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**Do entrepreneurial competences matter?**

**When a manager become a leader.**

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| **A B S T R A C T** |
| **Objective**: The purpose of this paper is to provide insight into how managers prosecute tasks and leaders act. In particular, the study aims to focus on the roles in the organizations. |
| **Research Design & Methods**: In total, 16 participant in large companies were interviewed. The study used principles of a grounded theory approach for collecting and analyzing data in business leader rankings.  |
| **Findings:** Results revealed that managers usually follow imposed goals while leaders are expected to create their own directions of organizational development. Although respect and authority might be integral part of managers job, in contradiction to leaders, they are not the indispensable ones.  |
| **Implications & Recommendations:** Findings point to what competencies influence an organizational role. Even if they are interrelated, there is no need to demonstrate all of them to became a leader. |
| **Contribution & Value Added:** This article offers a conceptualisation of how the theory corresponds with practice. Competencies do not ensure the transition from a manager to leader. Immaterial, immeasurable factors matter. |
| **Article type:** | research paper |
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**INTRODUCTION**

Each person deals with specific roles. Each role involves a set of competencies, behaviours, or attitudes. It all context sensitive. You need to have specific competencies when you want to lead effectively across cultures (Mendenhall, 2001), or when you want to lead children’s team sports successfully. And when you already do your job getting challenging tasks allows you to develop further your competencies or gain new skills. That helps to build confidence in your role (Kram, 1988).

In the current study, we aim to address manager’s and leader’s role. Drawing on competencies and other key elements of being a manager, or a leader, the authors describe and detail a study based on semi-structured interviews and grounded theory approach for collecting and analysing data in business leader rankings. That is to explain how managers become leaders and what conditions are necessary to complete the process of transformation

**Literature review**

**Entrepreneurial and managerial competencies**

A competency varies form situations or times, it is a capability or ability used in certain circumstances (Boyatzis, 2008). Abilities as knowledge, skills and attitudes allowing to prosecute tasks at the appropriate level (Filipowicz, 2004). It triggers specific behaviours, reveals the way of thinking. Following Woodruffe’s definition (1991) person’s behaviour reinforce competent performance while aspects of the job are fulfilled.

A person can demonstrate it what gives us an opportunity to measure his/her performance. When the person’s capability of action is consistent with individual needs, environment expectancies, or job demands it is said the person has reached maximum performance (Boyatzis, 1982). Job demands can derive from a role responsibilities or ongoing tasks. Boyatzis (ibidem) enlisted numerous competencies. Some of them related are grouped (Boyatzis, et. al., 2000).

In an entrepreneurial cluster we identify Initiative – taking responsibility of self-driven action, and Efficiency orientation – setting goals, motivating people to act, focusing on tasks.

Interpersonal cluster comprises: Concern with impact – seeking and using methods of influence, Oral presentation skills – ability to use effective language, Use of socialized power – developing formal and informal relations among people to motivate them to achieve objectives, or Managing group processes – group’s identity building, developing group roles.

Leadership cluster embraces Conceptualization – inductive reasoning to identify patterns and relationships, creative thinking to develop ideas and solutions, Self-confidence – believing in self, ideas, values, and again Oral presentation skills.

Goal and Action Management cluster consists of mentioned earlier Initiative and Efficiency orientation, Concern with impact, and Diagnostic use of concepts – deductive reasoning allowing to turn concepts into possibilities.

In the concept of “emotional intelligence” Daniel Goleman (1999, p. 48-50) grouped managerial competencies identified by Boyatzis (1982) into self-management and relationship management competencies.

In the paper from 2008 Boyatzis (p. 7) divided competencies into three categories:

* specific skills and experience,
* knowledge,
* cognitive competencies as ability to understand, analyze, reason.

Weber (2004) says than an organization performs best, when competencies are seen as a highly valuable asset treated as the main cause of climbing the path career by workers. According to his view, organizations ought to evaluate each person by criteria measuring effectiveness of the task performance. Following the Peter principle (Peter, 1975) organization select a candidate for a vacancy by his competencies demonstrated while acting in the current role, not by the abilities expected in the intended role.

There is no easy way to verify the candidate competency statements. Hidden information (Arrow, 1969) can play a crucial role while selecting workers, assigning them tasks. However, if competencies are proven, they add value to the whole organization (Stewart, 1997).

**Manager and leader in theory**

Business leader is a person able to influence psychological and institutional resources to motivate, trigger actions of need (Burns, 1978). They are a prominent social actor as they construct global managerial culture (Hatch et al., 2005/2010). Patterns of how the behave, what they do and to what values they point have immense impact on organization management concepts evolution. Business leaders play active role in economic environment development being an inspiration for others to trigger their own actions. When we talk of leader as a person, we can adapt leadership qualification’s competence-based approach focuses on identifying what traits, skills are crucial to define someone a leader (Northouse, 2004; Grint, 2005). In terms of behavioural studies we can enlist relations-oriented or task-oriented leaders democratic or autocratic, authoritarian leadership styles. Leader has a vision of the organization’s purpose that is to define a reality (Bennis, 1989). Their role is to build and maintain various groups of stakeholders (Maak & Pless, 2006). Bennis and Nanus (1985, p. 21) noted that leader do the right thing whereas managers do things right.

Mintzberg (1975) pointed out that manager’s roles arise from formal authority. Roles are divided in three areas: interpersonal, informational, and decisional. One of the roles within an interpersonal category is a leader. As leaders, managers have to set goals, bring together organization’s needs and organization’s members’ needs. They are to establish organizational and material conditions that support employees’ activities as well as to motivate a team to obtain goals. Currently managers with specific competencies compete successfully in the market. Companies have in mind that selection of managers must be followed creating an ability to identify, work on new, or cultivate further their competencies (Wu & Lee, 2007).

Competence indicates possession of knowledge, required skills, and attitude that enable a person to act effectively in a wide variety of situations or job (Filipowicz, 2004, p. 17). They are a cluster of categories which are related, interconnected (Ibid., p. 36-37), and they can occur in at any stage of a person’s career.

All these elements named above allow for qualifying managers and leaders as professions (Shein,1968). Profession is understood as a set of scripts, patterns of actions in running a specific business or managing people or situations. Managers and leaders are professionals because of the proper qualifications, education and competences, not thanks to individual relations, nor private connections. Their work is a profession because the whole community has its own ethics standards (oral or written). We believe that managers and leaders are new professions (appointed by studies that their craft is based on) according to Carr-Saunders typology (Vollmer & Mills, 1966). It means that both professions has systematic theory of practice, clients and other contractors’ authority, formal rules and sanctions for not obeying these rules and norms, ethical code and specific occupational culture (Hall, 1986).

We investigate mangers and leaders not only considering their professional role but also societal role which is a second dimension of the social role of these professions besides organizational one (Kostera, 1996). Societal role consists of the expectations of the outsiders – people who stay close to managers and leaders in their everyday activities. Analysed rankings are based on this perspective. That way we got material straight from the investigated group as well as from their closest work companions. Considering these dimensions of the social role we analysed how the role of the manager and leader is constructed.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The material presented in this paper was obtained from two resources. Both of them are ongoing ethnographic projects. Ethnography, being a specific methodology, is a natural consequence of the adopted view on the social reality. This implies that the evidence collected and presented and the conclusions drawn on this basis may provide an input for multidimensional discussions, yet will not feed into establishing one and only right course of action (Willis, 2005).

Traditionally qualitative methods (anthropological interview) formed the basis for that research (Kostera, 2005). An anthropological interview is a fundamental research tool helping to collect evidence on the ground. It is an undirected (non-standardized and unstructured) conversation aiming to induce interviewees to freely talk about their surrounding reality. The researcher’s “anthropological mind-set” (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992) is a desirable state of mind helping to see the stories heard as completely new and interesting phenomena on the one hand. On the other hand, it allows for asking such questioning that do not suggest anything to interviewees but enable them to tell their own stories.

We combined interviews collected by two researchers. Interviewees were managers and leaders on different organizational levels. Altogether we have 16 interviews that we are working on. They were conducted in diverse circumstances, some at the workplace during working hours, some after work, some at respondents’ home. The longest interview lasted 2,5 hours the shortest around 40 minutes. In general we collected 212 of the typescript.

Drawing on competencies and other key elements of being a manager, a leader, the authors describe and detail a study based on interviews and grounded theory. That is to explain how managers become leaders and what conditions are necessary to complete the process of transformation. The study used principles of a grounded theory approach for collecting and analysing data in business leader rankings. In total, 31 rankings from 4 polish business magazines published between 1992-2015 were investigated.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Draft horses and racehorses are in each good stable. [PP]*

We are to present definitions of managers and leaders in this part. Both managers and leaders has to deal with other people and they need to influence their behaviour to reach organizational goals. To cooperate with other people successfully they have to possess some specific attitude which arises from personal competencies. We listened to several managers and leaders and we got stories about managing people. We have been also witnesses of deep reflections on their everyday work. To point out how our interlocutors define managers and leaders we are bringing up quotations:

Manager is a person who was given a power. [TN]

A leader is the person you listen to, you follow without an official appointment. [TN]

[Leaders], but not appointed managers, are those visionaries, innovators, experts (…) maybe I would call myself a leader more than a manager. [TN]

Managers are described as professionals with specific roles. They supposed to be coordinators of everyday work and tasks. They also should be an example for other team-members. They should plan work for themselves and others, organize single tasks, control subordinates and project realization. These are simple manager roles named earlier by Mintzberg (1975) or administrative functions enlisted by Fayol (1947 cited by Piotrowski, 2001).

Social competence, interpersonal, simply to recognize and evaluate worker’s ability, not to give him a task he cannot handle, the task that makes him quite uncomfortable. Do not force him to do something that is not his. Be able to share work and split responsibilities in a way the person who is assigned to do it that is reconciled, not forced. In other way she can do the task wrong, come back to me and I need to improve. It seems to me that I have to be able to motivate people to do something, sometimes to unwanted things, to do tasks workers do not want to do such as stay late in the office, cause of tight deadlines, because something falls apart. Motivate, convince people that they wanted to do it. Also it seems to me that we need to have the ability to communicate difficult information in a painless way. [PC]

Besides traditional managerial functions interlocutors noticed other virtues – as they all them “psychological” - that can be helpful while managing people.

It is important to collaborate with people and understand how the group, which you manage, works and how to adjust workers well to do those tasks well. It seems to me that this is so psychological approach, to extract from the person you have, or find such person, the potential that yields results. [DR]

Managers and their co-workers (team-members) also expect managers to be fair in their actions and not necessarily submissive. That means they are perceived as strong personalities that are able to influence people and organize their work. It also indicates that managers don’t have to use power negotiation tactics to be successful because their virtues (like being fair or strong) makes people listen and follow them. Good managers obtained their authority by being consistent. This is very specific virtue that is also ascribing leaders. In our opinion consistency is even more leaders’ feature than managers. Only outstanding managers can brag with consistency/integrity – as they call it.

I want to say consistency/ integrity, you do not build it in a single moment, yes, it is a whole process, you build throughout your life, entire career, right from the beginning. Even if at the very beginning of your career you lose this integrity or consistency, do something against yourself or something unethical, something that you believe was not fair, anyone finds out about this, and I'm not talking about such decisions that you made because of lack of knowledge, right, but when your acts are premeditated, while being conscious, or against yourself, or against the ethical principles. Firstly, you lie or cheat and such behaviour come into the habit, and you cannot eradicate it, and secondly (…) when you lack precisely this consistency you encounter in the course of your career more and more people who do not want to work with you, because you cheat (…). And vice versa if you have followed fair, ethical path and had proper relationships with people with whom you worked, behaved professionally, not in the sense of beautiful voice, nor a nice suit, but fair, consistent, you work with various people within projects in different companies, with complete strangers, but they know you, they say: “I heard from Maciek we will work well.” [TN]

Except of consistency, in the eyes of managers, leaders should be responsible and they supposed to lead the team or other groups of people. Their task is to bring the future to the organization.

According to our interlocutors leaders fulfil 3 basic roles: they should give inspiration for actions, they should present a vision (new direction of organizational development) as well as be selectors who decide about people joining the company. For instance, one of the respondents – partner in his designing company ­– is organizing trips to Venice from time to time with his co-workers (especially architects) to build a team, to rest as a “working family” but also to inspire them with the creative surroundings and artistic places.

Following these quotations from our fields we believe that managers pursuing their career path change a lot. Depending on the organization they represent their development style differs. Some of them finish carriers on the level of manager but some move to the world of leaders. Here, we want to distinguish who is a manager and who is the leader not by the definition but by the specific features they possess. Following Boyatzis (1982)we divided all traits mentioned by the respondents into three groups: knowledge, skills and attitude/abilities of managers. Figure 1 sums up all the attributes named by our interlocutors.

**Table 1. Competences of managers named by interlocutors**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowlegde/analytic** | **Skills**  | **Attitude/ability** |
| Reconcile the ambitions of different people | Patience | Commitment / drive (to like it and want to do this) / People who do not get bored / exiting the initiative |
| Solving problematic situations | Listening | Openness to change |
| Analytic knowledge | Communication | Open-minded |
| Responsiveness to dynamically changing environment | Self-reliance | Enthusiasm |
| Good organization of work-time | Making choices, making decisions | Freshness, youthness, openness - desirable qualities |
| Sensing who cannot operate, work efficiently | Formulating thoughts | Courage and assertiveness |
| Experience in the field, in the organization | Fast knowledge acquisition | Distance what you are doing |
| Permissions – certification, eg. Proven title and practice of the profession of a statutory  | Maintaining good relationships with people | Spontaneity |
| Auditor | Interpersonal skills to motivate people | Willingness to take responsibility for their actions and results |
| Education – college, university, trainings | Mastering a stressful situation, indifference, apathy, ability to work under stress | Flexibility |

Managers also consider luck as an intrinsic feature of their actions. Success is not only defined by their individual contribution and hard work but it is also a matter of external factors. It is interesting point of view especially considering their engagement and long time spent at work. So it suggest what are their believes (luck) not exactly a lucky coincidence.

The causes of our success are a good concept in close cooperation with the management of Gdynia […], diligent work and support of Gdansk banking environment and the scientific community. With a little luck. [JJ]

In plenty of cases to win you need to opt for something that no one else did. You need luck in business, be in the right place at the right time. Persistence is not enough. [JZ]

Our interlocutors distinguished project managers from regular managers because of some elements we are going to name here. On the one hand, project manager should motivate team-members but on the other, he should be definite if the situation requires it. He should know everything about the teamwork, like creating a good team, understanding and managing people, finding conflict resolution and finally completing the project. Project manager as the person with the specifically defined goal needs to have nice personality, be relationship-oriented but still remember the goal of his actions, value qualitative approach and build trust and good atmosphere in his team as well as with his clients.

For us it is a failure if a client withdraws from a project. He does not want to continue the cooperation, right. It is the failure but relief also. The failure in the sense that you start to have doubt about the job performance and whether you do well. On the other hand, there is a type where the customer with whom thing won’t work ad you see it after some time, after a few weeks, really, after months of cooperation.

Researcher: It's not possible.

Usually ours contracts initiating relationships are not symmetrical agreements. So we have a little comfort when parting with some awkward customer, comparing with the situation in which the client is. At any time the customer can resign. Sometimes we even feel the need to cut the customer’s umbilical cord. But we have to fulfill assigned tasks. But really, the major setback for us is when the client loses confidence in the architect and stops cooperation. [PP]

What are the features distinguishing managers from leaders? As we already mentioned there is a fine line between leaders and managers. We also classified characteristic features of leaders enumerated by interlocutors into 3 groups: social and technical skills, and other abilities. Thanks to the skills, such as comprehensive planning and operational planning demonstrate the ability to synthesize the areas of business including knowledge, trends, policies, and further analyze the available information or apply the data. They are able to articulate their beliefs, making valid and sound arguments, convince people to follow the vision, objectives or goals, forecast/anticipate trends or results.

Good leaders possess specific social skills and among them collaboration capabilities, ability to understand and listen to the people, supervise the work, the ability to learn and acquire knowledge quickly, negotiating skills and determination. To reach goals and accomplish all tasks they also need some ability to establish relationships. However, we met some leaders with technical or analytical background and they admitted the lack of some social skills, in their opinion. Among the technical skills we could learn leaders present capacity to manage the direction of business development, financial management, restructuring of employment or running specific manufacturing company. Also, entrepreneurial skills, identifying opportunities and exploiting the potential of a business entity were named.

We also made an effort of putting together all virtues of the leaders named by interlocutors and emerged from the rankings as well. They are combined on Figure 2.

**Table 2. Competences of leaders named by interlocutors**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowlegde/analytic** | **Skills**  | **Attitude/traits** |
| Combination of technical skills and interpersonal (managerial) - two owners of the companyinterdisciplinarity | Flexibility | Respect |
| Identify problems in the environmentGenerate solutions to problems | Conceptual skills allow to structure the path of development of the organization.  | Sensitivity (engineer - artist) |
|  | Comprehensive planning and operational planning  | Wide view, contact with others, a different point of view |
|  | The ability to synthesize the areas of business including knowledge, trends, policies, and further analyze the available information | Consistency, integrity (fair, ethic) |
|  | Apply the data | Sympathetic |
|  | Articulate their beliefs | Flexible |
|  | Making valid and sound argumentsConvince people to follow the vision, objectives, goalsForecast, anticipate trends, results | Energetic |
|  | Collaboration capabilities,  | Thrill-seeking |
|  | Ability to understand and listen to the people  | Ambitious |
|  | Supervise the work,  | Eager to cooperate |
|  | Negotiating skills | Independent |
|  | Ability to establish relationships | Courageous |
|  | Manage the direction of business development, financial management, restructuring of employment.  | Prudent |
|  | Entrepreneurial skills - identifying opportunities and exploiting the potential of a business entity  | Responsible |
|  | Marketing skills | Honest |
|  | The ability to learn, acquire knowledge | Determined to obtain success |
|  |  | Stubborn |

If we asked interlocutors about leaders’ competences usually we got quite similar stories as for managers. Few details differed but, in our opinion, very significant ones. Respondents admitted that leaders need respect from others even more than managers to reach their goals. In their opinion it is extremely important for the organizational development from strategic point of view (for the company as well as for the leader).

Moreover it is the way for creating authority in their closer and further environment. The factor helpful in establishing respect is more behaviour than a knowledge of the leader. The leader must be a role model for his subordinates and wider business environment. It influences his position and efficacy. The whole process is very well-described in the quotation below.

At some point you build something like authority or expect others to act in obedience to your recommendations, no longer you have to show, for example, your CV and what you’ve done, or convince someone to do something. Each person sees your name positively (…). In the manager’s career something like building authority is an indispensable element in making any progress at all in his career, no training in new techniques of management. There are people who join my team, usually younger, who have PRINCE, B2B, various training done, cv full of trainings, but have no experience, no practice in leading projects. They do not have such authority built. Authority should be in a symbiotic relationship with certificates (…). Okay, maybe you have authority, but you do not have the theoretical basis and also nobody will treat you seriously. (…) Nobody assign you any serious task, because very often project leaders or managers are selected to the company not to perform the task effectively but to make a good PR around the task. And we do the same, we choose well-known consulting companies. [TN]

While asking of managers profession we heard also stories about entrepreneurs. Many of our managers appeared to be owners of their companies at the same time with several entrepreneurial features. The picture of the entrepreneur draw by our interlocutors shows that they are people somewhere in-between. Depending on the branch which they are acting in or business they are running sometimes they use only managerial skills, sometimes they must be visionary. That is the moment where all competencies get together again and form a capacious and diverse profession of managing people.

**CONCLUSIONS**

From our field material some differences between managers and leaders emerge. First of all managers usually follow imposed goals while leaders are expected to create their own directions of organizational development. Leaders have usually longer practice and are more experienced than managers. That is why they are ready to mark out directions of organizational development not only taking knowledge into consideration but also all mentioned skills.

Leaders ought to build respect among people they work with. Although respect and authority might be integral part of managers job they are not the indispensable ones.

From our research one more conclusion implicates: leaders need to deal with strategic for a company and much more important issues than managers who usually concentrate on finding solutions for everyday problems. To accomplish that goal mangers need specific skills that don’t have to be extremely creative but of high communication skills and abilities for successful teamwork. Working efficiently and ethically are their priorities for maintaining consistency in the profession. Answering a question that we rise in the title of the paper, managers, leaders as well as entrepreneurs (which we cannot separate clearly) need similar competences and other individual virtues indispensable to manage people. But more than competences they need to concentrate on long-lasting goals and strong values. It is much more important for them to care about moral attitude and safety of the organization they work for than social skills or other useful competences. They need to base on traditional values, create safe and peaceful (as they state) environment to achieve their goals. It doesn’t mean that competences are not important but it emphasizes that managers, leaders and entrepreneurs require foresee some steps ahead so they could see organizational phenomena from the wider perspective. As Czarniawska (2010) states specific times require different type of managing people. Usually hard times generate the need of managers who teach how to exist, the times of crisis need leaders who show the path for better life and times for creation demand entrepreneurs who are strong and can act fast. If we need managers, leaders or entrepreneurs the time will show soon.

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