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SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS
OF THE LEADERSHIP PHENOMENON IN MANAGEMENT

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Summary. This article focuses on the social and psychological aspects of leadership in management. The relevance of the topic is determined by the fact that in the present-day business environment companies more and more often face problems such as increasing complexity, uncertainty and pressure from competitors. Under conditions of dynamic and unpredictable changes in the external environment, the ability to develop leaders and leadership skills on all levels of organizational heirarchy is a key factor of success. Modern organizations need individuals who can balance effectively their managerial functions and leadership skills, i. e. they can integrate to the maximum authority and influence as the main instruments for changing the attitudes and behaviors of subordinates/followers. All this will contribute to the voluntary acceptance of set goals, standards and propositions and encourage employees to become engaged in a deep, inner process of becoming permanently committed to the organization's values, objectives and requirements. The article provides a detailed outline of the nature and specific characteristics of leadership. Special attention is paid to the question that has been in the centre of scientific interests of social psychologists and researchers of the theory and practice of management for many years, namely how managers can become effective leaders. With reference to the answer to this question, the author defines the prerequisites for successful leadership by analyzing the different approaches to studying different leadership theories. As a result of the comparative analysis of the existing concepts ideas of leadership, expressed by the researchers, presented in the specialized literature, the author of the present article puts forward the opinion that these ideas can be classified into three main groups. However, according to the conclusions made on the basis of the theoretical review, exerting influence on the behavior of followers is considered to be the primary, key characteristic of the definitions of leadership provided in each of the three groups.

Keywords: leadership; influence; behavior; management activity; group; authority; social and psychological impact.

Introduction

People have been interested in leadership for a long time since the beginning of modern civilization. Since ancient times, it has been known that individuals are not the same. For this reason, even in the earliest forms of human organizations certain individuals always stepped forward. They have stood at the forefront and led their clans, guilds, cities or countries. These people are the leaders. The interest in leadership can be dated back to the first human communities. Over the different cultural and historical periods in the development of society the attitudes towards leadership have changes. The approaches and methods for studying this phenomenon have also undergone changes and have improved with time.

The interdisciplinary character of leadership means that it can be analyzed from different points of view:

1) from the perspective of the subjective prerequisites – personality parameters, necessary traits, basic dimensions and combinations of skills for exercising effective influence on others;

2) from the perspective of the objective prerequisites – ways of performing different activities, demonstrated behaviors and styles with reference to subordinates, tasks and dependence on the internal and external business environment;

3) from the perspective of the current business environment and the requirements it places with reference to certain theoretical and practical competences.

Nature and specific features of leadership

The interest in the nature and process of leadership in the sphere of psychology originated from social psychology and later spread to areas such as organizational psychology and the study of management and the development of human resources.

Actually, the first formal studies of leadership date back to the end of the 19th

and the beginning of the 20th century and are related to the theoretical research of German psychologist from this period. The conducted research and the theories based on it produced various and often contradicting concepts but every one of them contributed to clarifying the nature of leadership and helped identify the factors that turn individuals into confident and effective leaders who could influence the behavior of other people or groups. The main question, which is still in the centre of interests of social psychologists and researches of the theory and practice of management, is how managers can become effective leaders. Looking for the answer to this main question has created numerous theories of leadership. The researchers' conclusions, resulting from the different approaches they have applied when studying this problem, state that the main theories could be grouped into three main categories (figure).

Leadership theories
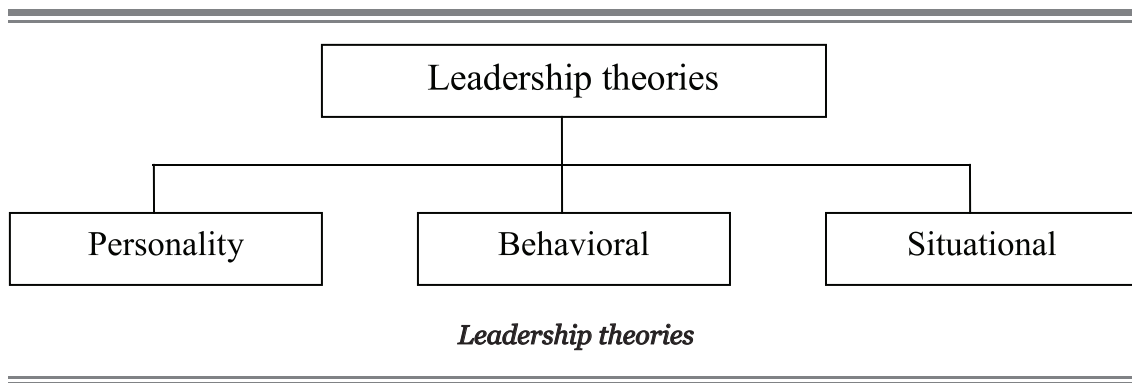
The first group refers to the personality theories or the so called trait theories. There, the efforts of scientists are directed to determining the prerequisites of successful leadership by studying the personality traits and attributes of famous business and historical model figures. The second group reveals the behavioral approach to leadership and focuses not on the personality traits of leaders but on their actual behavior and relationships with subordinates. These two theories have offered various models for classifying the different leadership styles of managers that are used widely in the studies of this phenomenon. Modern leadership theories are related to the situational approach in management. According to them, there is not only one, most effective leadership style. In addition to the personality traits and behavior of leaders, the effective management also depends on the needs and personality traits their subordinates, the type of task that have to be completed, the information available to managers and the influence of the context in which the business is performed. These are the so called situational factors which influence the choice of an appropriate management style [5, c. 292, 293].

In order to analyze more thoroughly the studied topic, after outlining the characteristics of the three main groups of leadership theories, it is necessary to define the notion of "leadership" itself.

The specialized literature provides many various definitions of leadership. However, certain trends can be distinguished because they focus on similar characteristics of leadership. The idea that unites all these trends is that leadership affects attitudes, behaviors, beliefs and feelings of other people. This effect can be viewed in general as the ability of a particular person with his/her behavior and actions to change the behavior and actions of other people (subordinates or followers). The particular authors put an emphasis on different aspects of the phenomenon thus prioritizing certain characteristics of the leader's personality. For example, according to Victor Vroom and Arthur Jago's definition of leadership, it is a process of motivating people to work together and cooperate with each other to achieve great things [12]. Chester Schriesheim, James

Tolliver and Orlando Behling define leadership as "...a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to achieve the organizational objectives" [11, p. 35]. According to Anatolii Asenov, "leadership is a process and a personal ability at the same time. Viewing leadership as a process suggests that it uses influence to streamline and coordinate the activities of members of organized groups so that they work voluntarily to achieve the objectives of the group. As a personal ability, leadership implies the set of personality traits and attributes of a particular individual who is considered to use them successfully to exert influence on others" [3, p. 193, 194]. Philip Usunov states that while management is oriented towards achieving objectives, leadership is to make others want to work in order to achieve these objectives [6, p. 13]. Martin Chemers defines leadership as a process of social influence by which an individual manages to obtain the support and help of others in accomplishing a common task [8, p. 76, 77]. For Stephen Robbins and Timothy Judge leadership is the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of a vision or a set of goals [10, p. 186–188] while for Robert Baron and coauthors leadership is to influence team members by provoking them to make mutual efforts and after that to manage the collective activities needed to forward the completion of tasks [7, p. 149, 150]. Another definition describes leadership in a similar way, namely as a process involving the exertion of influence on other people within the context of a group so that they group member achieve set goals [9, p. 13].

Having in mind the above – mentioned, we can summarize that specialized literature is abundant in various definitions of leadership that describe it from three main viewpoints. The *first approach* views leadership as a trait, the *second approach* describes it as a process while the *third one* suggests it is both a process and a trait. Research, done by the advocates of the first approach, states that leadership is a set of attributes and a multitude of traits, possessed by individuals, who successfully exert **influence.** Studies of leadership as a process suggest that it is a direct, voluntary **influence** on the actions of a group and their coordination for accomplishing its objectives. The third approach coordinates these characteristics and determines leadership as a direct **influence** of individuals, who possess the respective qualities, that elicits voluntary action for achieving certain goals.

It should be noted that each of the three approaches to defining leadership assumes the exertion of **influence** is one of its key characteristic.

From a psychological point of view, the influence an individual has on others could be explained by three qualitatively different from each other process [2, p. 26], namely:

● *Instrumental agreement* which implies the completion of set task for obtaining certain benefits or avoiding punishment; it usually involves minimal efforts.

● *Internalization* where the followers support the leader and comply with their requirements because these demands are internally desired and acceptable with reference to the followers' attitudes, beliefs or perceptions of self. себепредстави.

● *Personality identification* where followers identify with the leader or adopt their attitudes in order to be liked by them or be like them.

Social and psychological aspects of leadership

Over the last years the focus of research has shifted from studying power as a source of influence to investigating the various patterns of behavior used to exert this influence. Finding new possibilities and alternatives for improving and facilitating the management in its efforts to overcome more successfully the social and psychological barriers in organizations provokes the interest of the business in adopting such effective solutions that will encourage and guide employees to express their personalities actively and creatively.

The specialized literature mentions different methods of influencing the behaviors in organizations. In particular, these methods can be divided into two main groups [4, p. 108, 109], i. e.:

✓*Methods of direct influence*, which include:

– *giving orders* – this method is used mainly when there is not much time to apply the other ones. For it to be effective,

however, managers need to have considerably more authority than their subordinates;

– *persuasion* – it is used when authority is limited and the others have equal or bigger authority in the particular situation. In such cases it is necessary to give a good reason to the other team members to follow the leader. Leaders should also persuade team members that the tasks or goals that are to be completed are of great importance for the organization;

– *negotiation* – this method is used mainly when benefits for the potential followers are limited. It is necessary to offer these individuals something in return so that they become actual followers;

– *participation* – this methods provides opportunities for serious motivation and , therefore, it is of key importance that managers use it in every possible situation. The idea here is to make followers accept the set goals and task and make them their own. The important consequences of direct influence through participation are that team members share ideas, help each other and work in cooperation.

✓ *Methods of indirect influence* have a rather negative effect on followers. Examples of such methods include manipulation, misleading and opposing team members. These methods can provoke negative feelings and can result in lack of trust and insecurity in followers in the future.

It is necessary to point out managers should not mistake authority with coercion. Authority should imply reasonable, correct behavior based on persuasion – this is the modern understanding of authority. The way authority is applied and the responsibilities taken determine the role and form managers assign to authority [1, c. 400, 401].

The different methods of influencing help managers to use the authority delegated to them. These techniques also aid managers to lead their organizations in order to achieve the set goals but at the same time they encourage them to do it without imposing their personal interests. And if leaders perform well in this role, this is due to their ability to influence successfully the three levels of their followers' personality. These three levels refer to the intellect, emotions and behavior and imply the managers' abilities to explain and persuade; to get followers involved and encourage them to participate and to be a good example they can follow in accomplishing successfully their tasks. The strength of managers lies in their ability to inspire, motivate, and stimulate the enthusiasm of their followers by avoiding any insecurity, doubt or fear of problems.

Prerequisites for successful leadership

The concept of influencing on social and psychological levels in the leadership process shows that different individuals possess different possibilities to affect the group's activity and the individual behaviours of group (organization) members respectively. That is, every person influences the others in different situationsbut leaders exert unproportionally huge influence. This is a special case of interpersonal behavioural influence which is characterised as:

➤ an activity or behaviour which lead to changes in the understanding or behaviour of subordinates;

➤ a process of guiding and inspiring the organization's members to perform activities that will lead to accomplishment of particular set objectives;

➤ creating a system of relationships in the team which is based on mutual needs and desires;

➤ the ability to influence through taking initiative and responsibility for the actions of the group by one person, i. e. the leader, as well as the readiness of the others, i. e. the leader's followers, to participate in these initiatives and make efforts for their realization;

➤ an impact on the behaviour of others and the use of the personal skills and capabilities of individuals;

➤ a possibility for creating efficient work teams or groups by provoking the collective effort and managing the team/ group activities to forward the successful completion of task.

The outlined characteristics show that to influence individuals through leadership skills referes to the ability of managers to affect their subordinates (followers) on a cognitive, emotional or volitional level so that they commit themselves to following them.

Due to increased complexity and unpredictable changes in external environ-

ment, modern organizations have an increasing need for people who can balance effectively their managerial functions and leadership skills, which is to be able to integrate to the maximum their authority and influence as basic mechanism for changing the attitudes and behaviors of their subordinates/followers. This will contribute considerably to the voluntary acceptance of set goals, propositions and standards of behavior on behalf of subordinates. This will also facilitate the establishment of a supporting working environment and, therefore, the effective managing of organizations.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be summarized that multiple aspects of the discussed topic reveal the numerous interdisciplinary characteristics of the studied phenomenon which is analyzed by sciences such as psychology, sociology, management, and managerial behavior and many others. From the point of view the objective and subjective prerequisites it becomes obvious that modern business needs more leaders who possess the necessary competences and leadership skills to encourage positive changes in the working environment (friendly climate, supportive teams, delegating authorities and horizontal cooperation) and establish corporate culture that will be beneficial for the personal and professional development of employees as well as for increasing the effectiveness of management processes in organizations. This is due to the fact that leadership is not just a new management style. It is rather the ability to exercise influence in order to change the behaviors in organizations through inspiration, inclusion, commitment, involvement, motivation of their employees. Leadership also stimulates individuals to make collective efforts to increase both their and their organization's productivity.

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