
The Role of a Leader in Contemporary Organizations

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Abstract:

Purpose: The main scientific goal of the article is to present the results of research on identifying the roles and characteristics of a leader in relation to his followers. The article presents the theoretical basis of the discussed problem and describes the research results.

Design/Methodology/Approach: In order to achieve the main goal of the article, an argumentative literature review was selected, which was the basis for designing the methodological assumptions of the research. The second research method was a survey method. Such targeted research made it possible to get to know the respondents' position on the research problem and compare it with the desk research analysis. This method allowed for drawing conclusions, at the same time constituting the basis for further in-depth empirical research.

Findings: The results of the presented research broaden the existing knowledge in terms of expectations regarding the role of a leader in an organization. The most important roles of a leader fit into the creations of a strategist and mentor. Experience is indicated as a key factor positively influencing the performance of the role. The most important features of the leader's behavior are consistency in action and the ability to set priorities, but also courage in taking risks and difficult decisions. In times of change and uncertainty, they seem to be invaluable.

Practical Implications: The results indicate the directions of the leader's self-development. This is important as most people tend to prioritize their own interests. Identification of the expected roles, features and behaviors of the leader shows greater emphasis on creating a leader who can confidently and effectively inspire and lead his followers to achieve the organization's goals. Without losing the positive, caring relationship between him and his employees.

Originality/value: The key elements of modern leadership focus on relationship management. Leaders inspire and motivate employees to work positively. The article proposes an original set of leadership roles resulting from the study of literature and based on own research. Thus, it fills the research gap. Taking into account the conclusions of the research is a component of the process of educating future leaders, which helps to increase the efficiency and satisfaction of employees in the organization.

Keywords: Leadership, leadership paradigm, leadership qualities, the role of the leader.

JEL classification: M12, M54, J53.

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1. Introduction

The issue of leadership is constantly intriguing. A contemporary leader often faces the dilemma of how to create his/her role to become respected and effective at the same time. Whether to choose the role of a "tough" leader who ignores the importance of relationships and the importance of respect for subordinates, or to be a leader focused on people. No panacea for an ideal leader has been found. However, a modern approach to leadership by looking for one's strengths and weaknesses can be followed. Getting to know them will allow for possible compensation of defects, and support or use of potential. The knowledge about the desired role can be provided by the leader's subordinates or supporters, who are often a mirror of their superior's behavior.

This publication presents the results of own poll seeking respondents' opinions on the issue of leadership. The research was preceded by an in-depth study of the literature on leadership. The article aims to present the desired features and behaviors of a contemporary organization leader.

2. The Leadership Paradigm

Today, the issue of leadership has received quite a lot of scientific studies. This subject fascinated researchers from various scientific disciplines, and their achievements provided many materials that did not give clear answers to the issue of leadership. When trying to organize the research on leadership, Stogdill (1974) concluded that there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as people, who have tried to formulate them. Undoubtedly, the analysis of theoretical considerations regarding leadership allows finding differences and common threads in the approach to this issue. Leadership can be viewed not only as a process but also a quality.

Griffin (2000) defines leadership first as using non-coercive influence to shape the goals of a group or organization, motivate behaviors aimed at achieving those goals, and help establish the culture of a group or organization. Second, leadership can be treated as a set of traits attributed to individuals that are perceived as leaders, where leaders are individuals, who can influence the others' behavior without resorting to force, and those who are accepted by others as leaders. Generalizing, Griffin (2000) describes leadership as the entirety of processes used to get organization's members to cooperate in the interests of the organization. When paying attention to the leader's characteristics, Szczerba (2013) defines a leader as a person, who is followed voluntarily by others, because he/she, with his authority and behavior, awakens in them a willingness to follow.

Many authors consider the concept of leadership as a relationship of influence between the leader and those who recognize him/her as a leader, his/her followers. Blanchard (2007) defines leadership as the ability to effectively influence people by

releasing their strength and potential to enable them to pursue the greater good. While reviewing the theory of leadership, Bennis (1989), followed by Luthans (2011), and Kożusznik (2005) draw attention to the problem of interchangeable use of the concepts of leadership and management in literature, pointing to fundamental differences in defining them. According to Kożusznik, the concept of leadership is firstly a relationship of influence, not a relationship of power. Second, leadership speaks of followers and leaders - not subordinates and managers. Third, in leadership, intended changes reflect common goals, while in management they are the result of coordinated actions. Koźmiński and Jemielniak (2011) also point out to the issue of relations in leadership, i.e., leadership is the ability to lead more or less numerous groups of supporters. At the same time, this ability is conditioned by the ability to convey the vision in an attractive way and evoke an emotional desire to implement it in the followers.

Kopertynska (2015) draws attention to the meaning of the term managerial leadership. It is defined as the process of managing and influencing the activities of group members related to its tasks (Stoner, 1996). According to Kopertynska, the definition of leadership results in specific conclusions:

- leadership is related to other people, subordinates, or followers;
- it is group members who contribute to his position and enable the leadership process by surrendering to the leader;
- one cannot talk about the leadership qualities of a manager without subordinates;
- leadership involves the unequal distribution of power between the leader and group members.

However, although the leader has more power, group members can shape it in many ways. Leadership paradigms have changed throughout history. One of the synthetic approaches to this change is Avery's proposal (2009), which describes four groups of approaches to leadership: classical, transactional, visionary and organic. In its division, it takes into account the differences in the approach to specific dimensions. These are the period of occurrence, issues of the foundations of leadership, sources of commitment and approach to vision. In the first dimension, the differences are obvious.

The second dimension, which focuses on the basis of leadership, indicates that classical leadership is based on the dominance of the leader by respect and power to command and control. Transactional leadership is characterized by the influence exerted on group members. Visionary leadership is based on emotions, where the leader inspires group members. In organic leadership, the basis is shared understanding of the environment in the group, while the leader emerges on his own without being formally designated.

Another dimension, the source of group members' involvement, clearly indicates that team involvement varies from fear, respect for the leader in classical leadership, to acting in response to negotiating conditions, possible rewards and punishments in transactional leadership. Then, in visionary leadership, commitment is based on shared values, beliefs, visions, individualized approach to group members, up to the desire to self-define in organic leadership.

The last criterion taken into account in the differences between the views of paradigms proposed by Avery (2009) is the approach to vision. In classical leadership, the vision of the leader is not necessary to ensure the obedience of group members. In transactional leadership, it does not need to be present and need not be articulated. In contrast, in visionary leadership, vision is the foundation, and group members can contribute to the vision. Likewise, in organic leadership, vision emerges in the group and is an important part of the organizational culture.

In the literature on the subject, the paradigm of transformational leadership plays a significant role. Transformational leaders are able to transform people from followers into leaders (Van Linden and Fertman, 1998) and to influence followers to transcend their self-interests for the greater good of the organization (Bass, 1990). Transformational leaders motivate and inspire followers to achieve extraordinary goals (Berson and Avolio, 2004), and are process-oriented (Van Linden and Fertman, 1998).

It can be seen that contemporary researchers, after theoretical analysis of common paradigms, look for solutions within the framework of strategic leadership, innovative leadership or servant leadership. Research on strategic leadership focuses on executives who have overall responsibility for an organization (Jansen *et al.*, 2009). Innovation leadership proposes that leaders play a multitude of roles when facilitating innovation in organizations, especially roles that influence creativity and innovation (Alsolami *et al.*, 2016). Servant leadership seeks to engage others in decision-making, is based on ethical and caring behaviour, and enhances employee growth while enhancing the overall awareness and quality of organizational life (Spears, 2010; Setyaningrum *et al.*, 2020). Trends in leadership paradigms are in line with the assumption that despite the variability of the environment, which generates the variability of contemporary organizations, the human being is in the most important place in the organization (Stanczyk and Sus, 2013).

3. The Leader's Role in the Organization

Considerations about the leader's role assume its significant character, which stands out among other roles in the organization. Performing the role of a leader is regulated by the same mechanisms as other social roles. Giddens (2012) defines the social role as behaviors expected from an individual occupying a specific social position. The concept of role comes from theater and refers to the roles played by actors. In society, individuals play many different roles depending on the context of

their activities. Given the theory of Goffman (2000), in life as in theater, despite the same expectations for fulfilling the role and the same directors' instructions, actors can play roles in a variety of ways. There are many factors, including education, qualifications, experience, and personal characteristics, that influence the way a role is fulfilled.

A person who is to play the leader's role must enter into its attributes, adopt the facade expected from it: decorations, appearance, and way of being (Goffman, 2000). In the present conditions, leadership is expected from almost everyone in an organization. However, it cannot be acquired only in the recruitment process, it must be developed and awakened throughout the organization's life. The issue of leadership was taken up by many researchers trying to find a panacea for diagnosing the ideal leader.

Simerson and Venn (2010) list nine roles that effective leaders should play. Among them, they mention a guardian, trustworthy, trusting, upbringing, strategic, supporting, developing, inspiring and working leader.

The "alpha and omega" of leadership must have the nature of a protector. The role of a guardian leader should be manifested in a deep desire to extend the impact of his/her leadership beyond his/her time. The alpha is made up of ad hoc and future successes achieved through the leader's actions. The omega is the result of the leader's decisions and actions that make what he/she leaves behind specific, precisely because he/she was involved in it.

Among these roles, researchers identify the key initiators of leadership and critical factors of leadership. The first ones include a trustworthy leader, a trusting leader and an upbringing leader.

A trustworthy leader inspires confidence in actions, not just words. Building trust is key to extracting optimal engagement, above-average performance, and achievements from employees. A trusting leader sets goals clearly and allows others to choose how to achieve them. The leader's trust in the team allows him/her to cooperate on clearly defined and fair terms, and share responsibility. On the other hand, mistakes and failures are lessons of learning something new. Trusting leadership allows seeing ideas and advice from others, share knowledge and power, as well as support and appreciate good work.

Acting as an upbringing leader brings with it a wide range of activities undertaken to build a bond, compared to a family bond, in a team. According to Simerson and Venn (2010), fulfilling the role of an upbringing leader requires, among others:

- working on creating a bond that binds the organization's members;
- monitoring the emotional, mental, and physical condition of employees;
- focusing on people's needs;

- spending time helping people to allay their fears, reducing their limitations;
- focusing on employee development and making them feel proud of it;
- showing employees their progress;
- making minority voice heard and considered.

Underestimating key roles by a new leader often causes problems with employees' acceptance of the changes he/she intends to introduce. Employees will not support, implement, or defend any changes. According to Simerson and Venn, (2010), critical leadership factors include the remaining five distinguished roles: a strategic, supporting, developing, inspiring and working leader.

The choice of the role depends on the context defined for the organization, changing in time and space of the organization itself and its environment.

The strategic leader cares about maintaining both the internal and external perspective. The external perspective includes understanding and deepening knowledge about the industry and competitors' activities. The internal perspective is a strategic vision of development. Strategic leadership is not only about making decisions about the desired position of an organization among competitors, but about actions that can make that vision a reality.

Once the strategy is clearly defined and disseminated in the organization, there is a need to play the role of a supporting leader. After defining the goal and method of implementation, the leader's role is to support the efforts to achieve them. The supporting leader should take care of the systematic transfer of key information, set a pace adequate to all levels, ensure even distribution of work, enable employees to use their own ideas, provide appropriate tools depending on the needs, and reorganize teams depending on the needs.

Sometimes the company's situation requires a leader to assume the role of a working leader. Especially when employees feel overwhelmed or crushed, and the organization's performance is not optimal - the role of a working leader brings with it an increase in their potential. This role is most pronounced when the leader works directly with his subordinates. Such a reduction in distance and personal commitment to achieving the company's goals help employees to go through crisis situations and distinguish them from ordinary inconveniences, notice the differences between primary and secondary issues, and monitor progress and make the measurement results drive action.

A modern organization of the Industry 4.0 era, which thinks about success in the market, cannot do without a developing leader. The role of a developing leader begins with recognizing the employees' potential and exploring their talents. Subsequent activities enable people to contribute something from themselves; by setting challenges, they stimulate creative and innovative thinking. A developing leader gives employees opportunities for development, i.e., learning, expanding their

experiences, which in fact become an investment in the development of the organization's human resources.

The chances of success in implementing an organization's vision or mission decrease when people lose faith in the possibility of achieving them. This is when the role of an inspiring leader becomes significant. Inspiring leadership is not related to the skills of a good speaker, but inspiration by reminding people of things that seem obvious. Therefore, the role of an inspiring leader is to remind employees at the right time: why they are part of the organization, what they can do especially by working as a team, show how close the goals they strive to are, remind them of their past achievements and the dreams that were the driving force behind their actions.

The above characteristics of the leadership roles constitute a proposal that should be undertaken by a contemporary leader thinking about his/her career and the success of the organization. Each of those roles finds its place in various contexts of the organization, and an able leader must skillfully play several roles simultaneously. There is no better or worse role – just the appropriate one to the current situation.

4. Leadership Qualities

Nowadays, the approach to the theory of leadership qualities is based on researchers considering the issue of the existence of aspects of personality that would increase the probability that people will become leaders and achieve success. This assumption does not question the fact that leaders cannot be created and leadership skills cannot be taught; it rather concerns certain characteristics that mean that people are more likely to seek leadership positions.

Representatives of this approach are Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), who suggest that there are key traits helping people acquire the necessary leadership skills, develop a vision for themselves and others, and then implement it. The leader's key qualities include determination, motivation, honesty, self-confidence, cognitive skills, and knowledge of the business.

- Determination means that effective leaders have to not only be strong, determined and ambitious, but also willing to lead others.
- Motivation, i.e., awakening the power and potential of the followers through the person of the leader.
- Honesty: Effective leaders are open to their followers, but at the same time must be discreet and confidential.
- Leader's self-confidence manifested in mental resilience and emotional stability. This trait helps to act under pressure, make the right decisions when others cannot, and turn defeat into inspiration and development.
- Cognitive abilities: leaders need to collect, integrate, and interpret huge amounts of information. Due to rapid technological development and changes, these requirements are greater today than ever. Therefore, leaders

need to be intelligent enough to formulate the right strategies, solve problems, and make the right decisions.

- Knowledge of the business is considered indispensable in confirming the credibility of the leader. It builds on a high level of knowledge about the company, industry, technical matters, etc. In-depth knowledge of the organization and industry allows effective leaders to make informed decisions and understand the implications of these decisions.

Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) also indicate other features of a less distinct character, such as charisma, creativity, originality, and flexibility. Charisma is one of the qualities the authors believe are useful only to political leaders. According then effective leaders can also be more creative than non-leaders, but there is no consistent research on the subject. Conversely, flexibility or adaptability can be important traits for a leader in today's troubled environment. Especially when they need to be able to quickly make decisions and solve problems, or initiate and support changes. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) recognize that there are other important qualities useful in effective leadership but they consider the first six to be the basic ones.

It is increasingly believed that managers of smaller and larger teams must be leaders at the same time in order to achieve above-average results. According to Kozminski and Jemielniak (2011), the leader's role has a unique, even elitist character, which is related to relatively rare personal traits. In their deliberations on leaders, Balcerzyk and Zapala (2020), apart from their features, emphasize the importance of competencies possessed by the leader, which are the determinant of his/her position. Besides, the researchers believe that by realizing the nature of leadership, one can develop leadership qualities through proper training. A manager aspiring to a leadership role must skillfully and coherently combine activities and functions from the sphere of leadership and management. These key activities include creating values and culture, a personal model, and a guarantee of trust, planning, organizing, negotiating, managing knowledge and innovation, motivating, etc. Competency development is a continuous process that allows you to move to a higher level of their mastery (Balcerzyk, 2018). The issues of the complexity of the role of a leader and a manager and their competences are considered by many authors (Czaińska, 2020; Drewniak *et al.*, 2020; Kożusznik, 2005).

As Kopertyńska (2015, p. 257) writes a leader "... is someone who primarily inspires, motivates, persuades and influences other people, as well as paves the way for change". Not everyone can be a leader. Performing the role of a leader requires the candidate to have specific features and predispositions. In the subject literature, there are many different configurations of features that a leader should have.

Based on the research of Kopertyńska (2015) showed that the most important qualities that a leader should have to lead effectively include determination, self-confidence, responsibility, openness, empathy, and emotional intelligence. Among

the less important features, she lists concentration of attention and activities on priority tasks, flexibility, the ability to take risks, focus on success, optimism, strong desire and will to succeed, the ability to make the right choices, ethical behavior, intuition, and resistance to stress.

Kolodziej (2017) indicates on the basis of E. Michalski (2013) that an essential role in being a leader is played by such features as intelligence, knowledge and experience, domination, self-confidence, high energy level, stress tolerance, righteousness, honesty, and maturity.

Adair (1999) believes that a leader should be characterized by integrity, hardness, honesty, warmth, humility, and self-confidence. According to Obłój (1997, p. 118), the set of features and appropriate skills that a leader should have include self-confidence, ambitions, orientation towards achievements and success, assertiveness, ability to dominate others, tolerance to stress, stubbornness and firmness, intelligence, and courage. On the other hand, the leader's skills are creating a vision and the desired state, creativity and innovation, the ability to persuasively speak and listen, quick decision-making, as well as the ability to set tasks and organize work.

The literature review illustrates the multitude of sets of the leader's traits that would be favorable in his roles. They can be treated as a direction of development and expectations that are set for the leader. However, it is the leader who creates the role and should adapt his leadership behavior to a specific situation and contexts.

5. Research Methodology

The collection of the research material was preceded by the literature review and desk research. The presented analysis is part of a broader research on leadership issues. In the research, a questionnaire was used to obtain opinions on specific questions: about the leader's role in the organization, factors determining the role of a leader, qualities and behavior that a leader should be endowed with, and the importance of leader's certain qualities. The aspect of trust as one of the determinants of leadership was published in the *European Research Studies Journal* (Balcerzyk, 2020).

The research sample included 340 people. As for gender, the division of the studied sample was even. Women constituted 51% and men 49% of the study group. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) were very young, aged 19-25. About one third (28%) of the respondents were between 26 and 35 years of age. People in the 36-45 age group constituted 15% of the respondents. The lowest percentage (4%) were those aged 46-55. On the other hand, the oldest age group, i.e., people over 55, constituted 6%.

The independent variable, namely the place of residence, indicates that 43% of the respondents lived in a city with 26,000-50,000 inhabitants, 14% in a city with

11,000-25,000 inhabitants, 7% in a town with 6,000-10,000 inhabitants, 8% in a town with 5,000 inhabitants, and 29% lived in the countryside. Nearly half of the respondents worked in a company with over 100 employees. The remaining part was employed in smaller companies with from 51 to 100 employees 12%, from 21 to 50 employees 11%, from 11 to 20 employees 7% of the respondents, from 6 to 10 employees 10%, and with up to 5 employees 11 % of the respondents.

Besides, the research sample characteristics included the position in the company. Only 5% of the respondents held the position of a senior manager, 22% indicated the position of a middle-level manager, and 12% a lower-level manager. A large group (61%) were people occupying a different position than the mentioned above. The characteristics of the research sample allow us to assess that the respondents are mainly young people at the beginning of their professional careers, and few of them are senior managers. It can be assumed that at work they played the role of supporters rather than leaders.

6. The Importance of the Leader's Role and Qualities in the Respondents' Opinion

The strength of the leader in the organization lies in the team that he/she builds, manages, and cooperates with. The respondents were asked for their opinion on the leader's role in their organization. A cafeteria of possible answers was proposed, from which the respondents could choose the most appropriate one. Among the proposed roles for the leader in the organization, the following ones were cited: a visionary, guardian, strategist, mentor, tutor, mediator and inspirer. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents' answers.

Table 1. Leadership roles performed in the opinion of the respondents

Leadership roles	Number of responses	Share (%)
Visionary	36	10,59
Guardian	40	11,76
Strategist	114	33,53
Mentor	80	23,53
Tutor	30	8,82
Mediator	4	1,18
Inspirer	36	10,59
Total	340	100

Source: Own elaboration.

The highest percentage of respondents (33,53%) considered that the leader in the organization plays the strategist's role. It can be assumed that for the respondents it is the most vital role with which they identify the leader. It is important for employees that their leader knows where they are going, what the perspective is,

how to plan activities, how to use the potential of the organization to fulfill its goals and missions. The leader's role as a strategist gives employees a sense of security and transparency in matters of the future in the internal and external contexts of the organization.

The role of a mentor was assigned to the leader by 23,53% of the respondents. A mentor is a person endowed with authority and trust by others, he/she can inspire their motivation and passion for action, infecting them with his/her knowledge and potential. A mentor leader not only inspires admiration but also builds partnership relations by stimulating his/her followers to develop. The respondents' opinion indicates that being a mentor for people is extremely crucial in fulfilling the leader's role. 11,76% of the respondents assigned the guardian's role to the leader. It turns out that modern leadership must include the mission of being a guardian. Guardianship is understood as caring for the interests of employees, meeting their needs, helping them and, if necessary, taking a position of their protector or defender. The guardian's key task is also to ensure that his/her team is prepared in such a way that, when he/she is absent, its vision and mission will not disappear.

A vision is an image of the future that inspires passion (Hybels 2002, p. 33). Many leadership theorists emphasize the need for the leader to play the role of a visionary (Blanchard, 2018; Drucker, 2017; Hybels, 2002; Kaplan and Kaiser, 2010). Having a vision gives the ability to identify long-term goals. A visionary leader thinks innovatively, supports, and creates a similar-minded environment. A visionary also forces organizations to face challenges and changes, prompting continuous improvement. This role was indicated by 10,59% of the respondents. The role of a visionary is related to the role of an inspirer. This role was also assigned to the leader by 10,59%. The leader inspirer gives the team inspiration and suggestions for action. The inspirer is characterized by energy and the ability to influence people to make them perform certain tasks.

The upbringing leader is a role assigned by 8,82% of the respondents. The number does not differ significantly from the above. This fact may indicate a comparable importance of the indicated role to the role of a visionary or inspirer. The role of the upbringing leader is to build bonds and relationships in the team, care for people's development, and understand their own and employees' limitations. The nickname of an educating leader can be obtained by a person who has built people's trust to the extent that they can open up to it with their passions, concerns, or needs. The results show that the respondents appreciate the upbringing leader's role. The smallest percentage of the respondents (1,18%) assigned the leader the role of a mediator. It can be assumed that they do not notice the necessity for the leader to fulfill such a role, or the situations in which such a need occurs are very rare. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about the factors that, in their opinion, determine the leader's role. They could express their opinion by selecting the most appropriate answer from the proposed cafeterias. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Factors influencing fulfilling the leader's role*

Factors influencing fulfilling the leader's role	Number of responses	Share (%)
The experience of the leader and other members of the organization	130	38,24
Organizational environment	46	13,53
Abilities and expectations of subordinates	40	11,76
Type of tasks that need to be performed	62	18,24
The situation in which there is a relationship between the leader and members of the organization	62	18,24
Total	340	100

Source: Own elaboration.

In the opinion of 38,24% of the respondents, the experience of the leader and other members of the organization is a factor influencing the leader's role. That may prove changes that are taking place in the organizational awareness. For many years, having only theoretical knowledge was attractive for a potential employer. The leader's experience builds a sense of security, confidence, and trust of the team. Having experience determines, especially in difficult situations, certain algorithms that have been tried before. Therefore, a factor such as the experience of the leader and the team with which he/she cooperates is fundamental for the effective performance of the leadership role.

The position of the respondents on the other factors mentioned above, influencing the fulfillment of the leader's role, was quite evenly distributed. The research results indicate that 18,24% chose the type of tasks that need to be performed as a factor influencing the role of a leader. The same percentage of the surveyed indicated the situation in which the relationship between the leader and members of the organization is a factor. A slightly smaller percentage of the respondents (13,53%) believe that the organizational environment influences the leader's role. The lowest number 11.76% of the respondents - believe that it is influenced by the skills and expectations of subordinates. Such a distribution of responses may indicate the complexity of the leadership role. There is no single key determinant of success in fulfilling this role. The respondents' answers may prove the correctness of the situational approach in the theory of leadership.

Leader's role creation becomes easier if he /she is naturally endowed with certain characteristics or has certain behaviors. It should be emphasized that the leader, shaping his/her role, can work on himself/herself, develop himself/herself, and his/her qualities and behavior in the desired direction. The respondents were asked for their opinion on the leader's desired qualities and behavior. Their task was to choose the three most important of the 15 cafeterias proposed. The largest number of the respondents believes and the leader should be consistent in action and able to set priorities.

According to the respondents' answers, the second place is courage in taking risks and difficult decisions. Passion and commitment are third. Immediately behind them, the respondents point to being matter-of-fact and concrete. These four features and behaviors that, in the opinion of the respondents, a leader should have, are listed in the top and determine the way others perceives him/her in his/her strength and charisma.

When presented hierarchically, according to the greatest number of indications, the leader's desirable qualities and behaviors include the ability to build a team, the ability to motivate, the ability to influence others, and organizational skills. The group of these features concerns the relationship between people, the team and the leader. Further, such features as dynamism and the urgency of the leader's action were identified. Also, the same number of indications was obtained by justice along with flexibility and the ability to adapt to the situation. The next ones were innovation, overcoming limitations, standards and barriers, and honesty and reliability. According to the respondents' indications, the last place is occupied *ex aequo* by the ability to create a vision and share responsibility.

How important are the superior's leadership qualities for the respondents? The respondents were asked for their opinion on that issue. More than half of the respondents (52,35%) believe that they are necessary in a leader. 34,71% assessed having certain leadership qualities as indispensable. Only 7,65% of the respondents consider them to be less important than other predispositions and skills. On the other hand, 5,29% consider leadership unnecessary.

7. Conclusion and Discussion

The most important research result is the confirmation of the importance of having leadership qualities by a superior. The respondents recognized the following key behaviors and traits: consistency in action, the ability to set priorities, courage in taking risks and taking difficult decisions, passion and commitment, as well as being matter-of-fact and concrete.

The results of the presented research expand the existing knowledge in terms of the expectations posed for the leader's role in an organization. The most fundamental leader's roles fit into the creations of a strategist and a mentor. This fact proves the importance for subordinates of the ability to plan and manage the organization by their superior, as well as the knowledge, strength and trust they place in him/her. These roles give people answers to the questions: where they are going, what the prospects are, and the confidence and trust in the leader who will lead them there. The guardian's role, which is mentioned a little later by the respondents, has a slightly different character. Its essence is based on building relationships and atmosphere in the team while achieving goals. The role of a tutor, having its supporters among the respondents, is of a similar nature. The goal seems to be the shared denominator of the following roles: an inspirer and a visionary.

The respondents recognized experience possessed by the leader and other members of the organization as the most important factor positively influencing the leadership role. The respondents' opinion implies a tendency to change expectations in relation to the leader, who should be characterized not only by charisma and strength but also by practice, proven algorithms of actions that strengthen his/her effectiveness. The results of the research are in line with the current leadership paradigms. They confirm the need for variability of the leader's actions depending on the conditions, circumstances, and factors surrounding the organization. Leadership should exhibit strategic characteristics, base on a long-term vision and mission perspective, and be change-oriented, inspiring, motivating, supporting and activating followers

However, can the applicable paradigm be clearly defined? Research into organizational leadership is largely fragmented. They pave the way for future research. The author sees the need for further exploration of the issue. The challenges are added by the lack of a uniform framework for issues related to the areas of leadership activity, what is more, the analyzed domains differ, because the results of research in the literature refer to various individual, organizational or social domains.

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