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The Cross-cultural Leadership Aspect

1. Introduction

Modern times amaze with the suddenness of different issues and the rate at which everything changes. From a business point of view, more obvious would be the fact that many factors influence the achievement of success by an enterprise. For a long time, dominant was a statement that there were some conditions which had to be comply with in order to achieve the success [Porter 1992]. However, after some time passing, it started to be noticed that those conditions make the success easier to achieve but they do not determine it completely. This is why greater attention has started to be paid to issues connected with culture and cultural influence over the economy – in its broadest definition [Hofstede 2007]. That change of an approach to a company's success and building its competitive advantage were also caused by noticing the importance of the organisation human capital and its development [Byłok, Cichobłaziński 2009]. That is why, in such new environmental conditions being a manager who realises functions of management seems to be not enough. Organisations need leaders who would not only manage people but rather work with them in order to achieve common goals, participate in solving group and individual problems and make them aware of changes [Borkowska 1998, p. 79]. Moreover, a matter of greater importance would become interpersonal relations between members of an organisation and a leader because their quality is considered as a base of the organisational effectiveness [Bartkowiak 2003, p. 12]. Problems of the leadership seem to be especially important in enterprises which run their business on the international and cross-cultural market. Leaders in those companies need to take into consideration not only economical, political, law, technological, but also – or rather mainly – cultural differences between countries where they run their business because they are connected with people and that is why influence all enterprises' activities.

The aim of that article is to present theoretical assumptions and concepts concerning leadership and culture in an organisation. A special attention is paid to the authentic leadership idea [Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa 2005], which is a new concept and hardly ever has been empirically verified in Poland. The author presents research results and tries to indicate co-relations between cultural dimensions and features of the authentic leadership style.

2. Leadership – the theoretical approach

A phenomenon of leadership has become a matter of scientific interest for over 100 years. In subject literature there are many descriptions and definitions of that notion. Stogdill has even claimed that there are as many definitions of leadership as there are their authors [1974, p. 259]. Researchers [Bennis, Nanus 1997] emphasise that a main cause of that state is a multi-sidedness of that notion. Maxwell [1994, p. 15] claims that leadership is an ability of having influence. Yukl presents a similar point of view [2006], describing leadership as a process in which a leader would influence other members of a group in such a way as to allow achievement of group and organisational goals. Griffin [2001, p. 491] also points out exerting an influence without using means of constraint, basing on a leader's charisma, authority and a fact that he/she is accepted as being a leader by his followers. Locke's opinion seems to be the same because he says that the main difference between a dictator and a leader is using physical, psychological and economic constraint by a first one and not using by the second one [1991]. A strength of a leader means an ability of building positive relations with his/her subordinates. It means that fellows accept a leader because they like, respect and admire him/her, not because they are afraid or because of leader's formal power and his/her position in the organisation's hierarchy [Cialdini 2001]. Moreover, Bennis and Nanus [1997] indicate that leadership could also be perceived as a process of social changes of an organization because it imposes new meaning of an enterprise's members' activities. On the other hand, McGinnis [1993, p. 131] claims that for being a leader only two things are needed: knowledge of putting other people into action and having a 'spirit' of engagement and energy. In many definitions, authors [Kožmiński, Jemielniak 2008, pp. 21–23] emphasise that a leader should become an inspiration, an example for their followers. Moreover, leadership is related with interpersonal relations between different organisation's members and a role of a leader is crucial in building positive mutual relations within an organisation and social approaches in order to achieve success [Bartkowiak 2003, p. 12]. Creating a vision of an organisation, presenting it and inspiring followers (influencing them) to its realisation seem to be the most important of leader's functions [Blanchard 2007]. However, it should be mentioned that all organisations for effective functioning need not only charismatic leaders who would create and inspire but also efficient managers who would fulfil tactic functions - putting leaders' visions into practice [Jachnis

2007, p. 85]. What is more, Zeleznik [2005, pp. 82–83] points out specific differences in the way interpersonal relations are built between managers and leaders. The first one needs to create a relationship with other people because being lonely is distressing to him, but his relations are without any emotions. A leader - as far as his relations with followers are considered - is characterised by empathy and intuition. He/she is never neutral and insensible that very often arouses extreme feelings and probably that is why, a charismatic leader could better motivate, encourage his followers in order to achieve success of the whole organisation. A way of building interpersonal relations seems to be crucial in international enterprises which run their business on cross-cultural market. A statement that interactions between members of different cultures usually are difficult and could cause many misunderstandings is a truism. However, understanding the differences between cultures, accepting and respecting them, seems to be a necessity to run the effective international business. Thus, a leader of a cross-cultural team needs to widen his/her horizons of cognition beyond the borders of the country.

3. The authentic leadership concept

The authentic leadership concept is one of the most up-to-date leadership theories. Conceptual and theoretical origins of the authentic leadership concept refer to humanistic psychology and integrate knowledge of several fields, including transformational leadership [Bass 1990; Bass, Avolio 1994], positive psychology [Seligman 2002] and ethics and morality [Schulman 2002]. Especially, assumptions of the transformational leadership theory are essential. Although the main scientific questions while creating the authentic leadership concept was whether a leader could be transformational and immoral.

Key aspects of the transformational leadership theory are four “i” behaviours [Bass 1990]:

- *Idealised influence* (often identified with charisma) – transformational leaders are perceived by their followers in an idealised way. They want to identify with the leaders and their mission because, they develop strong feelings about such leaders, in whom they invest much trust and confidence and that is why, leaders gain power and influence over their followers.
- *Individualised consideration* which means to understand and share other’s concerns, needs and to treat each individual uniquely. Moreover, transformational leaders provide opportunities and develop organisational culture supportive of individual growth.
- *Inspirational motivation* means articulating simply common goals and mutual understanding of what is right and important for individuals, groups and organisations. Transformational leaders encourage followers and promote positive expectations on things which should be done.

- *Intellectual stimulation* – transformational leaders enhance to recognise old problems in new ways. They stimulate followers to ask questions about their values, beliefs, needs, assumptions. Thanks to that, in the future they would be able to solve problems unforeseen by the leader.

Bass [ibidem] claims that the integration of those four features has the strongest influence on employees' motivation for the leader's vision realisation and solving problems. Transformational leaders become a source of inspiration to others through their commitment and their willingness to sacrifice self-interest on behalf of others. However, it should be emphasised that a transformational leader do not have to act in an ethical and moral way.

This was one of the reasons that Bass and Steidlmeier [1999] suggested a notion of "authentic transformational leader" in order to distinguish "authentic" leaders from those whose behaviour does not allow call them "authentic". According to those authors, ethical conducting is the essential aspect of the authentic leadership. At the beginning, a notion "authentic" was understood by different scientists in different ways in their concepts. It was concerning a leader's courage [Terry 1993], skills of building a strong organisation [George 2003], or employees' motivation and their growth [Villani 1999]. Currently, the authentic leadership theory is – as it was mentioned above – deeply rooted in positive psychology and Luthans and Avolio [2003, p. 243] define the authentic leadership as "a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development". Thus, authentic leaders are persons who act consistently with their values which are visible for their followers. They focus on ethical, moral and right things which are to do within an organisation. Moreover, they communicate in a transparent way, are open for back-information and a priority to them is growth of others and building positive emotions [Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa 2005]. Therefore, authentic leaders could be called as those "who know who they are and know in what they believe" [ibidem, p. 13]. In the authentic leadership theory there are four characteristic features (dimensions) which describe leaders' behaviour and allow them to be recognised as authentic [Luthans, Avolio 2003]:

- *Transparency,*
- *Self-awareness,*
- *Ethical/ Moral,*
- *Balanced Processing.*

Transparency of a leader is closely related with his/her high level of openness and trust in close relations with followers. Moreover, a leader acts consequently in accord with one's values. He/she also cares of a development of one's positive

features as: optimism, hope, self-confidence which helps him/her to build relations. It has an influence on a growth of a leader and his/her followers. An essential condition of transparency is one's integrated functioning in all aspects of life. Scientists [Gardner, Avolio, Luthans 2005] agree that it is impossible to be the authentic leader if – relative to different situations – one would put different “masks”. What is more, authentic leaders value and work to achieve transparency and truthfulness in their relationships.

Second characteristic dimension is *Self-awareness*, which could be defined as “a process where one continually comes to understand his or her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs and desires” [ibidem, p. 349]. Being aware of one's self and one's value system, it is possible to motivate one's self to act in such a way which would give satisfaction. Because of an optimal self-evaluation and a great optimism, authentic leaders could enhance followers to be the same.

Next feature is *Balanced processing* which means that authentic leaders are open and ask for feedback, listen to and accept other viewpoints, and acting on suggestions even if they are critical for him/her.

The fourth dimension, which distinguishes authentic leaders from so-called-leaders in the most significant way, is the *Ethical/ Moral*. It involves acting in accord with one's values and needs rather than to please others, receive rewards, or avoid punishments. To be truly authentic, leaders must align their core and espoused values and actions.

Authentic leaders are aware that the most important are not their individual success but their followers' success and realisation of organisation's goals. Because of that they try to help other people to achieve better results of their performance and delegate more power, authority and responsibility to their followers. The main result of the authentic leadership style is a growth of trust in relations between a leader and his/her followers [Harter, Schmidt, Hayes 2002]. Moreover, scientists [Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, May 2004] suggest that authentic leaders are able to enhance follower attitudes such as engagement, commitment, and motivation to improve their work and, ultimately, performance outcomes through the processes of personal identification with followers and social identification with the organisation. The internal integration of leaders which coexists with personal development, a sense of security and a satisfaction with current job could also cause a growth of followers' engagement. Being an inspiration and example for employees enhance them to discover and use of their talents. Gardner, Avolio and Luthans [2005] indicate the importance of empowering organisational climate in that transparency is one of the most important features. Moreover, they acknowledge that leaders play a major role in fostering such organisational climate and that transparency in culture is pivotal to learning and growth.

4. Culture in an organisation

Relations between culture and an organisation and organisational success have become a subject of many scientists' interest for 60ties of 20th century. There are few reasons of such a situation. As it was mentioned above, the economic environment is still changing and for main changes are considered: closer relationship between East and West, expansion of South-Eastern Asian countries, growing importance of information and technology transfers, development of multinational – what usually also means multicultural – enterprises [Hofstede 2007]. Because of those, achieving the competitive advantage has been determined not only by economic factors, but also – or rather mainly – by societal and cultural factors. Their role seems to be crucial as they are related to human capital which is considered to be the most important organisational resource.

There are as many definitions of a notion of culture as there are members of it. There is no single or most appropriate definition. One may agree with what Herder [2000, p. 22] has said: „There is nothing more indefinite than the word ‘culture’”. The differentiation stems from the domain one treats as the root for the definition (anthropology, sociology, psychology). Although, researchers point out some common elements of that notion as: knowledge, art, language, religion, beliefs, law, customs, symbols or values [Gajda 2005, pp. 24–44]. It also should be mentioned that national culture is treated as that factor which differentiates groups/ nations the most. Culture has profound meaning, both in life on an individual, as in the life of the group. It teaches the members of the given community, how “to live”, think, behave, perceive the world. Thanks to it the individuals receive prepared patterns of behaviour and thinking. Culture „retains” the norms and values, which the members of the given culture share, and which mark the difference between them and the members of other cultures. Culture itself creates the division between people, the division into “us” and “them” [Nishiyama 2000, pp. 16–17].

As far as cross-cultural research is considered, the most popular and often cited are Hofstede's [2000, 2007] survey of IBM and his definition of culture as “the software of mind”. Hofstede's [1980] original study based of research among IBM managers and employees in over 40 countries and later [2000] other countries and samples were added. It is important to mentioned that, though widely usage, Hofstede's research has received substantial criticism mainly on a selection of a research sample¹ [Hunt 1981], taking into consideration only few selective features [Trandis 1982] or some doubts whether Hofstede's cultural dimensions could be treated as universal or characteristic only for research period [Lowe 1981; Smith 2002]. However, despite of those points of criticism, Hofstede's research has influenced almost all further cross-cultural survey.

¹ one multinational corporation – IBM

The approach is most widely used while studying culture is through the identification and measurement of its dimensions which are presented as a continuum with the extreme notions on its ends. Those dimensions describing the intensity of a culture's features are gathered into larger conceptual categories such as attitude towards their surroundings, attitude towards human nature, nature of human's actions, understanding the truth and time, attitudes towards interpersonal relations between organisation's members. Several different typologies of societal cultural value orientations or culture dimensions have been developed [Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner 2002; Hofstede 2000; Gesteland 2000; Hall, Hall 1990]. Those dimensions allow to conduct the comparative analysis between values of dimensions specific for a particular culture. Although scientists point out a large number of cultural dimensions, it is needed to single out those of them which would be considered as the most important in discussing relations between culture and leadership, especially authentic leadership dimensions. They would be: *Power distance*, *Avoiding the uncertainty*, *Individualism versus Collectivism*. Those dimensions could be found in most of culture's concepts. Moreover, they are considered as primary features, which significantly differ organisational cultures [Sułkowski 2002, p. 65]. Giving certain values of specific cultural dimensions allow diagnosis of organisational culture of a particular enterprise.

Power distance (PD) - Hofstede [1980, 2000] defines it as the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. In cultures with large differences in power between individuals, organisations will typically have more layers and the chain of command is felt to be more important. PD has an impact on management style in different organisations and is related to leadership. It also varies between cultures. GLOBE project [House, Wright, Aditya 1997] results concerning PD show the endorsement of participative leadership in different parts of the world (in different cultures). Other scientists [Dorfman 1996] also emphasise impact of PD on leadership effectiveness.

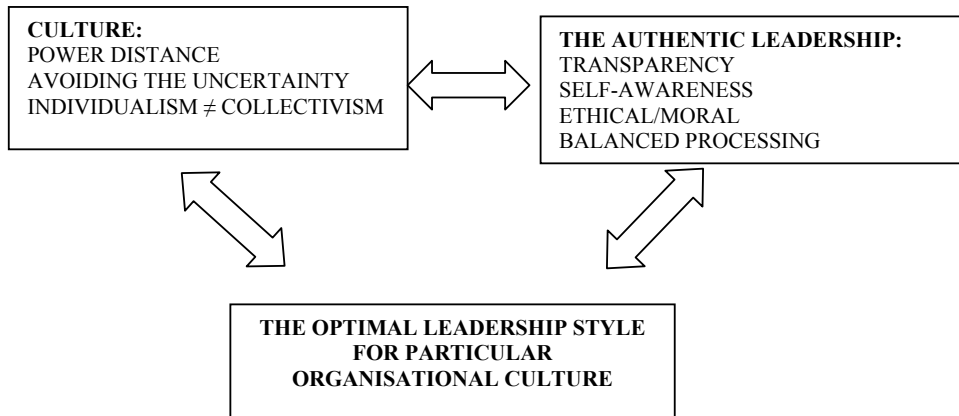
Avoiding the uncertainty (UA) - is another dimension identified by Hofstede. UA refers to the degree to which members in a society feel uncomfortable with ambiguous and uncertain situations, and take steps to avoid them. It describes a society's reliance on social norms and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of the future. Hofstede [1980] defined uncertainty avoidance as the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations by believing in absolute truths and the attainment of expertise, providing greater stability, establishing more formal rules, and rejecting deviant ideas and behaviours. This has several broad implications for organisations. For example, Shane [1993] found that uncertainty-accepting societies are more innovative than uncertainty avoiding societies. UA has

an impact on the characteristics associated with outstanding leadership and leaders' typical career patterns. UA also influences the expectations leaders have of subordinates and customers have of businesses. In high UA cultures, planning and detailed agreements are the norm, whereas in low UA cultures flexibility and innovation are more prominent.

Individualism versus Collectivism (IC) – Cultures characterized by individualism can be seen as loosely knit social frameworks in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and look after their own interests and those of their close family only. A tight social framework with strong and cohesive in-groups that are opposed to out-groups is a key characteristic of high collectivism. People expect their in group to look after them and are loyal to it in return [Hofstede 1980, 2000].

One of the reasons a particular leadership style will exist in an organisation is culture, in its national and organisational aspects. It is perceived as a specific base of that leadership style, which in fact would be constantly modifying in order to adjust to conditions of the environment [Kozłowski 2005, p. 152]. It also should be emphasised that – despite the fact that culture is common for a whole organisation – leaders play an important role in its creating [Hofstede 2007]. Because leaders have becoming an example, an inspiration, they show followers behaviours which are accepted or which should be eliminated. Moreover, they also indicate norms and values which often are obeyed in organisations by next generations of members. On the other hand, culture influences leaders, ways of their performance and ways of building relations with subordinates. Moreover, in different types of organisational cultures, using different leadership style seems to be a necessity. Researchers [Avery 2009] claim out that very often if leader changed an organisation, a change of the leadership style is also needed. Culture influences behaviours of organisation's members, creates them and limits at the same time. Thus, culture is closely related to building relations between a leader and his/her followers, to which a special attention is paid in the authentic leadership theory which is a matter of that article author's interest.

The empirical verification of relations between dimensions of culture (*Power Distance, Avoiding the uncertainty, Individualism versus Collectivism*) and dimensions of the authentic leadership (*Transparency, Self-awareness, Ethical/Moral and Balanced processing*) seem to allow indication of the optimal leadership style for a particular organisational culture (see Picture 1.). As the optimal leadership style would be recognised that one, which allows to achieve organisational and personal goals of a leader and his/ her followers and to build positive relations between them (rotation rate). The evaluation of a leader in the aspect of using professional and social competences made by different evaluative subjects would indicate to what degree a certain leadership style is optimal for particular organisational culture (periodical evaluation of the 360 method). The additional verifying index seems to be also job seniority as a manager.

Figure 1. Culture and the authentic leadership – the model

Source: own study.

5. Organisation of the research

Having as base assumptions the concepts presented above, research was conducted with the aim of finding the answer to the following questions:

1. What are cultural patterns of German and Polish enterprises?
2. What is a level of the authentic leadership in German and Polish enterprises?

Research was conducted in two Polish and German large productive enterprises which run their activities in Wielkopolska region in 2010. In research took part 48 and 50 employees of those enterprises. Survey was carried out using questionnaire technique with two questionnaires: the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) and the Values Survey Module 2008 (VSM08).

The authentic leadership style was measured by using the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ, version 0.1) which authors are Avolio, Gardner and Walumbwa from The Gallup Leadership Institute. That questionnaire was created basing on theoretical assumptions of the authentic leadership concept and it is used to measure its four dimensions:

- *Self-awareness* (5 items) – shows to what degree the leader is aware of his or her strengths, limitations, how others see him or her and how the leader impacts others,
- *Transparency* (4 items) - indicates to what degree the leader reinforces a level of openness with others that provides them with an opportunity to be forthcoming with their ideas, challenges and opinions,
- *Ethical/Moral* (3 items) – gives answers to questions about setting by the leader a high standard for moral and ethical conduct,

- *Balanced Processing* (4 items) – allows gaining of information on a degree to which the leader solicits sufficient opinions and viewpoints prior to making important decisions.

That questionnaire consists of 16 items. All of them describe different kinds of the leader's behaviour which constitute the authentic leadership style. In a particular version of that questionnaire the leader his/herself (version 0.2) or his/her subordinates (version 0.1) would give answers to presented questions. In the version for subordinates which was used while conducting research, tested people pointed out on a five-point Likert scale (means 0 = "not at all", 1 = "once in a while", 2 = "sometimes", 3 = "fairly often", 4 = "frequently, if not always") how often presented statements fit to a leadership style of their superiors, leaders. The ALQ has gone through extensive validation work, and is being used currently in a number of projects around the globe. A version which was used in research was translated from the English language version with "back translation" method.

During the research proceeding, dimensions of culture were investigated using the Values Survey Module 2008 by Hofstede [Hofstede 2000, 2007]. Although, according to Sułkowski's suggestion² [2002, p. 65] only three dimensions of national culture were taken into consideration during research. It should be mentioned, however, the latest version of the Values Survey Module (VSM 08) concerns seven dimensions. The twenty-eight content questions allow index scores to be calculated on seven dimensions of national value systems as components of national cultures: *Power Distance* (large versus small), *Individualism versus Collectivism*, *Masculinity versus Femininity*, *Uncertainty Avoidance* (strong versus weak), *Long- versus Short-Term Orientation*, *Indulgence versus Restraint*, and *Monumentalism versus Self-Effacement*.

All content questions are scored on five-point scales (1-2-3-4-5). Index scores are derived from the mean scores on the questions for national samples of respondents.

- *Power Distance* Index (PDI) - *Power Distance* is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a society expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.
 - *Individualism* Index (IDV) - *Individualism* is the opposite of *Collectivism*. *Individualism* stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: a person is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family only. *Collectivism* stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which continue to protect them throughout their lifetime in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

² The author claims out that primary dimensions of national culture are those the earliest appointed, means: *Power Distance*, *Individualism versus Collectivism* and *Uncertainty Avoidance*

- *Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)* - *Uncertainty Avoidance* is defined as the extent to which the members of institutions and organizations within a society feel threatened by uncertain, unknown, ambiguous, or unstructured situations.

6. Research results³

Data obtained during research show that Polish and German enterprises differ in a statistically significant way only as far as one cultural dimension is considered – *Individualism versus Collectivism*.

Table 1. Dimensions of national culture in German and Polish enterprises

Type of a dimension	Polish enterprises	German enterprises	„ μ ” ¹ value
Power distance	17,50	13,50	1,5984
Individualism/ Collectivism	87,50	71	2,0043
Uncertainty avoidance	37,50	42	1,5272

¹ The criterion value is „ μ ”>1,96

Source: own study.

The scores for three dimensions of culture were calculated using weighted means of individual items and constants as it was described by Hofstede [1994], which result in a distribution ranking from 0 to 100. This allows for comparisons with previously published country scores.

Analysing dimensions of national culture using VSM 08 of Hofstede showed a relatively low level of *Power distance* both in Polish and in German enterprises. That kind of situation shows that employees of Polish and German enterprises do not indicate a problem of observing *Power distance* and treat differences of being in power as a “normal” state.

A medium level of *Avoiding the uncertainty* in both Polish and German enterprises could indicate that members of those organisations try to a certain degree predict the future, because ambiguous and uncertain situations could cause their discomfort. A slightly higher level of UA in the German enterprises confirms previous survey results [Hofstede 2000]. It also could mean that German managers would expect reliability, punctuality and they tend to plan future actions more, and in a more careful and detailed way.

The analysis of a level of *Individualism versus Collectivism* of investigated people showed that this dimension of national culture is relatively more developed (in comparison to *Power Distance*) in Polish and German enterprises. In a statistically

³ Those research results were partly previously presented in [Bartkowiak, Furmańczyk 2010].

significant way data of research show that a level of Individualism is higher among Polish employees in comparison to employees of German enterprises. That kind of situation has several implications. First, those results confirm an influence of national culture of an enterprise's country of origin on organisational culture (German culture is – according to Hofstede's research - more collectivistic than Polish). Moreover, it could be assumed that in German enterprise – because of higher Collectivism level – followers would be more prone to identify with their leaders' goals and the common purpose or shared vision of the group and organisation and typically exhibit high levels of loyalty [Jung, Bass, Sosik 1995]. On the other hand, employees of Polish enterprise – because of higher level of Individualism - are expected to be more motivated to satisfy their own self-interests and personal goals. Individuals take care of themselves, and individual initiative, achievement and rewards are central.

Data which were obtained while research procedures show that there is a difference in the authentic leadership levels in Polish and German enterprises. That difference concerns both: a dimension of *Transparency* and a total score for a whole questionnaire.

Table 2. A level of the authentic leadership in Polish and German enterprises

The authentic leadership dimension	Polish enterprises	German enterprises	“ μ ” value ²
Self – awareness	13,35	15,29	0,922
Transparency	10,17	6,72	1,989
Ethical/Moral	8,74	9,11	0,847
Balanced processing	9,83	7,16	1,972
Total score	44,24	39,21	2,007

² The criterion value for $\alpha = 0,05$ is „ μ ” > 1,96 [Greń 1976]

Source: own study.

The analysis of above data shows that a general level of the authentic leadership in Polish enterprises is higher than in German enterprises which run their activities in Poland. That correlation is statistically significant (differences were verified by a significance of differences test “ μ ”). What is more, a correlation of both groups of research participants in the aspect of *Transparency* dimension is also statistically significant. According to obtained data, a level of *Transparency* of managers in Polish enterprise is higher. They probably are more open while communicating their decisions than managers of German enterprise. Moreover, they might show their emotions and ideas in a clear, direct and open way and they

more often admit to their mistakes. It could be assumed that a higher total score of the authentic leadership in Polish enterprises indicates more direct, basing on an authentic exchange of their ideas, judgements and emotions. On the other hand, it should be emphasised that independently on a total index score observed differences concern only one of the authentic leadership dimensions and they hardly cross (maybe because of a small number of respondents) a criterion of the statistical significance.

The research conducted did not verify all relations in the presented model of the optimal leadership style, but are – probably – a very important beginning. Thus, the model should be further empirically verified. Obtained data show that there is difference between a level of the authentic leadership in Polish and German enterprises. Those enterprises differ also as far as values of cultural dimensions are considered. Thus, there are correlations between dimensions of the authentic leadership and dimensions of culture, although it should be emphasised that the current research has limitations. First, probably the most important is the small number of respondents, which does not allow for expression of general statements. That is why, survey results should be taken with caution and further research concerning relations between culture and leadership should be carried out. On the other hand, the importance of a leader and his/ her role in an organisation is emphasised again.

Summing up, the emerging authentic leadership concept is still in the early stages of development and testing. However, it should be claimed that clarity of its construct and comprehensiveness of its theoretical assumptions could be a base for further research on relations between the authentic leadership and other aspects of organisational performance. The special attention should be paid to culture because it affects leader's behaviour, ways of thinking, perceiving of the world and through elements of culture the leader could have an influence on his/ her subordinates. Being an inspiration and example for his/ her followers could allow for adjustment more effectively to the changing economic environment and – in the future - building of a competitive advantage.

Abstract

The aim of the article was to present theoretical assumptions and concepts concerning cultural determinants of leadership. While describing the authentic leadership concept's theoretical assumptions and the relationships between an organisation and a culture, the author presented the results of empirical research, conducted in Polish and German enterprises. However, these results did not verify all aspects of the cultural determinants of the authentic leadership phenomenon, and so they could be perceived as a promising beginning and an inspiration for further research.

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