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# The Cultural Inheritance of Abilities and Skills in Entrepreneurship Domain as a Determinant of Organizational Leadership

## **Abstract:**

In this article the author attempts to present an idea that entrepreneurship understood as abilities and skills, which shape new organizational reality, flexibility and risk tolerance are the essential factors that create a leadership relationship. It is assumed that there is a relationship between entrepreneurship and organizational leadership. A leader is not an obedient performer of tasks but a creator of new activities and relationships. Entrepreneurship is treated in the accepted sense as learned skills and abilities in the process of cultural inheritance of attitudes and behavior patterns existing in family, neighborhood, places in society and environment. Hence, in the article the author attempts to outline the path from entrepreneurial attitudes and behavior observed in childhood to act in the same manner in adulthood, including influencing the actions of associates in the workplace which exist in the Polish society.

**Key words:****organizational leadership, entrepreneurship, abilities, skills**

## Introduction

The question of the cultural inheritance of entrepreneurship as an important factor shaping the leadership relationship has not been explicitly analyzed in previously conducted studies of successful leadership. This is a topic especially important in the cultural conditions existing in Poland. On the one hand, they are not very favorable in treating such an approach, because of promoted Catholic values. On the other hand, Polish conditions have predestinated people to entrepreneurship, especially in families that have demonstrated their inventiveness and activity in the creation of economic activities since the early nineties. The phenomena, which are a manifestation of entrepreneurship and leading to the creation of leadership relationships are also observed in the third sector – the emerging civil society in Poland.

The fundamental question is whether there are in Poland strong enough attitudes and behavior patterns inherited culturally, which give young people a basis for above-average activity, creativity and the ability to shape organizational reality.

The author has studied leadership relationships for the last ten years and the cultural inheritance of abilities and skills in entrepreneurship domain as a determinant of organizational leadership is one of the prospects important in better understanding leaders' attitudes and behavior. Many researchers have tried to find evidence that genetic inheritance of leadership features is possible. Their studies and analyses do not give a positive result (Kuc, 2006, pp. 380–394). The problem is to identify a set of inherited features characteristic for leaders provided for new approaches in leadership domain studies. Researchers have started looking for different sources of leadership – behavior and situation, in which someone shows above-average abilities and skills. Although there are different studies about regional,

national and organizational cultures (for example: Bjerke, 2004; Hofstede, 2000; Schein, 1985), research studies about leadership avoid the issue of the role of cultural heritage in building appropriate attitudes and skills in family and neighborhood in primary (especially early) socialization. Another important question which is difficult to find in literature is a relationship between entrepreneurship and leadership. According to previously described reasons the main purpose of the article is the description and analysis of culturally inherited entrepreneurship as an important factor, which is a foundation and shapes a leader's relationship.

The article consists of two major parts. First, which is a description of general discussion and critical analysis about cultural inheritance of attitudes and behavior. Second, which presents the results of different studies (including my own research) about culturally inherited entrepreneurship as a determinant of organizational leadership.

## Cultural Inheritance of Attitudes and Behavior

The earliest meaning of the term "succession", was legal inheritance. Colloquial language greatly expanded the scope of this concept. Biology took it as a technical term. Today, the technical term is also used in the sciences of culture (Sztalt, 2012).

According to Ossowski (1960), all three meanings of the term "legal, biological, cultural inheritance" have a common conceptual content. This common content manifests itself on three levels:

- In all three cases, followed by conformity to someone else in some way (in terms of the social situation, in terms of biological equipment, in terms of cultural characteristics).
- In all three cases, the inheritance is based on a one-way relationship: one side is a communicator, the other side is the recipient (inheritance differs from the exchange relationship).

- In all three cases, the direction of inheritance is consistent with the chronological order of coming into the world of individuals: the younger generation inherits from the elderly. They may be younger and older individuals of a social group or a chain of individuals appointed by the rights of succession (Szałt, 2012 for Ossowski, 1966). According to Ossowski, the chain can be interrupted at any cell (Ossowski, 1966, p. 60).

The term "inheritance" includes both biological and cultural inheritance. The distinguishing feature of cultural inheritance is to take over some of the features during a social contact. We can speak about inheritance (as biological and cultural) only when we are faced with an assimilated act. Inheritance cannot be equated with being subject to the influence of the previous generation through social or biological contact. Not every influence of previous generations through social contact effects the assimilation of some individuals to others. Inheritance, which is imitated action, occurs "when there is a causal link between having the same feature by person A and B" (Ossowski, 1960, p. 63). He also recognizes that awareness and inheritance will have a significant impact on the process of heritage. You can inherit consciously or unconsciously. Inheritance may be wanted or unwanted. Conscious inheritance can be accepted or consciously combated. These facts play an important role in the psychic life of the individual. Of particular importance is everything covered by the tradition of a social group, of which the individual is a member. According to Ossowski an essence of cultural inheritance are the abilities and attitudes (Ossowski, 1966). A similar approach to the issue of inheritance, taking into account both biological and cultural theory, presents a double inheritance theory. According to this theory, culture and genes create separate (but connected) systems of inheritance. (Smith, 2000, pp. 31–33; Boyd and Richerson, 1985; Durham, 1990, 1991, 1992).

In the process of acquiring certain skills and attitudes, behavior that can be understood as cultural inheritance, upbringing seems to be an important issue as it shapes attributes of the psyche and the mind within the

framework of defined predisposition of congenital structures, including the behavior patterns of cultural and social environment. Each organism grows in a particular environment, so environmental changes cause specific modifications in the functioning of an individual. Keeping lifestyles, attitudes and behavior from generation to generation, reinforced with continuous successes of "role models" and their followers cause a desire to learn these behaviors and conscious preference for a particular approach to life (Szołtysek, 2015, pp. 99–109).

Conformable action, about which Ossowski wrote, has been recognized as an important and undertaken by psychologists in the studies of the phenomenon called "imitative learning". The man, in fact, watches other people learn from their behavioral expression, targeted actions, affective attitudes and uses these instruments and symbolic systems. Learning has a place in institutions (like family – members of the older generation transmit cultural patterns) or through cooperation – learning as a result of joint exercise activities with family members, environment etc. (Tomasello, Kruger, Ratner, 1993, pp. 495–552). True imitative learning is playing someone else's behavior in a functionally relevant context, based on the understanding of the intentions underlying this behavior (Tomasello, Kruger, Ratner, 1993, p. 497) and efforts to achieve the intended results (Call Carpenter, 2002). Imitative learning seems to be the basis of cultural inheritance of different patterns of behavior in the family, neighborhood or media (Bialek, 2010, pp. 115–127). It is known that certain attitudes and behaviors in the twenty-first century, the world's dominant mass culture can be inherited, beyond the patterns of conduct observed in the family and neighborhood. An important role of shaping a young man is played by mass media. The issue of looking at reality causes duplication of certain patterns (Brodersen, Dammann, 2005, pp. 4–6), positive and negative attitudes towards specific groups of reference (Sztompka, 2002, p. 17)

The cultural development of human beings is building its human capital, their acquired knowledge, skills, experience, attitudes and values on the ba-

sis of their biological structures of personality in specific socio-cultural conditions (more about the factors that shape human capital, see. Kawka, 2012, pp. 241–249, Suchodolski, 2012, pp. 337–343, Antczak, 2014, pp. 113–132).

National character and culture play an important role in the discussion of cultural inheritance of attitudes and behavior learned in family and neighborhood conditions. National character usually means typical socially efficient attitudes and typical organizational skills – but always culturally, historically diverse and could be a relatively constant feature that occurs more frequently in one group than in others (Haromszeki, Jarco, 2012). What is important, according to Hofstede, is the dimensions of national cultures rooted in our unconscious values. Because values are acquired in childhood, national cultures are remarkably stable over time; national values change is a matter of generations (Hofstede, 2016). Behavior, which researchers have observed for last decades, shows that stability of values and attitudes of entrepreneurship and helplessness exist in different generations in family, neighborhood or local communities. More about this phenomenon and its relationship with organizational leadership is presented in the next part of the article.

## Culturally Inherited Entrepreneurship as a Determinant of Organizational Leadership

Shaping entrepreneurial attitudes, understood as a different ways of life (Sztompka 2002, pp. 229–232), runs initially in family and neighborhood conditions. Entrepreneurship as a value began to be clearly promoted in the 90s in Poland in accordance with the new cultural ideal of personality. A new way of thinking drew from and still refers to the values characteristic for the Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism diagnosed many years ago by Max Weber (Sztompka, 2002) carried out particularly clearly in the American ideology of success. Patterns of behavior usual in the Protestant

or Jewish families around the world were followed and inherited from generation to generation, forming the core of their success and the basis of aversion to them, presented by members of the cultures, in which they enrich themselves and entrepreneurship was something reprehensible and unworthy of an honest man. There are many publications about their successes (e.g. Landes, 2007; Brackman, Jaffe, 2011). Besides, a lot of interesting articles can be found about the formal (legal) issues of inheritance, business, wealth etc. However, it is difficult to find any information about the transfer of entrepreneurial attitudes to other generations. Definitely, there are more studies about cultural inheritance of poverty and helplessness than entrepreneurship (Tarkowska, 2006). In the study of poverty and privation, which in terms of methodology is similar to the study of entrepreneurship, researchers highlight the weakness of institutions and the strength of importance of others, so-called "role models" (just as it was many years ago in the life of Stanislaw Grzesiuk, 2005, pp. 36–57). These important others may strongly shape the young man in terms of the attitudes of passivity, pessimism and withdrawal or activity and creativity, even observed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century decreasing role of authorities in Poland.

Entrepreneurship is the basis of successful people and countries in the twenty-first century, whose "driving force" is the right attitude towards life, work, shaping reality etc. The formation of attitudes (also entrepreneurial) is carried out, in accordance with the presented ideas and results in the article, in the process of acquisition of patterns from others. Particularly appreciated or dominant in the family and environment approach to life influence individual choices, collecting and processing information. The bias of perception sometimes causes strong binding to an object – a man, an idea, technical or organizational solution etc. Entrepreneurial attitudes are particularly important in building leadership relationships which influence behavior. The transformation of attitudes in behavior depends on the type of situation which takes place. Individualizing situations depend on individual views, preferences and values. The impact on behavior in disindividualizing

situations have primarily symbols and values of the group. Besides, there are also script situations that automatically initiate a sequence of events – treated as something usual (almost unreasoning), as a way of life (entrepreneurship) promoted in the home, neighborhood etc. (Strelau, 2008, pp. 84–88). Like in Rothschild’s family – aside from the belief that entrepreneurship is inherited in the genes they took care of shaping the entrepreneurial attitudes and behavior from generation to generation by developing company and implementing a specific lifestyle (Landes, 2007, pp. 53–90).

Entrepreneurship is a kind of activity, action that is expressed in creating something new, which has its value. This requires an investment of time and effort and risk-taking. As indicated by Warneryd (1988, pp. 404–447), especially in business organizations “taking risks” differentiates an entrepreneur from a manager. It can be considered on the basis of previously conducted studies that a similar difference is also between a manager and an organizational leader (Haromszeki, 2012), whose attitude is closer to the entrepreneur e.g. in terms of dynamism and flexibility. Entrepreneurship can also be understood as a feature of certain people and therefore the willingness and ability to initiate and implement new bold actions. Psychological differentiators of enterprising individuals are: the need for achievement (McClelland, 1961), attitude to risk (March, Shapiro, 1987; MacCrimmon Wehrung, 1990; Strelau, 2008, pp. 358–359) and for leaders – the need for power (McClelland, 1975). If a person has a need for achievement and power, they create a new reality based on the work and commitment of others. According to a Warneryd’s study the entrepreneurs often have fathers who are (were) entrepreneurs. There is no reason to believe that entrepreneurship is an effect of genetic inheritance but it can be concluded that the observation of certain behavior and learning this type of activity in the family home from an early age could be a sign of cultural inheritance.

Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1965) identifies personal entrepreneurship mainly through the prism of a person full of initiative, seen as a man filled with energy and activity, who spontaneously starts the implementation of various

plans. Entrepreneurship is also defined as: foresight, resourcefulness, vigor, resilience, dynamism, diligence, perseverance in achieving goals; initiative (new actions and spirit of initiative), activity, mobility in projects, taking chances, the willingness to take risks, operability; ingenuity, intelligence, creativity, innovation, ability to cope with different situations; self-reliance, the need for achievement, quickness, brilliance, cleverness (Bieniok, 2007). The opposite of personal entrepreneurship is usually: hopelessness, helplessness, incompetence, passivity, laziness, lethargy, indolence, listless, neglect, extreme caution, cowardice, etc. (Bieniok, 2007) (e.g. described transmission of poverty and helplessness (Tarkowska, 2006).

The typically culturally understood approach to the acquisition of entrepreneurship is the maxim "everything depends primarily on our upbringing in the family and at school, as well as ourselves, our will and predisposition to the effort that we put into the process of self-improvement and conscious learning of different proactive and pro-entrepreneurial behavior (Bieniok, 2007). Besides, personal entrepreneurship is not only the activity beyond the standard behavior of other people, but also a transgression of our own previous achievements, experiences and habits. There are spontaneous acts of self-creation of new and exciting, yet unusual, behavior and solutions. According to Bieniok – "some estimate that the influence of heredity on subsequent entrepreneurial behavior ranges from 20 to 50 percent. Thus, even families of outstanding entrepreneurs have a problem with successors who are complete business losers" (see also Landes, 2007). As the results of the research show, a certain type of family, educational, cultural and social background can promote or hinder the development of entrepreneurial characteristics. Of particular importance are the dominant values in the family and school. According to psychologists, favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in the family is the ability to be active and an upbringing in accordance with the principles of moderate impact – avoiding the relentless use of do's and don'ts and mindless "spoiling" a child.

In the research on the importance of education in the development of entrepreneurship, there are frequently two views. The first treats entrepreneurship as a set of features with which a man is born, and the second indicates the possibility of acquiring the entrepreneurial characteristics and competencies in the process of learning (Hadryś-Nowak, 2015). The notion of innate entrepreneurial qualities is closer to the entrepreneurs and the belief in the positive effects of entrepreneurship education currently dominates in social sciences. Increasingly, attention is drawn to the fact that entrepreneurship is a feature, skill or competence useful in every area of life, not only professional but also personal. Ojastu, Chiu and Olsen study (2011, pp. 397–434) confirms the belief that although personality traits do not change under the influence of education, it is possible to influence the attitudes of entrepreneurship in the process of education. Morris, Webb and Singhal (2013) listed thirteen entrepreneurial competencies that can be developed through education that promotes certain norms and values, but they also depend on personal traits and cognitive styles of an individual. These entrepreneurial competencies are: to recognize the opportunity – the ability to see changing environmental conditions which are a potential source of profit; assessment opportunity – the ability to assess accurately the attractiveness of emerging occasion; communication of a vision of the desired future state of the organization to their successors; tenacity/ perseverance – the ability to act against obstacles to achieving them; creative problem solving – the ability to combine objects or variables that have not had a relationship in order to produce new and useful results; mobilizing resources – the ability to organize resources that are not necessarily owned or controlled by an entity that derives benefit from them; “partisan” skills – the ability to benefit from the environment by means unknown to others, unconventional tactics; creating value – the ability to develop new products, services, business models; maintaining the direction and adaptation – the ability to balance between the desire to achieve the objective and strategic direction of the organization and the need to adjust

to the external environment; resistance – the ability to cope with stress, recovery forces and thrive even in the face of danger; belief in their own abilities/ self-efficacy – the ability to maintain confidence in carrying out their tasks at various levels of activity; building a network of social contacts – the ability to establish, develop and maintain contacts with other people (Morris, Webb and Singhal, 2013).

In a similar vein, Santi recognizes that entrepreneurship is not an innate trait but a characteristic of the spirit and activities that are the prerogative of many, but few of them shape and strengthen them (Samborska, 2015). Diagnosis and analysis also shows that entrepreneurship over the years came to be associated with analytical and communication skills, effective way of thinking and acting. Another study confirms that an enterprising person is one that is characterized by the activity and dynamism in action and the ability to adapt to constantly changing conditions and use appearing opportunities. What is the most important for the deliberations carried out in the text, according to the creators of the program for students, an enterprising person has leadership qualities characteristic for the coordinative (participatory) leadership (Balicka, 2010, pp. 4–6). A similar meaning of entrepreneurship is presented by authors in various books in this domain (e.g. Wachowiak, 2007; Jaremczuk, 2006).

If the patterns of behavior accepted and promoted by a particular culture expect from a leader assertiveness, risk tolerance and the creation of a new organizational reality (Sztompka, 2002: 381), these are ideal conditions for the formation of a system of dependence called the "leadership relationship – superordinate with subordinates (or co-workers, depending on the particular type of organizational leadership), aimed at achieving goals – a vision, dreams, plans, values – based on respect for and trust in the leader's qualifications, and often the fascination with him, rational or irrational commitment to the co-created vision of development"(Haromszeki, 2010).

It is essential for comprehensive diagnosis and analysis of the leadership relationship to examine the causes of the distinctive features and

effects of the leaders activity to modify the behavior of their supporters and third parties. The study conducted over the last few years seems to confirm that an important factor in the formation of leadership relationship is entrepreneurship of the leader. Entrepreneurial activity in leadership relationship relates primarily to creative and courageous shaping organizational reality based on a good assessment of the situation, especially social expectations. Desirable, in a given place and time, attitudes and behavior depend on the cognitive schemes and their tendency to divide people into categories. A better understanding of social expectations and the effectiveness of entrepreneurial leaders in creating acceptable solutions is easier to obtain, among others, thanks the theory of categorization of leadership and the theory of social identity and leadership. The first one assumes that people have their own ideas about the optimal behavior of the leaders in typical or specific situations based on cognitive schemes of the types of leadership. Then, it starts a process of prototyping, storing them in memory and run in a specific social context. Lord, Foti and DeVader (1984) have identified 27 prototypical characteristics of a leader. These are e.g.: dedication, goal orientation, information, charisma, determination, responsibility, intelligence, determination, organization, verbal skills. According to other studies, these factors are: dedication, intelligence, charisma, strength and sensitivity (Offermann, Kennedy, Wirtz, 1994). Besides this, effective leaders must be flexible, modify their behavior to the needs of tasks and social requirements (Hall, Workman, Marchioro, 1998; Zaccaro, Foti, Kenny, 1991). Characteristics highlighted by researchers can also be a mirror image of an entrepreneurial person. According to the above described theory, leadership is the result of individual information processing, but not the characteristic of specific social groups (Kozusznik, 2005, p. 118). This information processing takes place on the basis of patterns of understanding social reality acquired in the process of socialization and learning. While, the theory of social identity and leadership (Hogg, Martin Weeden, Epitropaki, 2001) assumes that people have a tendency to divide people into categories.

Source of positive self-esteem results from belonging to a socially relevant group. The more growing the importance of the psychological group, the more the basis for leading the social identity is becoming (importance of prototypicality instead of the leadership characteristics) (Hogg, 2001). In the cases, in which the importance of group is lower than previously described, a greater impact on choosing leaders have their individual features. According to Hogg, leadership effectuality also depends on their social attractiveness. Often a very enterprising, feisty person is socially recognized as a good leader. Unfortunately, sometimes people thoughtlessly follow them, with laziness or need to avoid the responsibility, not paying attention to their real competencies.

## Conclusion

The role of entrepreneurship as a main factor which shapes the type and character of organizational leadership is an important domain to discover. Entrepreneurship is the force that affects the quality and diversity of life. Reality shaped due to the attitude of the activity, constantly creates new possibilities for action and generates interest and admiration of society. This feature is one of the most visible extraordinary talents (ability, skill) which helps individuals to find followers of created or coordinated actions. Therefore, the entrepreneurs are often successful leaders within the initiated activities.

According to my own critical analysis of different studies (including my studies of organizational leadership and role of local leaders in three sectors of the Polish economy) and theoretical concepts (presented in this article) a very interesting issue for further analysis and research seems to be cultural inheritance of features and attitudes of an entrepreneurship. Especially important research seems to be a generation change or stability of behavior existing in families in which there are/were successful entrepre-

neurs, managers and leaders. It also important to analyze the role of Polish national culture and national character of Polish society in shaping new attitudes, especially entrepreneurship. Other direction in which the research is planned is the role of different institutions – family, kindergarten, school, local governments, entrepreneurs associations and state in promoting, creating, changing and maintaining specific cultural ideals.

Further study – questionnaire interviews and observation will be conducted especially in local communities because they are an essential part and foundation of civil society. In organizations that exist in the three sectors of the Polish economy there are people whose activities inspire other community members to start thinking in a more positive way and become a part of these new activities, they are often followers of leaders. Of course, such approach to life often evokes strong public resistance especially among people who are jealous, envious, passive and conservative.

A real chance to conduct in-depth research of this phenomenon described in this article is to observe my previous studies of local leaders and activities of local communities members (for example: Haromszeki, 2014; Haromszeki, Jarco, 2012; Haromszeki, 2012, Haromszeki, 2011a, Haromszeki 2011b), because both attitudes: activity and passivity/ hostility often relate to families and local communities. We still observe that trans generation maintains the attitude of entrepreneurship or helplessness which are difficult to modify, even with a very creative approach to education and vocational training.

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