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The importance of teacher leadership in shaping the creative attitudes of students

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Abstract

There are many theories for the analysis of leadership, characteristics associated with the concept, functions and leadership styles. It was found that the behaviour of leaders have influence on the organizational climate and culture conducive to creativity (Hage and Dewar, 1973; Maier, 1970; Amabile et al., 1996; Mumford et al., 2002). It is claimed that the leader should build such working conditions that enable creativity, learning and efficiency. The superior may not always be able to influence the complexity and suitability to work, but it can have an impact on working conditions and the willingness that the people in this environment will continue to develop and grow by encouraging them and recognition. In a work environment that encourages creativity, should be perceived atmosphere of fairness, confidentiality and security. Which improves the basic conditions for the development of creativity, i.e. well-being, freedom and enthusiasm. The purpose of this article is to present theories that relate to the leadership impact on the creativity. Therefore, the attempt to study the impact of leadership of academics lecturers among young people (students) was made. The main objective of the research was: Using scientific procedures and using the appropriate methodology examined and recognized types of leadership, which in the opinion of students most actively shape the creative attitude. Considerations were the basis for the formulation of the research hypothesis: The more active leadership favourable to the development of creativity, the higher the level of creativity among students, who as part of the intellectual capital is a major factor in the development of micro- and macro-region. In order to verify this objective and the research hypothesis, tests on a group of 232 students from the University of Szczecin, West Pomeranian University of Technology and the Academy of Arts was conducted.

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1. Introduction

There are many theories of the analysis of leadership, characteristics associated with the concept, functions and leadership styles. It was found that the behaviour of leaders have influence on the climate and organizational culture conducive to creativity (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988; Mumford et al., 2002). It is claimed that the leader should build such working conditions that enable creativity, learning and performance. Superior may not always be able to affect the complexity and suitability to work, but can have an impact on working conditions. And what is more, the willingness that people will continue to develop and grow by encouraging them and recognition.

In a working environment that encourages creativity, should be perceived atmosphere of fairness, confidentiality and security. That improves the basic conditions for the development of creativity, i.e. well-being, freedom and enthusiasm.

Table 1. Managing inhibiting creative activity (by Pietrasinski)

Basic organizational factors	Behaviour and management attitude	Typical effects of the behaviour and management attitudes
Emotional climate	generating fear, distrust	fear of criticism, mockery and disapproval, censorship of others' ideas, reducing reactions of subordinates, creative activity goes down to "underground",
Flow of information	distortion of information; restriction on the ability to communicate	the promotion and advertising of certain ideas, creative effort directed at objectives contrary to the organization objectives, cheating, reducing impulsive subconscious reaction, striving to be always reasonable,
Shaping purposes	imposition of purposes; persuasion; manipulation	deviance of creativity in the direction of neurotic behaviour, directing the creativity of the external purposes, apathy, stereotyped and routinized behaviour, resistance,
Control	strict control of behaviour	limited range of behaviours and ideas, conformist and dependent behavior, conformity priority on the creativity,

Source: Dobrolowiecz (1993).

2. Theories of leadership and their impact on the employees' creativity

Below are presented theories that relate to the impact of leadership on the creativity of employees. In the merits layer of these theories can be traced the relationship between leadership style and creativity (for more see: Sokol, 2014). Although these compounds, as it was proved, are too weak and limited, to be able to clearly state that a particular style generates added value in the organization in the form of increased creativity. In 1962, Fred Fiedler started deliberations on the relationship of leadership and creativity. He assumed that in case of a bad or a good atmosphere in groups different behaviours of leaders will foster creative attitudes, or will it slow down. Analysis of the results showed that when the relationships in the group are bad, for creative activities favours leadership behaviour, which supports members of the group and shows them solidarity and gives guidance. Badly affects the assessment and excessive validation. When the atmosphere in the group is good, the most optimal for creative activities will be stepping aside of the leader, acknowledgment, but also provoking and lack of consent.

In referred studies, sought to find the relationship between leadership and style and creativity – these are transformational and transactional theories. In the first theory, proposed by Burns (1978), assumed two leadership styles that are extremes, in which one end assigns transactional leadership and the other transformational. The first one, characterize relationship between leader and subordinate, based on the 'something for something' exchange. The second one, going beyond the exchange and provide outside instrumental motivation of action. Intellectual stimulation in this kind of leadership is expressed by encouragement, observing and asking questions, providing support for individual development needs of the group members. Creative behaviour is a multistep process of problems recognition, generating ideas and solutions, support of the idea of forming and its implementation. Creativity (i.e. creation of new and useful ideas) is therefore an important element of the innovative behaviour. Transformational leader responds to the need of making changes in the organization, including those radical, in response to signals of new trends, because he understands the directions of potential changes. Transformational leaders tend to make changes so that an organization run by them was competitive and achieves better and better

results. At the same time, they can use the potential of their employees, seeking to ensure that the development of the organization / company make a common goal and motive of action of entire work team. At the same time leaders, organizing organizational culture, have contribution to the creation of standards, ensure compliance, create a vision of the future of the organization and its development path (Bass et al., 1996 fo Sokol 2014, 2015).

Bass (1985, 2002) and also Bass & Avolio (1994) conducted the study, which is currently the most popular, and relate to leadership and also refers to the development of creativity. It is worth noting that the Bass concept does not treat the two types of leadership as so called extreme, but as a completely independent style. They are based on different assumptions and ways of motivating. Transformational leadership consist on dimensions such as: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Pieterse et al., 2009).

Bass (1990) distinguishes four behaviors "i" characterizing a transformational leaders: (Furmanczyk, 2011)

  idealized influence, equivalent of charisma. Leaders are seen as the perfect leader, worthy to follow. Employees want to be involved in the implementation of tasks and missions. In the eyes of subordinates leaders are trust worthy and confidence, which in turn allows leaders to have influence and authority over subordinates;

  individualized concern of employee: praising, supporting, encouraging, teaching, treatment in a unique way. Leaders support favourable organizational culture that supports the individual development of employees;

  inspirational motivation: adoption of an attractive vision and the use of symbols to increase the efforts of subordinates. Clearly way of the purpose communication and the confidence to achieve taken all the necessary measures to achieve the individual, group and organizational objectives;

  intellectual stimulation: encouraging to the development and support of subordinates in finding new solutions for the already existing problems and urge them to ask questions.

Transformational leadership model can be treated as a synonym for creative leadership, which was confirmed by numerous studies presented in the literature. These types of issues are responsible for: Amabile (1996). According to these authors, there is a strong causal link between the degree of creativity and discussed the type of leadership (Karwowski, 2010; Jaussi & Dionne, 2003; for: Sokol, 2014, 2015).

Analyzing the causal link between creativity and transformational leadership, it should be noted that this model does not exclude the positive effects. It consists in the "something for something" exchange in a simple premise, but not conducive to stimulating creativity. However, if you are already set the right conditions, which allow you to associate the reward with the creative attitude and implementation of creative activities. You may find that it is very good stimulator development. (Karwowski, 2010; for: Sokol, 2014, 2015).

In the literature, can also be found the study saying that creativity can be the result of imitation, which carrier is the leader. They showed that the degree of how supporters of the leader perceive him can contribute to the growth of their creativity (Simonton, 1975 for: Jaussi & Dionne, 2003).

It should be noted that the leader should encourage creativity by (Sokol, 2014, 2015):

  leading by example;
  realistic planning and setting goals,
  providing support to individuals and teams;
  good communication and interaction;
  appreciation of the contribution of individual employees;
  constructive criticism;
  trust and openness to new ideas.

For the development of the employees creativity is also important: management by exception, style laissez - fair, initiating structure, superior attitude of mind for promotion, lack of unfavourable leadership. According to Bratnicka (2011), it is reasonable to also identify the determinants of leadership affecting the creativity. These include: (a) protection as the personal value; (b) the employee's focus on prevention; (c) identification with the creative role; (c) identification with the team; (d) the autonomy of the work; (e) the distance between the employee and the leader; (f) improving leadership (youth and adults); (g) encourage by the leader; (h) the innovative climate; (i) the employee's level of creative abilities; (j) close supervision.

3. The scope of leadership on students' creativity, in their opinion – results of the study

In the survey 232 students have participated representing three institutions of higher education from West Pomeranian region, namely University of Szczecin (US), West Pomeranian University of Technology (ZUT), Art Academy of Szczecin (AS). 209 questionnaires have been used in the process of analysis: 98 from US, 102 from ZUT and 9 from AS. Detailed presentation is shown in table 2. The choice of research sample was based on the diversification of institutions of higher education which was crucial in reflecting types of creativity used in business practice. The literature of the subject matter differentiates three types of creativity, namely: technical, scientific and artistic creativity (Lumsdaine, Shelnutt, Lumsdaine, 1999; Kloudová, 2010; Wajdenfeld, 2013). Women constituted nearly 40% of the survey participants. 75% of the respondents were from Szczecin area, the rest of them were from the rural areas. The main areas of research focused on the levels, which concerned the way the impact of leadership on the development of creativity among students. The scope of the study included both the leadership resulting from the relationship of teacher – student and student – student (teams in which students work).

Table 2. Numbers of respondents

209 students – 100%					
US 98 students 47%		ZUT 102 students 49%		AS 9 students 4%	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
66	32	15	87	3	7
32%	15%	7%	42%	1%	3%

Source: own study.

Therefore, the first issue to be tackled is an attempt to evaluate teachers by students as supporters their creativity. For students from the University of Szczecin and the West Pomeranian University of Technology, the most important factor in deciding whether lecturer supports their creativity is that he/she gives students a sense of emotional support, efficiently monitor their work, give feedback in due time. Another place is the behaviour of a teacher who tries to understand when there are problems with doing the work by the student. Of course, in direct conservation, students (18%) indicated that it is about justification, that actually points to the problems emerging as a result of the job. In their opinion, these may be situations, such as: no literature, no access to the lab, no components to complete the task. Then the students indicated that support of the teacher for the students' creativity is when the lecturer gives a sense of autonomy and independence for students, does not impose opinions as the work should be done and even waiting for creative solutions from students. Students in 90% showed that they very appreciate suggestions from teachers on the task they doing. However, to develop creative attitudes, work should primarily be ensured some degree of autonomy. Last place but also important for the respondents was that the teacher allowed students to co-decide in terms of the accepted solutions at work, ultimately did not impose his/her opinion, not allowing students for their own. The study results are presented in Figure 1.
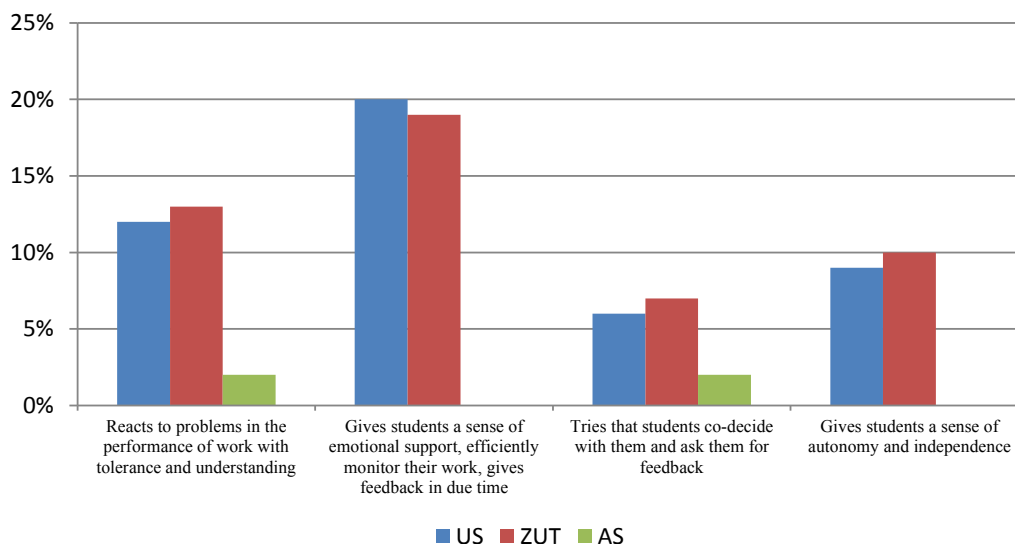
Figure 1. The teachers' evaluation by students as supporters their creativity – results of study
Source: own study.

Another research issue was the assessment of negative attitudes emerging among lecturers that are not conducive to the development of creative attitudes. According to the respondents, in all three universities, factor, that in a particular way is not conducive to the development of creative behaviour, are situations in which the lecturer gives unconstructive feedback (US – 26%; ZUT – 33%; AS – 33%). The second place, negative factor in terms of behaviours teachers as leaders, students listed: US - 21% avoids solving problems in this creates unnecessary obstacles; ZUT - 21% excessively controls of students; AS - 22% excessively controls of students and avoids solving problems in this creates unnecessary obstacles. According to the respondents the least negative behaviours determining support for the creativity of students is: for students from AS - rapidly changing expectations; for students from ZUT - giving contrary commands; for students from US - rapidly changing expectations.

Table 3. Negative evaluation of a teacher who does not support the students' creativity

Specification	US	ZUT	AS
excessively controls students	14%	21%	22%
gives unconstructive feedback	26%	33%	33%
sets vague objectives	15%	12%	11%
rapidly changing expectations	8%	17%	0%
gives contrary commands	14%	4%	11%
avoids solving problems in this creates unnecessary obstacles	21%	10%	22%

Source: own study.

The last issue of the study was the limiting factors affecting the creativity of the students. The results show that ZUT students agreed that the most important are: the distance between the student and lecturer, encouragement from teachers, identification with the team and the student focus on prevention. Respondents from US recognized that the most important are: the distance between the student and lecturer, encouragement from teachers, the level of the student's creative abilities and the work autonomy. As you can see the students gave very similar answers. Only there are slight differences.

Range of research on the boundary factors influencing the creativity of students are presented on Figure 2.
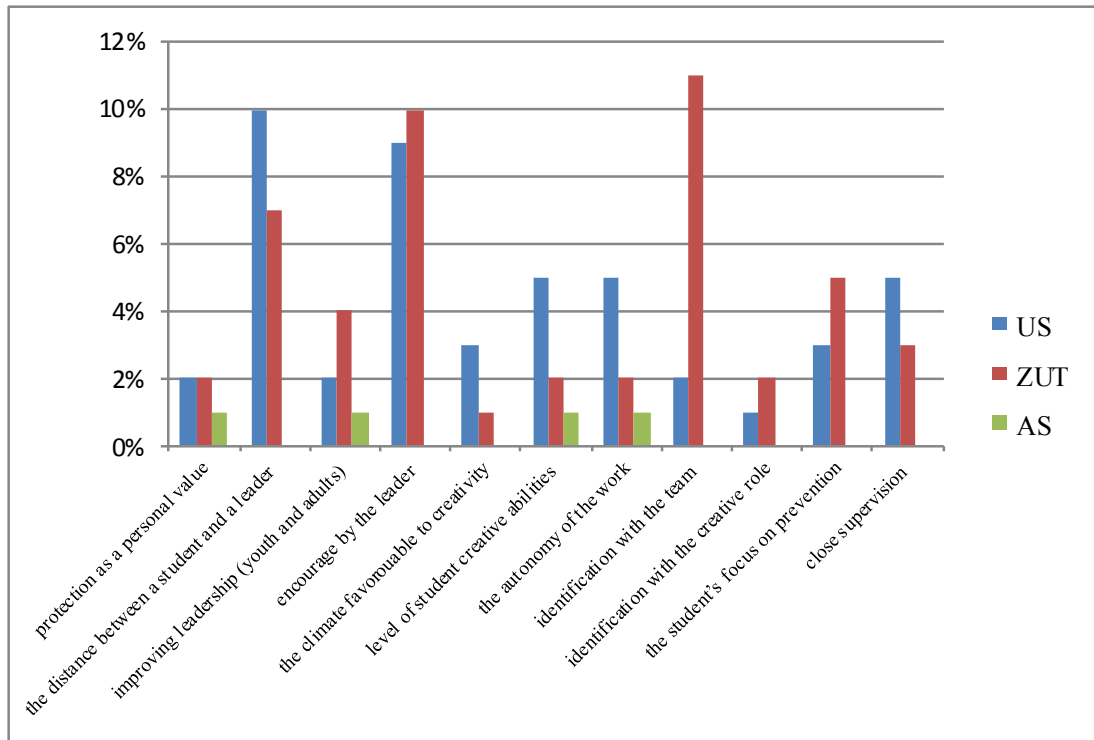
Figure 2. Leadership determinants influencing on creativity

Source: own study.

4. Conclusion

Competencies are an important determinant of the effectiveness and efficiency of the leaders' work. There are a reflection of the level of professional tasks. Contemporary, they are characterized by variability in time and, therefore, development. Moreover, they are also measurable - which is why they should be subjected to a systematic assessment. Currently gained knowledge and experience does not guarantee success in the workplace for leaders. First of all important are the ability to use them in practice management. Therefore, leaders should have creative powers so called hard – expert knowledge of the sector and the organization, ability to analyze competitors. And soft competencies, which allow you to better manage your employees and lead them to development.

In the case of university leadership qualities – for teachers particular importance for the development of students and their creative attitudes. Each student has specific creative ability, but their levels can be increased by appropriate attitudes of leaders and training on creativity. The study demonstrated that college students of West Pomeranian Province especially appreciate when teacher gives students a sense of emotional support, efficiently monitor their work, give feedback in due time. The next place is was teacher's behaviour that tries to understand when students have got problems with the work. They are particularly valuable guidance in shaping the personality of students who after graduation will be very valuable human capital in today's. From which quality makes economic development of countries. It seems that the obtained results should be evaluated very positively. These are confirmed by the accepted assumption in the literature on leadership that supports creative processes. These specific conditions were discussed in the theoretical section of the article.

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