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Jerzy Mączyński\*  
 Łukasz Sułkowski\*\*

### A Seven Nations Study of Leadership Attributes

**Abstract:** *The overall purpose of this paper was to compare a representative sample of Polish middle managers with a representative sample of chief executive officers (CEOs) from six chosen countries, in regard to selected leadership traits and behaviors. We present a small portion of data collected under the GLOBE project, Phase 3, and longitudinal research findings concerning subordinates' assessments of Polish middle managers in relation to their attributes from 2008 to 2012. The GLOBE, Phase 3 research is the first study to investigate several thousands of CEOs and senior management teams in 24 countries, to empirically and directly assess the relationship between culture and leadership traits and behaviors. We provide research evidence that the investigated CEOs from the United States, Austria, Germany, China, and Taiwan (with the exception of Russian CEOs and Polish middle managers) were generally positively evaluated by their direct staff in regard to: inspirational, visionary, integrity, and performance-oriented leadership behaviors (constituents of charismatic leadership), team-oriented behavior, and participative leadership style. Empirical findings under the GLOBE project, Phase 3 revealed that the charismatic leadership behavior of CEOs has a huge influence on top management teams' (TMTs) dedication to organizational goals, and is the most predictive of all leadership behaviors for TMT commitment to organizations. The analyzed research findings indicate that CEOs in Russia and Polish middle managers display strong similarities. They tend to behave in less charismatic, team-oriented, and participative ways than CEOs in the remaining countries.*

**Key words:** *Leader attributes, Charismatic leadership, Dedication to organizational goals*

Our study focuses on the findings from the GLOBE project, Phase 3 and middle Polish managers concerning leadership traits and behaviors. A significant part of our study focuses on the relationships between traits and behaviors of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Top Management Teams (TMTs) dedication to organizational goals. In our paper we present a small portion of the data collected under the GLOBE project, Phase 3<sup>1</sup>, and longitudinal research results concerning followers' evaluations of Polish middle managers in regard to their traits and behaviors in the years of 2008–2012.

Leadership in organizations has been a significant area of research over the last few decades. Both Bass (1990) and Yukl (1994) present a comprehensive review of the extensive literature on leadership developed over the years. Nevertheless one area in which new developments

in leadership research are required is cross-cultural studies (House et al.; 2004, 2014; Smith et al., 1994, 1998; Sułkowski, 2012). The GLOBE project, intended to fill this gap, is an international research program developed by Robert House in 1993, which focuses on leadership perceptions of practices and leader attributes cross-culturally (House et al., 1997). In the GLOBE study, leadership is defined as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organization of which they are members,” (Den Hartog et al., 1997b, p. 256).

Phase 3 of the GLOBE project particularly examines the relationships between the observed leadership traits and behaviors of CEOs, and TMTs' dedication to work performance. In total 24 countries participated in Phase 3. From this broad sample, we chose for our analyses six

\* University of Social Sciences SAN, Poland

\*\* Clark University, USA

Please send request for reprints to Jerzy Mączyński, Social Academy of Sciences, Sienkiewicza 9, 90-113 Łódź, a.maczyńska@ik.pl

<sup>1</sup> More comprehensive analyses of the present study can be found in Robert J. House et al. (2014), “Strategic Leadership Across Cultures, The GLOBE Study of CEO Leadership Behavior and Effectiveness in 24 Countries.” Sage Publications, Inc. 2014.

countries: Austria, Germany, and Russia from Europe; China and Taiwan from Asia; and the United States from North America. Poland did not participate in the GLOBE project, Phase 3, but nevertheless the authors of this paper collected the data concerning followers' evaluations of Polish middle managers in regard to their traits and behaviors in the years of 2008–2012. A longitudinal study was conducted among 342 followers employed by over 300 organizations located in different parts of Poland (including Legnica, Świdnica, Wrocław, Łódź, Warszawa). Followers of Polish middle managers, tested in those years, completed identical questionnaires as followers investigated under the GLOBE project, Phase 3. Hypothesizing on the basis of extrapolation, the data collected among Polish middle managers can be compared with the data collected under the GLOBE project, Phase 3. Nevertheless, further research is required among a representative sample of Polish CEOs, in order to acquire strong empirical evidence that our hypothesis is valid.

Under the GLOBE project, Phase 3, the three following hypotheses were tested, assuming that CEOs' leadership behaviors predict TMT dedication and firm competitive performance:

1. CEO charismatic leadership behavior will be positively associated with TMT dedication and firm competitive performance.
2. CEO team-oriented leadership behavior will be positively associated with TMT dedication and firm competitive performance.
3. CEO participative leadership behavior will be positively associated with TMT dedication and firm competitive performance.

In multilevel analysis, CEO leadership behavior served as the independent variable, and TMT dedication and firm competitive performance as dependent variables.

### Method

The leadership measurements surveyed followers of CEOs as well as Polish middle managers to assess their superiors according to six attributes that are presented below:

1. Performance Leadership Dimension: improvement-oriented, excellence-oriented, achievement-oriented.
2. Integrity Leadership Dimension: honest, sincere, just, trustworthy.
3. Visionary Leadership Dimension: foresight, prepared, anticipatory, plans ahead.
4. Inspirational Leadership Dimension: enthusiastic, positive, morale booster, motive arouser.
5. Team Orientation: group-oriented, collaborative, loyal, consultative.
6. Participative Leadership Dimension: involvement of subordinates in the decision-making process and implementation.

In generating leadership traits and behaviors, the items were based on several existing leadership theories, as described by House et al. (1997). All scales developed in the GLOBE project are based on an extensive pilot study

(see House et al., 2004). Questionnaire items developed in the GLOBE project were translated from English to Polish, and later translated back into English. The reverse translation was checked by the GLOBE coordinating team.

Data were collected from the immediate subordinates of the CEOs (i.e. directly reporting subordinates and advisers). Three randomly selected TMT members (directly reporting to a respective CEO) were asked to complete the GLOBE project, Phase 3 survey questionnaire forms, developed to assess CEO traits and behaviors. A total of more than 1,000 CEOs and 5,000 of their direct staff (TMTs) were respondents in the GLOBE project, Phase 3.

### Research Results

First of all in Table 1 we present selected key CEO leadership traits and behaviors predicting TMT dedication to organizational goals and firm competitive performance.

**Table 1. Rank Order of Selected CEO Leadership Behaviors Predicting Top Management Team Dedication and Firm Competitive Performance**

TMT Dedication		Firm Competitive Performance	
Leadership Behavior	Correlation	Leadership Behavior	Correlation
Inspirational Leadership Dimension	.36**	Visionary Leadership Dimension	.29**
Visionary Leadership Dimension	.35**	Team Integration	.26**
Integrity Leadership Dimension	.35**	Inspirational Leadership Dimension	.19**
Performance Leadership Dimension	.33**	Performance Leadership Dimension	.16*
Team Integration	.24**	Integrity Leadership Dimension	.16*
Participative Leadership Dimension	.22**		
Autocratic Leadership Dimension	-.12**		

N = 998 for TMT Dedication. N = 255 for Firm Competitive Performance.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Research findings under the GLOBE project, Phase 3, presented in Table 1 indicate that inspirational, visionary, integrity, and performance leadership behaviors, as

constituents of charismatic leadership, play a significant role in TMT dedication to organizational goals and firm competitive performance.

In addition, the data displayed in Table 1 indicate that participative CEO leadership was predictive of TMT dedication, but not firm competitive performance. Its predictive power for TMT dedication was less than that of charismatic leadership (inspirational, visionary, integrity, performance-oriented) and team-oriented (House et al., 2014).

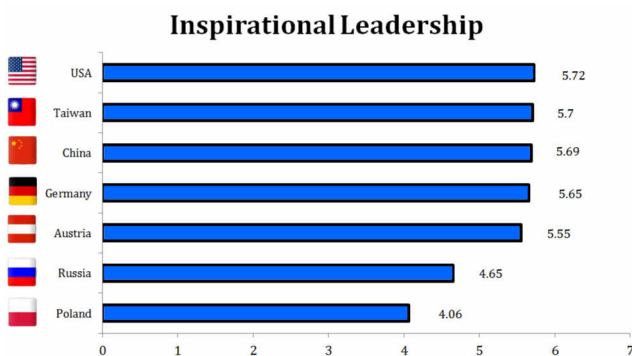
Research findings concerning cross-cultural studies in regard to leadership attributes (inspirational, visionary, integrity, performance-oriented, team-oriented and participative leadership styles) are presented in the subsequent figures.

### The Inspirational Leadership Dimension

Under the GLOBE study, inspirational leadership expresses the ability to inspire, mobilize subordinates by giving courage, confidence, hope, praise, and to expect high work performance on the part of team members.

Figure 1 displays the mean differences between CEOs and Polish middle managers with regard to the inspirational leadership dimension.

**Figure 1. Mean differences between investigated leaders on inspirational leadership dimension**



The research findings, displayed in Figure 1, indicate that Russian CEOs and Polish middle managers contain significantly lower levels of inspirational leadership attributes than the leaders from the remaining countries. Based on the GLOBE research findings, it was empirically demonstrated that inspirational leadership behavior is concerned with the development of enthusiasm and dedication, by affecting strong emotions in regard to subordinates needs, values, dreams and ideas.

Inspirational leadership behavior may appeal to subordinates' desire to feel important, to accomplish significant organizational goals, to perform an exceptional task, or to participate in a fascinating and inspiring one.

### The Visionary Leadership Dimension

Under the GLOBE project, visionary leaders inspire their followers with a highly ambitious vision, set high performance objectives, are well-organized, effectively manage their organizations, are likely to lead highly-

motivated teams, and create successful results for the organization.

Visionary leadership anticipates and prepares for an array of possible events. Important factors of visionary leadership are envisioning future events and providing long-term direction to subordinates. Thomas and Greenberger (1995) argued that the ability to create vision is to some extent associated with the future-time perspective characterized by the leader. A leader who is focused on future orientation has a clear picture of where the organization will be in a few years, and makes plans and directs his energy towards achieving future goals.

Figure 2 displays the mean differences between the compared CEOs and Polish middle managers regarding the visionary leadership dimension.

**Figure 2. Mean differences between investigated leaders on visionary leadership dimension**



The research results displayed in Figure 2 demonstrate substantial evidence of differences in mean scores on visionary leadership between the compared groups of leaders. Russian CEOs and Polish middle managers display significantly lower levels of visionary leadership attributes than the remaining groups of managers.

Organizations that value future orientation demonstrate a tendency to endorse the effectiveness of visionary leadership. Hofstede (1991, 2000) postulated that long-term orientation is essential for a high tendency to save, while short-term orientation results in a tendency to enjoy leisure in the present time and emphasizes above all the immediate interests of the people.

Leaders who value vision have the ability to inspire and motivate subordinates to work hard in order to achieve organizational objectives.

### The Integrity Leadership Dimension

Integrity as a leadership dimension within the GLOBE project indicates leaders who are honest, and deserve to be trusted as they mean what they say and can be relied upon to keep their word. Their behavior is always ethical, and they express a strong sense of value and purpose, and behave accordingly.

Figure 3 reports the mean differences between the analyzed groups of leaders on the integrity leadership dimension.

**Figure 3. Mean differences between investigated leaders on integrity leadership dimension**



From a comparison of research findings under the GLOBE project, Phase 3, displayed in Figure 3, it can be concluded that Russian CEOs as well as Polish middle managers score significantly lower on the integrity leadership dimension than leaders from the remaining countries.

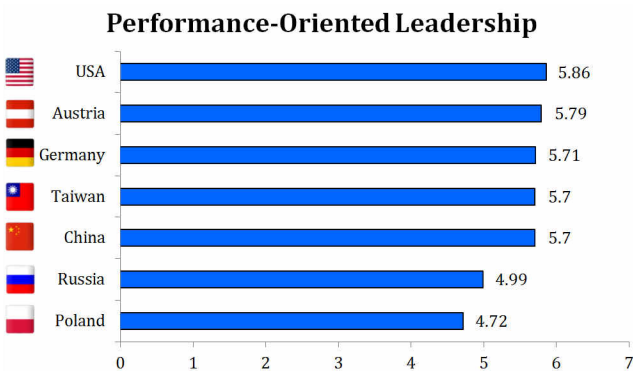
Leaders demonstrating a high level of integrity are able to set an example, through their own behavior, for subordinates to stimulate enthusiasm and effort to perform tasks better. Such leaders are likely to influence motivation and satisfaction of their subordinates. As Yukl stated, “subordinates are usually more satisfied with a leader who is friendly and helpful, shows trust and respect, and demonstrates concern for their needs and feelings,” (Yukl, 1994, p. 446).

**The Performance Leadership Dimension**

Performance-oriented leaders are concerned with setting high standards, challenging goals, and high performance expectations. Such leaders work hard, and seek continuous improvement in performance (McClelland, 1987; Steers et al., 1996).

Figure 4 presents the averaged ranking scores for the compared groups of leaders on performance orientation.

**Figure 4. Mean differences between investigated leaders on performance orientation**



The research results shown in Figure 4 indicate that Russian CEOs and Polish middle managers demonstrate significantly lower levels of performance orientation than

the remaining groups of leaders. Based on the GLOBE research findings, societies whose members demonstrate strong performance orientation value education and learning, set high performance goals and value expressing initiative (House et al., 2014; McClelland, 1987).

It is worth noting that the GLOBE research results on performance orientation showed that performance-oriented societies are more economically prosperous. Measures of economic health applied by GLOBE revealed a strong and significant correlation with three scales: “economic prosperity (correlation = .573,  $p < .001$ ), public support for economic prosperity (correlation = .547,  $p < .001$ ) and societal support for economic prosperity (correlation = .367,  $p < .05$ ),” (House et al., 2004, p. 254).

It should be noted that Hofstede and Bond (1988) demonstrated that “Confucian Dynamism” was significantly correlated with economic growth among 22 societies under their investigation. Their concept of “Confucian Dynamism” has a strong connection with McClelland’s need for achievement and GLOBE’s performance orientation, lending support to the idea that societal and organizational practices that encourage achievement motivation are solutions to economic and business success. Peterson et al. (2003) discovered that the five dimensions of CEO personality (conscientiousness, emotional stability, agreeableness, extraversion, and openness) influence TMT dynamics, and TMT dynamics in turn are associated with firm performance.

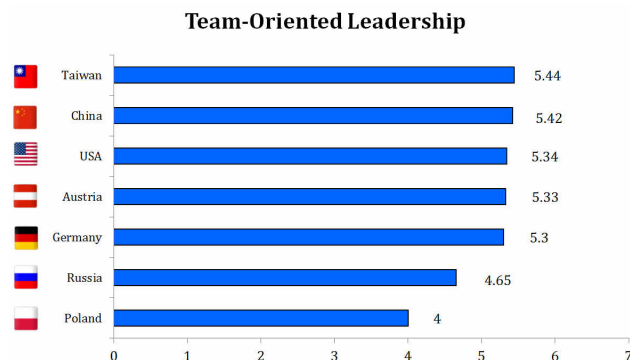
The data presented in Figures 5 and 6 indicate that CEOs are also reported (with the exception of Russian and Polish managers) to be generally team-oriented (5 out of 7 on a Likert scale) and participative (4.84 out of 7 on a Likert scale). CEOs in most investigated countries score around 5 on both dimensions.

**The Team-Oriented Leadership Dimension**

Team-oriented leaders are loyal to their followers and express care for the welfare of their team members. They use their authority and interpersonal skills to develop the team’s internal dynamics and to build a cohesive working unit.

Figure 5 presents the data associated with mean differences between CEOs and Polish middle managers on team-oriented leadership dimensions.

**Figure 5. Mean differences between investigated leaders on team-oriented leadership dimension**



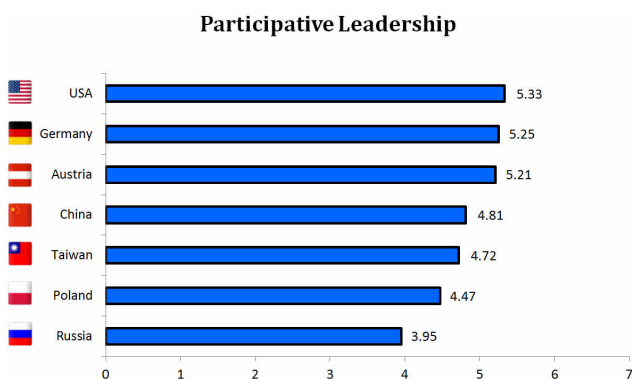
The results presented in Figure 5 indicate that CEOs in all the investigated countries (with the exception of Russian CEOs and Polish middle managers) are reported to behave in generally team-oriented ways, scoring above 5 on a 7 point Likert scale. Under the GLOBE study it was found that team-oriented leaders are concerned with expressing the importance of cooperation between team members for achieving organizational goals, as well as individual objectives. Numerous studies provide strong evidence that leaders' ability in team building is highly relevant for intensifying subordinates' identification with the organization's mission and leadership effectiveness (Peters and Austin, 1985; Tichy and Devanna, 1986).

### The Participative Leadership Dimension

Participative leaders express the view that subordinates have the potential to contribute to decision-making, and should be involved in the process and its implementation. They are also convinced that debate, discussion, and disagreement are natural parts of successful decision-making and should not be restrained. They give followers a high degree of discretion to perform work.

Figure 6 displays the findings concerned with mean differences between CEOs and Polish middle managers on the participative leadership dimension.

**Figure 6. Mean differences between investigated leaders on participative leadership dimension**



The research findings presented in Figure 6 indicate that participative leadership behavior is perceived to be more important in facilitating leadership effectiveness for the leaders in the United States, Germany, and Austria than for leaders in Russia, Poland, and partly for the leaders in Taiwan and China.

Another interesting finding emerges when considering participative leadership in its impact on subordinates' dedication to organizational goals. It turned out that participative behavior is positive in its effects on predicting TMT dedication ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ), and the autocratic dimension is highly negative on predicting direct subordinates' dedication ( $r = -.12, p < .01$ ) (House et al., 2014). Our research results point to the conclusion that the less a participative leadership style is applied

towards subordinates, there is more opportunity to manifest autocratic leadership behavior.

It should be mentioned that Mączyński et al. (1994) conducted a cross-cultural study on leadership style among matched samples of Polish, Austrian, and American managers. The matching was done on the basis of those organizational and demographic factors known to influence leadership style: sex (Jago and Vroom, 1982), hierarchical level (Jago and Vroom, 1977), managerial function (Jago, 1980), and age (Jago, 1980). 91 matched triads were established; managers within triads were similar in all aspects known to be associated with leadership behaviors, except for culture. Within each sample, the average age of respondents was 42 years. Four tested managers out of 91 respondents were female. Sixty-four percent of the sample performed the function of department head; twelve percent of respondents were executive managers. Thirty-four percent of the tested managers held production functions; thirty-eight percent of the sample described themselves as general managers. The framework of Vroom-Yetton (1973), and Bohnisch, Jago, and Reber (1987) was administered to explore differences among the leadership styles of the three cultures. Austrian managers were found to be the most participative, Polish managers the most autocratic, and American managers between the two.

It has been discovered that leadership style is influenced by the phenomenon of "Power Distance." Hofstede defines this concept as "the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed equally," (1980, p. 45).

Our research results revealed that "High power distance is dysfunctional since it discourages members of the society or organization from debate and voicing of divergent views. Asking questions may be regarded as criticizing and blaming, and therefore may not be allowed. In contrast within low power distance societies, the flexible distribution of power is expected to reinforce entrepreneurial innovation, broader participation in decision-making, and to restrain the abuse of power and corruption," (Mączyński et al., 2013, p. 15).

Under the GLOBE research, it has been found that nations who score lower on power distance of societal and organizational practices tend to be "more economically prosperous and competitively successful, enjoy higher levels of societal health, and human development," (House et al., 2004, p. 556). It can be assumed that progressing higher scores on power distance and autocratic leadership style for Polish managers produces unfavorable situations for Polish organizations relative to western institutions, and become particularly dysfunctional for organizational survival and effectiveness. We express the view that to be competitive with western organizations, Polish managers should acquire such values and leadership behavior which would help them to adapt to rapidly developing world-wide economic conditions (Mączyński et al., 1994; 1997; 2009; 2016a; Sułkowski, 2008; 2009).

## Conclusions

In summary, our overall purpose in the present paper was to compare a representative sample of Polish middle managers with a representative sample of CEOs from six chosen countries in regard to selected leadership attributes (traits and behaviors). The data presented in this paper were drawn from a larger cross-cultural study of the GLOBE project, Phase 3, which was designed to investigate leadership attributes of CEOs from 24 countries (House et al., 2014). Poland did not participate in the GLOBE study, Phase 3, but nevertheless longitudinal research was conducted among 342 subordinates in regard to evaluations of traits and behaviors of their managers. The GLOBE, Phase 3 research is the first study to examine a large number (several thousands) of CEOs and senior executives in 24 countries, in order to empirically and directly investigate the relationship between culture and leadership attributes (traits and behaviors). We provide evidence that the investigated CEOs from the United States, Austria, Germany, China, and Taiwan (with the exception of Russian CEOs and Polish middle managers) are generally positively assessed by their direct staff in terms of inspirational, visionary, integrity and performance-oriented leadership behaviors (constituents of charismatic leadership) and team-oriented behavior, as well as participative leadership.

Empirical research results under the GLOBE project, Phase 3, indicated that charismatic leadership behavior of CEOs has a huge influence on TMT dedication to organizational goals and are the most predictive of all leadership behaviors for TMT commitment. Team-oriented behavior of CEOs is the next most influential global leadership behavior. Participative leadership of CEOs was predictive for TMT dedication to organizational goals, but not firm competitive performance (House et al., 2014). It should be noted that research of Burke et al., (2006) has shown empirical evidence that there is a positive relationship between leader behaviors and team work performance.

Recent research by Wang, Tsui and Xin (2011) indicated that CEOs' leadership behavior influences organizational performance and employees' attitudes. According to Hambrick (2007) the importance of leadership behavior at the top level of the organization is significant because CEOs influence not only the top level of management that directly reports to them, but also the larger organizational environment. In their earlier research, Hambrick and Mason (1984) concentrated on the role of demographic characteristics of CEOs on firm performance. These included such traits as age, functional path, formal education, and socioeconomic background. Nevertheless, the relationship between CEO demographic attributes and firm performance has found only limited support (Waldman, Javidan, and Varella, 2004).

A further review of the analyzed research results shows that CEOs in Russia and Polish middle managers show strong similarities. They tend to behave in less

charismatic, team-oriented, and participative ways than the CEOs in the remaining countries. In addition, research results not portrayed in our paper indicate a considerably less negative attitude towards autocratic leadership on the part of Russian and Polish managers in comparison to CEOs from the remaining countries.

Interpreting our findings in this light leads to the conclusion that profound developments in political and economic systems, particularly in Poland, are not sufficient conditions to potentially modify leadership behaviors and subsequent organizational practices. It would mean that deep changes in people's mentality are necessary to produce desirable conditions in cultural values and succeeding traits and behaviors (Hofstede 2000; 1991; 1980; Martan, 1993; Mączyński et al., 2009; 2013; 2016 a,b,c; Shabo et al., 1997).

It should be emphasized that under the current conditions in Poland, control no longer comes so exclusively from high-ranking leaders. Employees now have much more power and concurrent expectations that their preferences and interests will be taken into consideration. In other words, leaders can no longer behave effectively by applying an autocratic leadership style. Today, Polish organizations expect more participative leadership practices compatible with human capital conceptions of what participation signifies (Mączyński, 1996, 1998).

Research evidence accumulated by Hofstede (2000) and Mączyński et al. (1994) shows that there is a strong relationship between power distance and leadership style. Research results presented by Mączyński et al. (2009) demonstrate that power distance is still a persistent phenomenon deeply embedded in Polish culture, which has an intense influence on the leadership style of Polish managers. That is why Polish middle managers investigated in the period of 2008-2012 display a substantially less negative attitude towards autocratic behavior than their western counterparts. The cross-cultural study conducted by Smith and Peterson (1988) revealed that in national cultures low in power distance, there is a greater reliance on participative decision making.

Research evidence accumulated by the first author of this paper suggests that autocratic leadership syndrome can be broken through intensive training in participative leadership. Findings concerning the effects of decision participation training among Polish managers (Mączyński, 1996, 1998; Mączyński et al., 1997) offer hope for modification of organizational and management practices, to help Polish managers overcome dysfunctional leadership values and autocratic managerial styles in order to compete effectively with western societies in a global business environment.

Research findings of the first author of this paper clearly indicate that as a consequence of decision-participation training, the tendency to apply autocratic leadership styles decreased substantially, and that simultaneously a tendency to include followers in the decision-making process increased. This was expressed

in a willingness to apply participative-decision styles (for example group decision procedures) more frequently (Mączyński, 1996, 1998; Mączyński et al., 1997). It should be emphasized that the Vroom/Yetton (1973) and the Vroom/Jago (1988) models of decision-participation, and the method for assessing decision-making styles (“problem set,” see Vroom, Yetton, and Jago, 1976; Mączyński, 1996, 1998), have significant educational value for leadership development. Decision-participation training encourages leaders to analyze their own managerial style more deeply so they would have a chance to appreciate the value of decision-participation training in the development of management effectiveness. Research findings concerning the positive effects of decision-participation training suggest that effective leadership style is an attribute possible to acquire, and that, among other factors, it can be modified through training.

Finally, it can be stated that research evidence presented in our paper suggests that we have at our disposal cross-culturally validated, useful methods developed to diagnose the analyzed traits and behaviors responsible for leadership effectiveness and organizational performance. We hope that it will be found that our research findings are theoretically informative, and may have significant implications for improving leadership effectiveness.

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