainment that a leader does not need to be original but has to support originality in his followers. Although most of the leaders have the opinion that charisma is an inevitable assumption of leadership, there also appeared negative perception of charisma and negative influence of charismatic leaders in a company. The speculations about the interchange of a leader's charisma and ego appear more frequently, and also that the charisma is not necessarily needed for leadership and that charisma could be even harmful for company and followers, because "illusion about leaders inerrancy suppresses proposals and criticism of followers, delimits apprenticeship in organisation, development and planning of future succession (Yukl, 2010) Collins (2011) also assumes that one of the most harmful trends in recent history is a tendency to choose charismatic leaders with the status of celebrity and to omit potential but less shining leaders. The acting of charismatic leaders and their influence to company and followers is an interesting subject for continuance in study of the leadership.

The role of a leader is not only to evoke passion and inspire employees to fulfill the vision and objectives of a company, but also continuously maintain their dedication and effort throughout encouragement. According to McKenna and Meister (2005) leader can contribute to success of an organization that he "promote thoughts and ideas of others, encourage creativity and gives energy and enthusiasm". Real leaders recognize that the success of the organization depends on their ability to support other people. Leaders who participated in this study differentiate between **encouragement** and **mobilisation** and effectively use mobilisation in their leadership work. Concerning encouragement it is important for a leader to give people the feel of confidence and to be able to get over incertitude of their people. People will believe that together they can get over any kind of barrier, if there's a trust between leader and them. Leaders delegate competencies and they try to provide their employees enough space and responsibility for their own decision-making. Indeed criticism can be encouragement as well. This information is contrary to the stereotypes about leadership reported in the literature which does not pay almost any attention to constructive criticism, or does not give any incentive effect on employee performance. According to Strážovská (2015) leaders do not impute relevance to feedback only as a reformative measure, but there often appeared in interviews an

encouraging aspect of providing feedback. Leaders in contrary do not pay any attention to the feedback from the bottom, which is provided by the subordinates to their leaders. Knowledge of how leaders perceive feedback from the bottom is another challenge for leadership research.

Interviews with leaders showed that people trust a leader who is consistent, keeps their promises and agreements, who is successful and interested in their co-workers. Investigated leaders give greater importance to the employees trust to themselves than to trust that they themselves devote to their subordinates. Leader's trust towards his employees grows slowly and it usually is not an absolute confidence. The relationship of trust between leaders and subordinates should be naturally balanced, because an imbalance can cause poor use of human potential of organization. The finding that the idea of the leader as always "perfect robot with a stone face" belongs to the past is also interesting. Leaders are aware that emotions are a powerful tool and if they express them it may have a positive effect on their relationship with employees. Findings from the research say that it is not necessary for a leader to control their emotions and moods at all times. Petrovici (2014) defines promoting and building emotionally intelligent leadership as essential for cultivating a comfortable mental climate and team work spirit. Although there are leaders whose leadership is based solely on trust or on commitment, we have found that most leaders use a combination of both. According to the leaders, **trust** and **commitment** are closely related, and the majority of relationships between leader and subordinate include both of these components. The simplest formula says that commitment is a voluntary acceptance of obligations and duties to the organization or individual, and the practice of mutual obligations and promises that play a major role in the life of organizations. Yukl (2010) defines commitment in leadership as following: "The obligation arises when the target person (employee) internally agrees with the decision or requirement of a leader and makes a great effort to implement this requirement, to effectively implement the decision". Some leaders perceive a commitment as setting the rules, while trust is the result of continuing fulfilment of commitments. Other leaders on the contrary perceive trust as a condition of future liabilities.

Conclusion

A true leader is not only characterized by his personality traits and characteristics or their power position, but mainly by their knowledge, skills, leadership style and content of the work, and finally the results of the managed company. When looking for new leaders, not only their professionalism, character, temperament will be crucial, but also how these elements can be used in the practical implementation of leadership. Leadership should be seen more widely and next to formal prerequisites for leadership work it is useful to examine how a leader manifests themselves by specific and typical leadership activities. Significant is what the leaders actually do in everyday practice, because the leadership is expected to achieve concrete and useful progress.

The research project examined the nature of leadership work through the analytical scheme that puts into interaction the typical business leadership activities. Pairs of leadership activities are *power and influence*, *charisma and inspiration*, *encouragement and mobilization*, *trust and commitment*. Such an arrangement is not confrontational, because activities are interconnected and operate in continual dependence. As a result of partial contradictions some communicating tension was created, space for controversy and debate. We found out that leadership is in very colourful and diverse in real life. Leaders rarely resort to extremes in practice, for example absolution of power tools, rather we found out a combination of leadership activities, e.g. combining power and influence and trust and commitment.

It is anticipated that findings from the research could be used to establish the standard procedure of the leadership actions, which would measure and evaluate the level of true leadership, let us say leadership potential candidates for top management positions. The research results can be used to adjust the reference level (benchmark) of leadership actions of managers who have an ambition to be leaders, and so to develop and improve their leadership skills.

Acknowledgments

Supported by Grant no. ITMS 26210120047.

References

- Adair, J. E., Reed, P. J. (2009), *Not bosses but leaders: How to lead the way to success*, London: Kogan Page Publishers, 181 p.
- Armstrong, M., Stephens, T. (2005), *A handbook of management and leadership: A guide to managing for results*, London: Kogan Page Publishers, 242 p.
- Bennis, W. (1959), Leadership theory and administrative behavior: The problem of authority, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, No. 4, pp. 259-260.
- Burns, J. M. (1978), *Leadership*, New York: Harper&Row.
- Čajka, P., Rýsová, L. (2008), *Regionálny rozvoj a regionálna politika v kontexte poznatkovo-orientovanej spoločnosti*, Zvolen: Bratia Sabovci, 240 p., ISBN 978-80-89241-20-0.
- Čajka, P., Terem, P., Rýsová, L. (2012), Education and Research Infrastructure Development in the Slovak Republic, In: Ivanička, K. (2012), *New Model of Socio-economic Sustainable Development of the Slovak Republic*, School of Economics and Management in Public Administration in Bratislava, Institute of European, National and Global Studies, pp. 266-282.
- Collins, J. (2011), *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap...and others don't*, Harper Collins, 320 p.
- Craimer, S. (1995), Have the Corporate Superheroes Had Their Day? *Professional Manager*, No. 3, pp. 8-12.
- Děd, M., Jankurová, A. (2015), *Etické hodnoty študentov*, Sládkovičovo: Vysoká škola Danubius, 130 p., ISBN 978-80-8167-047-3.
- Donate, M. J., Sánchez De Pablo, J. D. (2014), The role of knowledge-oriented leadership in knowledge management practices and innovation, *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 68, Issue 2, February 2015, pp. 360-370.
- Donnelly, J. H., Gibson, J. L., Ivancevich, J. M. (1997), *Management*, Praha: Grada Publishing, 821 p.
- Drath, W. H., Palus, C. J. (1994), *Making common sense: Leadership as meaning-making in a community of practice*, Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Dušek, J. (2015), International Cooperation of Regional Authorities of the Czech Republic: History, Presence and Future, In: *Conference Proceedings „18th International Colloquium on Regional Sciences“*, Brno: Masaryk University – Faculty of Economics and Administration, pp. 300-305, ISBN 978-80-210-7861-1, DOI: 10.5817/CZ.MUNI.P210-7861-2015-40.
- Dušek, J., Skořepa, L. (2007), Development of the Region in Terms of Cities, Municipalities and Their Citizens, *Conference Proceedings „Economic Growth and Development in the Region“*, Hradec Králové: University of Hradec Králové, pp. 126-131, ISBN 978-80-7041-812-3.

- Dušek, J., Skořepa, L. (2014), Impacts of the World Recession and Economic Crisis on the Subjects of Tourism, *Conference Proceedings „Topical Issues of Tourism – Tourism and Its Impacts on Society“*, Jihlava: College of Polytechnics Jihlava, pp. 32-41, ISBN 978-80-87035-87-0.
- Hemphill, J. K., Coons, A. E. (1957), *Development of the leader behavior description questionnaire*, Columbus: Bureau of Business Research, Ohio State University, pp. 6-38.
- House, R. J., Wright, N. S., Aditya, R. N. (1997), Cross-cultural research on organizational leadership: A critical analysis and a proposed theory, In: P. C. Earley & M. Erez (eds.), *New perspectives on international/organizational psychology*, San Francisco: New Lexington Press, pp. 535-625.
- Jacobs, T. O., Jaques, E. (1990), Military executive leadership, In: K. E. Clark & M. B. Clark (eds.), *Measures of leadership*, West Orange, NJ: Leadership Library of America, pp. 281-295.
- Karmel, B. (1978), Leadership: A challenge to traditional research methods and assumptions, *Academy of Management Review*, No. 3, pp. 475-482.
- Katz, D., Kahn, R. L. (1978), *The social psychology of organizations*, 2nd ed., New York: John Wiley.
- Koper, J. (2003), *Mechanizmy vzniku moderného politického systému*, Zvolen: Bratia Sabovci, 21 p.
- Kováčová, N. (2014), *Politická participácia občanov v podmienkach SR*, Sládkovičovo: Vysoká škola Danubius, 164 p., ISBN: 978-80-8167-022-0.
- Kotter, J. P. (1992), Power, dependence and effective management, In: Gabarro, J. J. (ed.), *Managing people and organizations*, Boston, MA, Harvard Business School Publications.
- Masár, D., Kollár, D. (2015), Participácia a udržateľný rozvoj: spôsoby zapojenia občanov, spoločnosti a organizácií, In: *Evropská unie – rozporuplnost nebo složitost*, České Budějovice: VŠERS, pp. 29-37, ISBN 978-80-87472-89-7.
- McElhaney, K. A. (2008), *Just good business: The strategic guide to aligning corporate responsibility and brand*, Berrett-Koehler publishers, 194 p., ISBN 9781576754412.
- McKenna, P. J., Meister, D. H. (2005), *The effective leader*, Praha: Alfa Publishing, 238 p.
- Mintzberg, H. (1973), *The Nature of Managerial Work*, Harpercollins College Div, 298 p.
- Northouse, P. G. (2010), *Leadership – theory and practice*, Fifth edition, Sage publications, 432 p.
- Petrovici, M. A. (2014), Emotionally Intelligent Leader (Ship): An Efficient Approach, *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 141, 25 August, pp. 227-231.
- Rauch, C. F., Behling, O. (1984), Functionalism: Basis for an alternate approach to the study of leadership, In: J. G. Hunt, D. M. Hosking, C. A. Schriesheim, & R. Stewart (eds.), *Leaders and managers: International perspectives on managerial behavior and leadership*, Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, pp. 45-62.
- Richards, D., Engle, S. (1986), After the vision: Suggestions to corporate visionaries and vision champions, In: J. D. Adams (ed.), *Transforming leadership*, Alexandria, VA: Miles River Press, pp. 199-214.
- Smircich, L., Morgan, G. (1982), Leadership: The Management of Meaning, *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 248-272.
- Schein, E. H. (1992), *Organizational culture and leadership*, Jossey-Bass, 418 p.
- Stogdill, R. M. (1948), Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature, *Journal of Psychology*, No. 25, pp. 35-71.
- Terem, P. (2013), Reflexia vnímania vzdelávania, vedy a výskumu ako nástroja zvyšovania konkurencieschopnosti v podmienkach Slovenskej republiky, In: K. Pająk, J. Polcyn

- (eds.), *Determinanty rozwoju regionalnego w Polsce: społeczeństwo – gospodarka – środowisko*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek. pp. 325, ISBN 978-83-7780-634-0.
- Strážovská, L. (2015), *Family business in the Slovak Republic*. Globalizácia a jej sociálno-ekonomické dôsledky '15, Žilina: EDIS, 108 p., ISBN 978-80-554-1102-6.
- Ulrich, D., Smallwood, N., Sweetman, K. (2008), *The Leadership Code*, Harvard Business Press, 208 p.
- Yukl, G. (2010), *Leadership in organizations*, Seventh edition, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 644 p.