

LEADERSHIP AS A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON: THE PROBLEM OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN RUSSIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Jelena Živković¹¹¹
Slobodan Živković¹¹²

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Abstract: *This paper considers the key methodological problem in the study of the phenomenon of leadership in Russian social psychology, which is the problem of the relationship between leadership and management (headship), i.e. leadership as a socio-psychological phenomenon of informal relations in organizations and management as a characteristic of formal relations. This paper points to contemporary problems in the study of leadership in Russian social psychology, which are primarily related to different approaches and terminology of leadership and management in relation to Western approaches. Based on the analysis of the leadership - headship problem, it is concluded that it is best for the organization that the head of the organization also has the status of a leader, and we consider socio-psychological characteristics of the head-leaders as crucial for the successful functioning of the organization.*

Keywords: *leadership, headship, socio-psychological characteristics, methodological approach of Russian social psychology*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Soviet period, the study of leadership was associated with small social groups and was methodologically separated from the phenomenon of management in organizations, which was in fact formal headship or administration, aimed to fulfill ideological goals “from above”, without taking into account interests of the collective. Only in the 90’s psychologists started to distinguish organizational leadership as a special form that differ from leadership in small groups and politics. Nowadays, the psychology of leadership rapidly develops in Russia. However, the concept of “leadership” is still interpreted ambiguously which makes many methodological problems.

2. THE FIRST PROBLEM: LEADERSHIP VS. MANAGEMENT

At the beginning of the 70’s in Soviet psychology scientists opposed the concepts of leadership and management. Leadership was related to the regulation of interpersonal relationships in small social groups while management was related to the regulation of formal relationships in organization. These differences were first described by B.D. Parygin in 1971 [1]. The author understood leadership as “one of the processes of organizing and managing a small social group that contributes to the achievement of group goals in optimal terms and with optimal effect, determined by social relations that dominate in society” [2]

¹¹¹ Moscow State Pedagogical University, Malaya Pyrogovskaya 1/1, 119991 Moscow; Russia

¹¹² School of Engineering management, Bulevar vojvode Mišića 43, 11000 Belgrade; Serbia

Table 1: Differences between leadership and management in Russian psychology

	Management (headship)	Leadership
field of activity	macroenvironment, he represents the group in wider social systems	microenvironment, intragroup relationships in small groups
conditions of occurrence	officially assigned (appointed or elected) to manage the group and organize its activities, under the control of the social structure	arises spontaneously, chosen by the group who give him the right to make decisions in significant situations for the group
stability	more stable	less stable, depends on the group
regulation of relations in the group	regulates the official relations of the group as a certain social organization; its activities are governed by the relevant legal provisions and duties.	regulates interpersonal relations (socio-psychological) in the group, its activity is ensured by the moral norms
social role	mediator of social control and authority, legally responsible for the functioning of the organization, has strict sanctions for subordinates	subject of group norms and expectations that spontaneously form in interpersonal relationships
decision-making	complex decisions, mediated by many circumstances	decisions concerning group activities

This trend of opposing leadership and management came from foreign psychology. The dual meaning of “leadership” noticed C. Gibb in 1969. He believed that leadership is legitimate in cases where the influence of the leader is voluntarily accepted by his followers or shared with the followers. To describe unidirectional coercive influence, S. Gibb proposed the term "headship". Thus, he separated official influence from leadership by several criteria [3]:

Table 2: Differences between leadership and management in Western psychology

Headship (management)	Leadership
supported by the organizational system	spontaneously approved by the group
sets group goals based on his professional interests regardless of the wishes of the group	reflects the interests and wishes of the group members
while achieving goals it is not mandatory to rely on feelings and group’s common opinion	must necessarily rely on feelings and group’s common opinion
social gap between him and the group members	one of the group members
receives authority from a non-group source	is given power by the group itself

This attempt to separate leadership and headship was unsuccessful. The reason for this lies partly in traditional western management theory, where from the very beginning leadership was studied as an organizational phenomenon: the leader was the first person of the organization, its head, occupying a certain leadership position. Therefore, a problem of headship basically doesn’t exist in Western psychology as in Russian psychology we can still find leadership-management separation which causes many methodological problems as it neglects the importance of leadership phenomenon as an integral element of any organization.

3. THE SECOND PROBLEM: LEADERSHIP AS THE INFORMAL SIDE OF MANAGEMENT

In Russian psychology of management there is another popular view on leadership, which also distinguishes leadership and management, but does not oppose them [4]-[8]. This view can be presented as following:

organization → management → headship → (administration and leadership)

This means that in any organization there is a part of the management – a “headship” phenomenon, characterized by the interaction between the head and the members of the organization. It has two types: *formal headship* as a part of the formal structure of the organization (the vertical relationship “boss - subordinates”) and *leadership* as a part of the informal structure (relationship “leader – followers”) [7]. In this regard, the head and the leader have *qualitatively different forms of influence* on the group (organization):

1) The head has the *official power* determined by his position and status, which serve as the main and formal method of influencing subordinates (either along with authority and influence, or besides them) [5], [7]. He mostly uses authoritarian style, requires strict execution of orders and instructions, high discipline and subordination. The lack of trust in subordinates leads to their minimal autonomy and direct control over their activities.

2) The leader has *the ability (power) to influence* group members (followers) by using socio-psychological methods and mechanisms, different leadership styles and situational control in order to find the right approaches in relations with subordinates and to achieve the best results [9]. Therefore, leadership is “one of the mechanisms for *integrating* group activities, when an individual or part of a group plays the role of leader that unites, directs the actions of the whole group, which expects, accepts and supports its actions” [8]. It is the followers that distinguishes leaders from non-leaders [10] with being loyal, not obliged, but willing to obey, and perceiving the leader as “one of us”, “the best of us” [11]. Therefore, leadership is a *cognitive construct* associated with ideas about leadership features and the expectation of their realization in behavior [5]. This resource of influence is informal and is realized through the phenomenon of authority, which is based on personal characteristics of a leader, as qualities of high value to group members, and which are recognized by followers [4]-[5], [11]. The leader becomes a guide to the goals and values preferred by the group members and a behavioral reference in meaningful situations [12]. Therefore, a leadership is *interpersonal phenomenon*, as it includes the value exchange between the leader and his followers [7].

Interpretation of leadership as part of management also came from the West. In the early 70's G. Mintzberg considered leadership as a part of management and used the term “*social leadership*” meaning role or style characteristic of management, which allows expanding the influence of a leader not through traditional administrative methods, but socio-psychological. Combination of these two roles in one person makes the manager effective as it gives him the opportunity to influence the processes of group's self-organization and also to reflect their interests in external institutions [13]. Kotter emphasizes that “leadership provides adaptive or beneficial changes implemented in the company, while the role of management is to ensure the stability and sustainability of the organization” [14]. Thus, different goals require different types of leadership: a formal leader is needed to stabilize an organization, whereas for its development an informal leader is required.

So, nowadays in foreign psychology, the phenomenon of organizational leadership is seen as a synonym to headship, or as a part of it – the social role of the head in the organization. In Russia, either the classical Western view is used: a leader is seen as the first person of the organization, i.e. its head, who occupies a certain leadership position; or traditional Soviet view: leadership is divided into formal (official) and informal (social).

The division of leadership into a formal and informal is applicable to informal groups, as it allows to identify the socio-psychological component of this phenomenon. However, this separation is confusing when considering organizational leadership, especially in large organizations. Formal leadership is usually rigidly structured with established rules and functional relationships and therefore easy to determine, while informal leadership arise from interpersonal relationships with not such a clear hierarchy and therefore difficult to analyze. We cannot always be sure whether the employee submits to the head solely because of his formal official power, or because his authority as a leader. Therefore, the leadership behavior of a manager can be inseparable from the position that he occupies. This happens because of many similarities between headship and leadership [7]: 1) both phenomena represent two sides of a people management, 2) they have identical expression: headship is described as the relation “head – subordinates”, and the leadership with the analogous “leader – followers”, 3) both have the influence in the system of informal (psychological) relations. These common features often lead to management being able to transfer from formal into informal which significantly increases the effectiveness of leadership.

4. THE THIRD PROBLEM: THE “NEW VIEW” ON LEADERSHIP IN AN ORGANIZATION – MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

Creating highly efficient organizational structures implies the existence of a new type of leadership – managerial leaders who do not see teams as an object of management, but are capable, leading people, to transform a group of people into self-learning organizations, into a single, holistic, “social organism” [15].

„Managerial leadership” was introduced by J. Yukl in 1989 [16]. It took more than 10 years for this term to appear in Russia, introduced by E.S. Yakhontova in 2002 [17]. Following terms are also used: “organizational leadership”, “leadership in organization”, “leadership in management”, “entrepreneurial leadership” and other [15].

Under managerial leadership, we understand the type of interaction between a leader (head) and his followers (subordinate employees), based on the recognition of the head as a leader by subordinates and effective combination of various sources of power, aimed at solving organizational problems and optimizing intragroup interaction [15]. This is a harmonious combination of effective headship (formal component) and leadership qualities (socio-psychological component) in management activity, i.e. formalized leadership + social leadership. As a manager, he uses his legal powers and status for the effective solution of organizational tasks, and as a leader he uses personal influence on his subordinates.

Managerial leader has more opportunities to effectively manage an organization than just a manager who turns into a manager-administrator or just an informal leader who does not have a status authority. A strong leader, but a weak manager is no better, and perhaps worse, then vice versa. So, an ideal manager for the successful functioning of the organization is one having leadership status. It is one that can effectively combine skillful leadership (personal power) with competent headship (organizational power) as two complementary forces [18].

The effectiveness of managerial leadership is determined by the socio-psychological and individual characteristics of the leader [5]. Socio-psychological characteristics include variety of management styles, flexible management, different roles and methods, situational approach. Among many individual characteristics we have to mention *personal qualities such as*: extraversion (sociability, charisma, cooperation, social proactivity), positive attitude towards others (empathy, understanding, kindness, responsiveness), self-control and self-confidence (conscientiousness, responsibility, accuracy, determination), perspective vision and strategic goal setting (dedication, initiativeness, sensitivity to change, flexibility, ability to learn, innovation, creativity) and *motivational qualities* such as – the need for achievement, the need for power, the need for control, the desire for acceptance, no fear of rejection. These qualities are the social and psychological basics for developing managerial leadership which in fact has to unite „the best of both worlds“ – headship and leadership.

The analysis of leadership and headship concepts and the core features that managerial leader has to have so he could be effective in the organization and social relations in general, is of great importance for social psychology. It is both theoretical and empirical issue because it is essential for developing psychological techniques aimed to identify managerial leaders and psychological methods and trainings aimed to help the individual to develop certain features, knowledge and behavior to become a managerial leader.

5. CONCLUSION

Leadership is an integral part of any civilized society and a key element for the functioning of the organization.

Leadership is a complex socio-psychological phenomenon, based on the informal influence, the use of authority and personal qualities. It is the integral part of management process.

Managerial or organizational leadership is the most effective way of combining formal and informal power to achieve both interests of the organization and of its members. The effectiveness of a managerial leadership depends on socio-psychological, personal and motivational characteristics of a leader.

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