

PRAKTYCZNI ASPEKT KONCEPTA AUTENTICZNOGO LIDERSTWA NA SREDNIM NIVOU MENADŻMENTA U POLSKOJ

PRACTICAL ASPECT OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP CONCEPT AT MEDIUM LEVEL OF MANAGEMENT IN POLAND

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Summary

The subject of the thesis hereby is the concept of authentic leadership at medium level of management in corporations operating in Poland. The paper consists of two parts. The first academic part presents the concept of authentic management and its dimensions. The second empirical part enunciates the feedback from own research conducted by the author in 2013 in corporations functioning in Poland.

The phenomenon of leadership is a matter of common interest for both theoreticians and practitioners of management. It is believed that at the time of turbulent changes occurring in the economic environment, organizations are in need of leaders – heads in the first place instead of supervising directors – managers per se. Bennis and Nanus believe the leadership to be a key power in an organization, as it is responsible for creating a new vision whose delivery is supposed to be inspiring and motivating the members of an organization. Academic achievements on management with regard of leadership is immense, which stems from the fact that the problematic aspects of the kind have been preoccupying great thinkers for ages. Questions that had been asked in ancient times, the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment are still valid till today.

The etymology of the terms “leading” and “leadership” stems from an old English word “lithan” which means “go”. The word “lead” derives from Anglo-Saxon word denoting a way, a course, knowledge of next steps, thus leadership implies demarcating directions and taking a certain path of action. The notion is hard to define, it’s „a people-centered skill essential in almost every situation in which two or more people have the intention to deliver a specific task”. Leadership has been defined as a “process of influencing people” for a long time, emphasizing that the word may be mentioned in each case of someone having an effect on someone else with the aim of achieving the established target. Although, the definitions of leadership undergo constant modifications, since more emphasis is put on the statement that leadership does not target at accomplishing specific goals, but is a challenge triggered and posed in front of managing directors, the concept of which should elicit enthusiasm in people as well as exploit their potential minding the benefits for the organization at the same time. The analysis of the definition implies that leadership is a process, which leads up to achieving group goals by exploiting tools of social influence and motivates the group to deliver these goals and also affects the organizational culture. Other definitions concentrate on the characteristics of leadership understood as the characteristics

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attributed to those entities, which are perceived as leaders. In the most recent concepts leadership is treated as a communication process by which the objectives of the organization are being delivered. In this context, the success of a leader is synonymous with the work of the whole team for the good of the organization.

As a result of great interest in leadership, there are many classifications of the concept in the teachings about organizations and management. The author will differentiate between classic and contemporary theories for the purposes of the paper hereby. One should indicate the following classical theories: theories based on traits, behavioral theories of leadership and situational theories. By contrast, the contemporary theories should bring into attention the following: natural emotional leadership, level 5 leadership, Intelligence Leadership, transformational leadership and Authentic Leadership. For the purposes of the dissertation hereby, the author will focus on the assumptions of authentic leadership.

The concept of authentic leadership largely refers to humanistic psychology. It is worth mentioning that it has the features of an eclectic concept, since it comprehensively and thoroughly combines the elements of the previous leadership theories including transformational leadership assumptions involving positive psychology, ethics and morality at the same time. When it comes to transformational leadership - the authors point to some shortcomings in the assumptions of the theory – namely that the transformational leader is not required ethical behaviour. It has been believed for many years now that the main and actually the only objective of corporations is to maximize profit and efficiency which should be incorporated in the leadership. However, it should be assumed that ethical behaviours relate to people and people make business. This, in turn, justifies the need to focus on ethics and morality, especially in terms of leaders who influence the subordinates and the entire organization. It was Friedman who formulated the need of Institutionalism of moral responsibility within the company.

Bass and Steidlmeier, coined the term of "an authentic transformational leader" by using the behaviours described as "4 i" - idealized influence, individual care for the employee, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation. This authenticity was initially understood in different ways, inter alia as the ability to lead in times of chaos, or the ability to build a sustainable organization and motivate and support the development of subordinates. The authentic leaders are characteristic of influencing the team in a way as to increase the feeling of commitment, dedication and motivating to improve the tasks performed in the organization permanently. What the authentic leaders are acknowledged for are high moral standards reflecting both by creating visions of the future, stimulation of conduct and communication devoid of rhetorical tricks and language of persuasion. The focus on the morality of the leader as one of their basic features is something, which distinguishes the concept from other theories. Ethics and morality of the leader is the central element of this theory.

A characteristic feature of the concept of authentic leadership are the dimensions that describe the behaviours of the leaders influencing their authenticity. Luthans and Avolio indicate that these are: transparency, self-awareness, openness to feedback and ethics (morality).

The characteristic features of the concept make a research task even more interesting, because it attempts to verify the influence, which the leader exerts on their team both in the area of behavior and attitudes and the system of values of the subordinates.

In the exploratory part of this study it was examined whether and, if so, to what extent the concept of authentic leadership is used in Polish corporations at medium level of management. The actual survey was conducted with the use of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) version 0.1. prepared for examining leaders.

Keywords: leadership, specific goals, influence, characteristic features
