LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS IN SUBORDINATES’ VIEW: TRANSFORMATIONAL VERSUS BEHAVIOURAL PERSPECTIVE. IF TRANSFORMATIONS OF LEADERSHIP LITERATURE MATTERS IN PRACTICE

1Aurelija Stelmokienė
Department of General Psychology
Faculty of Social Sciences
Vytautas Magnus University
Jonavos str. 66-328, Kaunas
Lithuania
Tel.: +370 37 327 824
E-mail: a.stelmokiene@smf.vdu.lt

2Aukse Endriulaitiene
Department of General Psychology
Faculty of Social Sciences
Vytautas Magnus University
Jonavos str. 66-328
Kaunas
Lithuania
Tel.: +370 37 327 824
E-mail: a.endriulaitiene@smf.vdu.lt

1Aurelija Stelmokienė received her PhD at Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Social Sciences, where she works as a Lecturer and post-doctoral researcher. Her research interests are leadership effectiveness, social perception and gender issues in human resource management. She has published several articles mainly in the field of leadership psychology.

2Aukse Endriulaitiene received her PhD at Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Social Sciences, where she works as a Professor and Head of General Psychology Department. Her research interests are human resource management, risk-taking behaviour and decisions, transformational leadership. She has published more than 30 articles and has experience in academic journal co-editing.

ABSTRACT. The purpose of this paper is to look for an answer if and how the behavioural paradigm and transformational leadership perspective are different when they are applied as theoretical background in the assessment of leadership effectiveness performed by the subordinates in Lithuanian organizations. Five hundred and five subordinates completed the self-administered questionnaire that consisted of Modified leadership effectiveness questionnaire and Global transformational leadership scale.

Acknowledgements: The Article was prepared during the project “Postdoctoral Fellowship Implementation in Lithuania”, funded by Research Council of Lithuania.
The cross-sectional methodology, group comparison, measurement of inter-rater agreement and explanatory factor analysis were used to find out the differences in the assessment of leadership effectiveness. The results of this study suggest that when subordinates assess their leader’s performance, the application of different theoretical background to the appraisal system does not make a distinction between the feedbacks. However, the subordinates agree more on the appraisal of leader’s performance based on behavioural paradigm in comparison to the transformational leadership theory. The research contributes to the field of leader’s performance appraisal from “follower-centric” perspective by providing empirical findings and theoretical interpretations.

**KEYWORDS:** leadership effectiveness, behavioural theory, transformational leadership, employee attitudes, appraisal of leader’s performance.

**JEL classification:** M12, M51, M54.

**Introduction**

Researchers and practitioners agree that successful functioning of an organization depends on various internal and external factors (Yukl, 2008). Most of the factors change suddenly and rapidly. Organization in such situation must react quickly and very often adjust to those transformations in the exact obligatory way. Leadership is classified as the most important internal factor (Bowers, Seashore, 1966; Hogan, Kaiser, 2004; Zaccaro et al., 2008). Moreover, the organization is able to control this factor and plan its development. Therefore, the leadership research is popular in social sciences and appreciable in organizational practice: it can propose particular recommendations and intervention programs for organizational development in the uncertain environment.

The systematic scientific study of the leadership is dated from the early 1930s (House, Aditya, 1997). Since then, the scientists continuously create and present various theoretical perspectives on leadership. They try to define effective leader, differentiate criteria of effective leadership and propose systems of the assessment of leadership effectiveness to human resource managers. Researchers are seeking to answer what makes people effective in leadership positions (van Knippenberg, Sitkin, 2013). Beginning with the leadership trait, behavioural paradigms and contingency theories, the leadership research extends to recently introduced theories: implicit, transformational, ethical, spiritual, authentic, servant, strategic, shared leadership perspectives (Avolio et al., 2009, 2009a). Transformation of leadership literature accelerates; still, there is no answer which theory is the best one for the research and practice. Analysis of differences among leadership theories is required from theoretical and practical perspectives.

All together and each separately, the scientists try to define how a leader could motivate others to change and to make changes in the most successful way (Hernandez et al., 2011). The question remains if those leadership perspectives are that different when the main mechanism (influence) and purpose (change) of the leadership are the same. Moreover, Mumford (2011) states that the systems of assessment of leaders’ performance are based on various theoretical perspectives, but there is a lack of clear distinction among them. There is a
controversy, if transformations of leadership literature matters in practice (Redeker et al., 2014), the practitioners feel ambiguous when they have to decide which system has more pros than cons in the specific situation. The authors of this article admit that assumptions about effective leadership from different theories should be compared by using theoretical analysis and empirical research. Therefore, the aim of the article is to look for an answer if and how the behavioural paradigm (traditional leadership theory) and transformational leadership perspective (modern leadership theory) are different when they are applied as theoretical background in the assessment of leadership effectiveness. First of all, the authors of this article will introduce theoretical assumptions about effective leadership from behavioural and transformational leadership theories. Secondly, the empirical evidence about leader’s performance appraisal based on both behavioural and transformational leadership theories will be provided. Finally, the concluding remarks and insights for research and practice will be presented.

Not only the content, but the process of assessment is a significant topic in the leader’s performance appraisal research (den Hartog et al., 2004). Mostly, the assessment of leadership effectiveness performed by the subordinates is applied in organizations (Halverson et al., 2002; Hamlin, 2004; Spreitzer et al., 2005). The subordinates are those members in the organization who directly experience the influence of the leader (Kaiser et al., 2012). This “follower-centric” perspective on leadership gains more and more evidence (van Quaquebeke et al., 2011). The researchers state that the perceptions of leadership rather than leadership itself predict organizational effectiveness (Bowers, Seashore, 1966). Moreover, leadership is defined as attribution, something that is in the eye of the follower (van Knippenberg, Sitkin, 2013). From this point, the specificity of the perceived influence (what is done and how) in practice and the scientific understanding of what determines good leadership can differ. Therefore, the research on followers’ view of effective leadership is so important for correct practical implications. Considering the situation, it has been chosen to use the follower-centric perspective in the study about the leadership effectiveness when different theoretical background is applied in the practical system of leader’s performance appraisal.

1. Theoretical Foundations for Studying Leader’s Performance Appraisal

Leadership literature presents various models of leadership effectiveness, but the exact criteria are necessary for the comparison. Hernandez et al. (2011) propose the system for codifying leadership theories. The differentiation of those theoretical perspectives is based on two fundamental principles: the locus and mechanism of leadership. The locus of leadership is defined as “the source from which leadership arises” (leader, context, followers, collectives or dyads) (Hernandez et al., 2011, p.1166). The mechanism of leadership is presented as “the means by which leadership is enacted” (traits, behaviours, cognition or affect) (Hernandez et al., 2011, p.1167). Thus, the leadership theories vary on this point: they underline different locus and mechanisms.

In this research, two leadership theories that according to the system of Hernandez et al. (2011) should differ the most has been chosen for this research. Behavioural paradigm emphasizes the leader as the main locus and behaviour as the main mechanism of leadership. Transformational leadership theory highlights dyad as the source of leadership and suggests that traits, behaviours, cognition and affect are all dominant means of effective leadership (Hernandez et al., 2011). Thus, one theory is very specific, and the other is more complex and integrated. Moreover, these theoretical perspectives can be acknowledged as the most popular ones during different historical periods of leadership research (old and new leadership
Structural Transformations in Business Development

Thereinafter, the behavioural paradigm and transformational leadership theory will be introduced and compared.

Behavioural theory represents old leadership school (Avolio et al., 2009). This school is oriented towards one-way influence of a leader towards subordinates, highlights instrumental origin of the relationships in organization. Financial indicators are the most important ones for the evaluation of leadership effectiveness (Avolio et al., 2009; Higgs, 2003; House, Podsakoff, 1994). The leader behaviour paradigm is a set of studies that identified two broad classes of leader behaviours – task oriented and person oriented – necessary for the effective leadership (House, Aditya, 1997; Judge et al., 2002). This period of intensive research lasted almost thirty years.

Transformational leadership is classified as the new direction in leadership research (Avolio et al., 2009). This new direction analyses mutual relationships between a leader and subordinates, integrates instrumental, emotional/moral and symbolic dimensions of leadership. Vision of the future, social processes, emotional consequences of leadership to each member in the organization are the main factors that describe successful leadership (Andersen, 2006; Avolio et al., 2009; Bennett, 2009; Higgs, 2003; House, Podsakoff, 1994). Transformational leadership theory is famous for continuous studies and intense application in practice (Felfe et al., 2004; Hunt, 1999).

Recently, the scientific community questions the distinction of those theoretical perspectives in leadership research (Anderson et al., 2008; Derue et al., 2011; Redeker et al., 2014). This question is especially hot in charismatic-transformational leadership research, which is compared with behavioural paradigm (van Knippenberg, Sitkin, 2013). Furthermore, the scientists describe new challenges: development of comprehensive theory/system of the evaluation (integration of leadership perspectives) and the increase of inter-rater agreement concerning the leadership effectiveness (Avolio, 2007; Kilburg, Donohue, 2011; Schrader, 2001). These new tendencies highlight the importance of subordinates’ view of their leader. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to look for the differences in the assessment of leadership effectiveness when subordinates evaluate their leader with reference to behavioural and transformational leadership theories. The determination of subordinates’ agreement about their leader’s performance based on criteria of those two theoretical perspectives is an important part of this purpose.

There is a body of empirical work exploring generic leadership functions and specific leader behaviours (House, Aditya, 1997). This specification could be an important point for the differentiation of behavioural and transformational leadership perspectives. Behavioural paradigm conceptualizes the organization as social and task performing system where task and person orientation are generic functions of a leader (House, Aditya, 1997). Transformational leadership perspective suggests additional leadership functions: communicating vision, behaving as a role model, enhancing new ways of problem solving, collaborating with subordinates as individuals (Avolio et al., 2009). There, the informational roles and affect, value dimensions are emphasized (Yukl, 1999). Although the modern behavioural models include informational roles as important aspects of leadership, the affect dimension together with leader personality and cognitive aspects are exceptional attributes of the transformational leadership theory (Yukl, 2002). They are necessary for the modern leaders who can motivate subordinates to make extra efforts willingly (Bennett, 2009; Felfe et al., 2004). Besides, the transformational leadership involves change-oriented behaviours that together with task and relations oriented behaviours have implications for organizational effectiveness (Yukl, 2008).
Generalizing the results mentioned previously, the transformational leadership is considered as the most comprehensive parameter of the leadership effectiveness (Derue et al., 2011; Tett et al., 2000). It is even presented as perspective that “can explain additional variance above and beyond existing theories” (Hernandez et al., 2011, p.1181). Moreover, the assessors have possibility to evaluate their leader by using more specific criteria than only task and person orientation. According to van Knippenberg, Sitkin (2013, p.1), “There is a widely shared consensus that charismatic – transformational leadership is a particularly effective form of leadership”. In this study, it is as well expected that leaders in subordinates’ view will be more effective (will get higher scores) with reference to criteria from transformational leadership perspective in comparison with the behavioural theory.

The most common tendencies of inter-rater agreement about leadership effectiveness studied in the previous research point that particular well-defined behaviour of a leader is evaluated quite similarly by the subordinates (Mumford et al., 2009). Behavioural paradigm is understood as a more common and traditional form of the assessment (van Knippenberg, Sitkin, 2013). Such assessment is characterized as direct, related to facts, practical and functional in various situations (Groth-Marnat, 2009; London, 2003). However, even when in objective terms, the leader’s behaviour with employees in subdivision is the same, they do not necessarily perceive him/her similarly (den Hartog et al., 2004). It is more obvious when the transformational leadership perspective is applied to the assessment. Transformational leadership is based on mutual relationships between a leader and subordinates. This peculiarity leads to subjectivity and possible differences among dyads (Avolio et al., 2009; Carless et al., 2000; Podsakoff et al., 1990). It as well could be associated with higher sensitivity to the quality of leadership subordinates experience (van Quaquebeke et al., 2011). Therefore, the inter-rater agreement could be achieved less often. Some behaviours are observed and assessed more accurately without ambiguity among raters than others (Yukl et al., 2002). For example, the affect dimension of transformational leadership could be interpreted as the most individual aspect of the assessment (Hernandez et al., 2011). Based on the previous studies, it can be proposed that the subordinates’ opinion about their leader’s effectiveness with reference to criteria from behavioural paradigm will be more similar in comparison to the transformational leadership perspective.

Some overlap between the theoretical models of behavioural and transformational leadership points a dilemma about the need of distinct labels for leadership. Moreover, the practitioners query if transformations of leadership literature matters in practice and what leadership theory they should apply for the leader’s performance appraisal. Therefore, this study will try to answer the question if and how the behavioural paradigm and transformational leadership perspective are different when they are applied as theoretical background in the assessment of leadership effectiveness performed by the subordinates in Lithuanian organizations.

2. Method of the Empirical Study

2.1 Subjects

This cross-sectional quantitative survey with self-administered paper-and-pencil version questionnaire was conducted by using “convenient sampling” method. The sample consisted of 505 subordinates (40 percent males, 60 percent females). Half of them were middle aged (40-59 years old), 39.7 percent were younger (18-39 years old) and 10.3 percent older (more than 60 years old) than the majority of group. Fifty-four point eight percent of
respondents had higher education and 45.2 percent lower than the higher education. Their work experience was from 1 to more than 36 years.

Employees were from 20 different size subdivisions (13 organizations) under the leadership of a direct middle manager. The size of subdivisions varied from 10 to 60 employees. Organizations offered social, educational, medical, building or water supply services. The subordinates assessed their current manager – 11 female leaders (243 subordinates) and 9 male leaders (262 subordinates). There were 346 leader – subordinate dyads homogenous by gender (193 female-female, 153 male-male) and 158 leader – subordinate dyads heterogeneous by gender (49 female-male, 109 male-female).

2.2 Instruments

The modified leadership effectiveness questionnaire (Heck et al., 2000) was employed to measure the subjective subordinates’ judgment on main leadership activities (behaviour) performed by a leader. This questionnaire consists of 32 items (Cronbach’s alpha – 0.97) allowing researchers to assess four main leadership activities – vision and goal setting (Cronbach’s alpha – 0.9), management of the unit (Cronbach’s alpha – 0.9) as task orientation dimensions, interpersonal relationships (Cronbach’s alpha – 0.88) and communication/representation skills (Cronbach’s alpha – 0.83) as person orientation dimensions. These criteria represented behavioural leadership theory. The perceived transformational leadership was assessed with seven-item Global transformational leadership scale (Carless et al., 2000). This scale is used not only for the measurement of leadership style but as the criteria of leadership effectiveness from transformational leadership perspective as well (Bass, Riggio, 2006). The internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) of the instrument was 0.93.

Both measures were adapted to Lithuanian language following back–forward translation procedure for the doctoral thesis (Stelmokiene, 2012). Likert-scale scoring (1 – strongly disagree, 5 – strongly agree) where the major score indicated higher perceived leadership effectiveness) was used for the instruments.

Participants were as well asked to indicate their gender, age, education level, general work experience and work experience at present position in subdivision.

3. Results of the Empirical Study

First of all, the descriptives of the perceived leadership effectiveness from the transformational leadership (TL) perspective and behavioural (BL) theory are briefly introduced. Subordinates from various subdivisions do not diverge extremely in opinion about their leaders’ performance. The majority of means of perceived leadership effectiveness are moved towards the maximum (from 2.92 to 4.3 for TL and from 3.28 to 4.18 for BL, where minimum is 1 and maximum is 5).

Nevertheless, the subjects of the evaluation are different leaders. Their leadership effectiveness could vary for objective reasons. Therefore, the standardization of scores of real leader leadership effectiveness was done separately for each subdivision. The parameters of particular subdivision (not all sample) were used for this transformation of the data. Those standardized (considering subdivision) z scores of each subordinate were used for further analysis.

After the transformation of data, the comparison of the perceived leadership effectiveness in groups of homogeneous and heterogeneous by gender dyads, in groups of assessors with different work experience and education level was done. There are no
statistically significant relations of these socio-demographic characteristics to the differences in the assessment of leadership effectiveness both for transformational leadership perspective and behavioural theory (Table 1).

Table 1. Relations of raters’ socio-demographic characteristics to the differences in the assessment of leadership effectiveness from transformational leadership perspective and behavioural theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic characteristic</th>
<th>Leadership effectiveness, according to TL Mean (SD)</th>
<th>t or F (p)</th>
<th>Leadership effectiveness, according to BL Mean (SD)</th>
<th>t or F (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>leader-subordinate dyad</td>
<td>homogeneous</td>
<td>0.0026</td>
<td>0.040 (&gt;0.1)</td>
<td>0.0034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.025)</td>
<td>(1.019)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>heterogeneous</td>
<td>-0.0011</td>
<td>-0.0038</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.878)</td>
<td>(0.894)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education level</td>
<td>lower than university education</td>
<td>0.0453</td>
<td>0.938 (&gt;0.1)</td>
<td>0.0707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.978)</td>
<td>(0.965)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>university education</td>
<td>-0.0392</td>
<td>-0.0620</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.988)</td>
<td>(0.997)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work experience</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>0.0699</td>
<td>1.494 (&gt;0.1)</td>
<td>0.0024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.991)</td>
<td>(1.034)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-15</td>
<td>-0.0818</td>
<td>-0.0835</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.943)</td>
<td>(0.904)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>-0.1063</td>
<td>-0.1047</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.054)</td>
<td>(0.954)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;26</td>
<td>0.1082</td>
<td>0.1273</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.943)</td>
<td>(1.007)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: TL – transformational leadership, BL – behavioural theory.
Source: created by authors based on SPSS data analysis

The paired – samples T test was applied for the comparison of the leader’s performance appraisal when different theoretical background (transformational leadership and behavioural theories) is selected for the assessment. Contrary to the expectations, the perceived leadership effectiveness is the same despite the chosen criteria from the behavioural (BL) or transformational leadership (TL) theories (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison of leader’s performance appraisal with criteria from transformational leadership perspective and behavioural theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria of appraisal</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>t (p)</th>
<th>correlation r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>-0.001000 (0.982)</td>
<td>-0.033 (&gt;0.1)</td>
<td>0.771**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>-0.0000004 (0.980)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particular leadership behaviours BL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vision and goal setting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.745**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management of the unit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.699**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.741**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication/ representation skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.708**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: TL – transformational leadership, BL – behavioural theory
** p<0.01

Source: created by authors based on SPSS data analysis

Additional correlational analysis for the particular leadership behaviours and transformational leadership was run (Table 2). Although the relationship between the management of the unit and transformational leadership is the weakest, and the vision and goal setting correlates the most with the transformational leadership; these differences are not significant (according to Blalock, 1972).
According to the type of the agreement on leadership perceptions, the respondents were grouped in three categories: under estimators, over estimators and adequate assessors (Table 3). If the exact rating is higher/lower than the mean of that subdivision plus/ minus standard deviation, it is coded as the deviation of the assessment of leaders’ performance (Atwater, Yammarino, 1992).

Table 3. Peculiarities of the assessment of leadership effectiveness based on the different theoretical perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peculiarities of the assessment</th>
<th>TL</th>
<th>BL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deviation of the assessment underestimation</td>
<td>78 (15.4 percent)</td>
<td>80 (15.8 percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overestimation</td>
<td>74 (14.7 percent)</td>
<td>73 (14.5 percent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adequate assessment</td>
<td>333 (65.9 percent)</td>
<td>340 (67.3 percent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: TL – transformational leadership; BL – behavioural theory.

Source: created by authors based on SPSS data analysis

No difference in deviation of the assessment of real leader leadership effectiveness (underestimation, overestimation, adequate estimation) between two groups of criteria (behavioural theory and transformational leadership) was found (Vilcoxon Z = -0.265; Sign test Z = -0.345; p>0.05).

Table 4. Inter-rater agreement of leaders’ performance from transformational leadership perspective and behavioural theory in subdivisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subdivision</th>
<th>Members in subdivision</th>
<th>a_{tg} TL</th>
<th>a_{tg} BL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.70 c</td>
<td>0.89 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.65 c</td>
<td>0.82 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.68 c</td>
<td>0.81 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.33 b</td>
<td>0.74 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.41 b</td>
<td>0.72 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.67 c</td>
<td>0.83 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.74 d</td>
<td>0.85 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.72 d</td>
<td>0.88 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.61 c</td>
<td>0.81 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.47 b</td>
<td>0.68 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.81 d</td>
<td>0.84 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.49 b</td>
<td>0.61 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.69 c</td>
<td>0.87 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.25 a</td>
<td>0.80 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.47 b</td>
<td>0.69 c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.95 e</td>
<td>0.98 e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.68 c</td>
<td>0.85 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.62 c</td>
<td>0.81 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.56 c</td>
<td>0.78 d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.35 b</td>
<td>0.85 d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean (SD) 0.59 (0.175) c 0.81 (0.084) d

Paired samples T test (using subdivision as the unit in the analysis) t=-7.028**

Note: TL – transformational leadership, BL – behavioural theory

** p<0,01; a- lack of agreement, b- low agreement, c- moderate agreement, d- strong agreement, e- very strong agreement (according to LeBreton, Senter, 2008).

Source: created by authors based on SPSS data analysis
Awg index was used for the measurement of the inter-rater agreement (IRA) of leaders’ performance in subdivisions (Brown, Hauenstein, 2005). It is applicable when “multiple judges rate a single target using an interval scale of measurement” (LeBreton, Senter, 2008, p.821). Raw values instead of standardized ones were used for the calculation of Awg index.

As it was expected, the inter-rater agreement in subdivisions is higher for the assessment of a leader based on criteria of behavioural theory in comparison to the transformational leadership (Table 4).

The results of this study suggest that there is no difference for the general assessment of leadership effectiveness if subordinates evaluate the intensity of transformational leadership or performance of the leadership behaviours. Additionally, this tendency was confirmed by the explanatory factor analysis that proposes one principal component solution (criteria from transformational leadership perspective plus behavioural leadership theory). The aggregate leadership effectiveness component explains 88.561 percent of phenomenon dispersion.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study explored the question if and how the behavioural paradigm and transformational leadership perspective are different when they are applied as theoretical background in the assessment of leadership effectiveness performed by the subordinates in Lithuanian organizations. Therefore, it contributes to the debates “if we need more labels for leadership” (van Knippenberg, Sitkin, 2013) that are important in the organizational research by giving some ideas about the similarities and differences between the behavioural paradigm and transformational leadership theory. In general, the authors of this article found that the application of two different theoretical perspectives in the assessment of leadership effectiveness proposed the same feedback from the subordinates about their leader’s performance.

Contrary to the expectations, the employees evaluated their direct leaders similarly despite the chosen criteria from behavioural theory and transformational leadership perspective. The results did not support the assumption that a leader in subordinates’ view is more effective if intensity of the transformational leadership in comparison with accomplishment of the main leadership activities is assessed. Behavioural paradigm asserts that a study of behaviour that makes a difference in hard (performance) and soft (satisfaction of employees) factors of organizational effectiveness is enough for the description of successful leadership (Bowers, Seashore, 1966). However, the modern studies confirm the need for transformational leadership to understand and influence employee and organizational effectiveness (Cleavenger, Munyon, 2013; van Knippenberg, Sitkin, 2013). Transformational leadership perspective is distinguished from the other theories for its complexity (mechanisms of personality, behaviour, cognition and affect, more specific behaviours as change orientation, informational roles, etc.) (Hernandez et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it might be the fact that leader’s behaviour is the main measure of leadership effectiveness for the subordinates. Those generic functions (task and person orientation) are enough for the evaluation, and the specific ones are not so outstanding that they could change the opinion about the leader. Besides, behaviour can be observed more easily in comparison to the leader’s personality or affect dimension (Yukl et al., 2002). Therefore, the subordinates’ feedback about the leader’s performance did not differ irrespective of the chosen theoretical background. The confirmation of similarity between the behavioural paradigm and transformational leadership perspective comes from the meta - analysis of experimental and
quasi-experimental leadership impact studies (Avolio et al., 2009a). Thus, the emphasis on different aspects might be not enough for the new theoretical paradigm.

Consistent with the other researches investigating inter-rater agreement about the leadership effectiveness (Yukl et al., 2002), the authors of this article have found that the subordinates agree more on leader’s performance when the behavioural theory is applied in the assessment in comparison to the transformational leadership perspective. Performance of the main leadership activities is a more precise way of the evaluation with visible criteria (Won, 2006). Whereas, theoretical background of transformational leadership emphasizes the subjective picture of the leader that each follower creates in his/her mind (Felfe, Schyns, 2010; Felfe et al., 2004; Schyns, Sanders, 2007). Moreover, this perspective is related to the emotional aspects and individual reactions to it; it is highly reflective of liking for the leader (Hernandez et al., 2011; van Knippenberg, Sitkin, 2013). On this point, even leader-subordinate dyads are unique and can be related to the exceptional opinions. Therefore, the subordinates’ feedback on their leader that is based on the transformational leadership theory diverges more than the using of behavioural paradigm as the theoretical background of the assessment.

It has to be noted that the explanatory factor analysis confirmed one component solution (behavioural theory plus transformational leadership perspective) for the leadership effectiveness in subordinates’ view. This component could be defined as a higher-order concept. Besides, the high correlations between particular leadership behaviours and transformational leadership raise doubts about the conceptual distinctiveness of chosen theories in practical applications. Thus, the integration of theories could be presented as a promising direction for further leadership research. This direction is supported by the other researchers who state that plenty of new similar “micro theories” increase the fragmentation of leadership discipline and indicate a lack of integrative, overarching work (Pillutla, Thau, 2013; van Knippenberg, 2011). Some authors admit that different aspects of organizational effectiveness are related to different leadership characteristics (Bowers, Seashore, 1966). Therefore, more complex picture of leadership can add extra value when explaining the prediction of effectiveness. Moreover, the organizational research is blamed for the obsession with novel interesting theoretical contributions (Pillutla, Thau, 2013; van Knippenberg, 2011). Leadership perspectives are created for the commercial aims, self-expression needs but rarely come from the research problems, limitations of previous theories. Therefore, it is suggested that more thorough analysis of the existing leadership theories and articulation of their distinct meanings are preferable to the creation of newer ones.

Ratters’ socio-demographic characteristics made no differences in the feedback on leader’s performance, despite the chosen theory for the assessment. Stereotypic tendencies of the evaluation of leadership effectiveness that depend on the type of leader-subordinate dyad, ratters’ education level and work experience (with reference to Dvir, Shamir, 2003; Kark, Eagly, 2010; Koch et al., 2005) were denied in this research. It is supposed that the modern society that is open to experience does not share those traditional stereotypes of leaders (Diekman, Goodfriend, 2006). This is common to both transformational leadership and behavioural theory. It could be that the other ratters’ characteristics (personality, social perception, etc.) are more important when the leadership effectiveness is assessed.

There were several limitations in the current study. Therefore, the results should be interpreted in consideration of them. The first issue is the bias of social desirability. The evaluation of leader’s performance is a sensitive question for subordinates. Scientific literature acknowledges that the employees want to make impression on leader (Donaldson, Grant-Vallone, 2002), but as well admits that the influence of social desirability bias in papers
of organizational research is overemphasized (Moorman, Podsakoff, 1992; Spector, 2006). Some efforts were made to reduce this bias: study was introduced as scientific by the external investigator; there were no questions that could help to identify particular member of the organization. However, the authors of this article encourage other scientists to include a measurement of social desirability bias in the instrument.

Non-objective measures, only subordinates’ self-report was used in the research, and this could be defined as the second limitation. The objective measures could help to compare leaders from different subdivisions and propose reliable information. Although, they are preferable to self-reports both for scientists and practitioners in organizations, there is a lot of disagreement about particular objective criteria of leadership effectiveness among authors (Bogale et al., 2009; Kaiser et al., 2008; Yukl, 2008). Therefore, in this research, the authors applied statistical procedures (data transformation) that the subordinates’ perception of different leaders could be compared.

The third limitation is a number of theoretical perspectives applied in the empirical study. It was mentioned that the leadership area is overcrowded with theories, but only two of them were selected for this research. Criteria of the choice are based on a theoretical model (Hernandez et al., 2011): one specific limited in locus and mechanism (behavioural paradigm) and the other integrated more extensive in the leadership mechanisms (transformational leadership perspective). Nevertheless, these theories have been already sustained in scientific and practitioners’ community. Thus, the future research should pay more attention to the comparison of those new theories that particularly lack a clear theoretical background and continuous empirical research. As Pillutla, Thau (2013) notes, they need more empirical findings that could verify, advance and validate the theoretical perspective.

The key message of this article is that the application of two different theoretical perspectives in the assessment of leadership effectiveness proposes more similar than different feedback from the subordinates about their leader’s performance. According to scientific literature, transformational leadership perspective captures more specific leadership dimensions in comparison to the generic leader functions presented in the behavioural theory. Besides, behavioural leadership theory deals with objective criteria of leadership effectiveness, and the transformational leadership is understood in more subjective terms. Despite the mentioned theoretical assumptions, the empirical study showed that when subordinates assess their leader’s performance, the application of different theoretical background to the appraisal system does not make a distinction between the tendencies of feedback. Theoretical perspective matters only when the inter-rater agreement about leadership effectiveness is the focus of research. Subordinates agree more on the appraisal of leader’s performance based on the behavioural paradigm in comparison to the transformational leadership theory. Human resource managers should be aware of those similarities and differences if they want to make correct decisions about the leader’s performance appraisal systems.

As organizational psychology “is driven by a desire to address issues that are important to people at work” (van Knippenberg, 2011, p.3), some practical implications from this study could be suggested. Leadership is a challenge that pays dividends for the organizations, but it needs attention (Cleavenger, Munyon, 2013). Scientists try to suggest what should be exceptionally effective for the change of individuals and social systems at present and propose their leadership theories (van Knippenberg, Sitkin, 2013). However, the human resource managers should base the need for additional leadership theory in the assessment procedure on specific arguments. Data of this study revealed that the different theoretical paradigms fail to present unique feedback from the subordinates about their
leader’s performance. On the one hand, if particular situation requires decision about leadership effectiveness made by the majority, the behavioural paradigm might be a better solution. On the other hand, the emotional particular aspects of leader-subordinate dyad could be captured more nicely by the transformational leadership perspective.

References


pp.189-216.
PAVALDINIŲ POŽIŪRIS Į VADOVAVIMO EFEKTYVUMĄ REMIANTIS ELGESIO IR TRANSFORMACINIO VADOVAVIMO TEORIJOMIS AR POKYČIAI MOKSLINĖJE VADOVAVIMO LITERATŪROJE ATSISKLEIDŽIA IR PRAKTIKOJE?

Aurelija Stelmokienė, Aukšė Endriulaitienė

SANTRAUKA


REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: vadovavimo efektyvumas, elgesio teorija, transformacinis vadovavimas, darbuotojų požiūris, vadovo vertinimas leadership effectiveness, behaviourial theory, transformational leadership, employee attitudes, appraisal of leader’s performance.
2. The contingency approach to leadership explains that leaders are most effective when they a. plan for emergencies before they occur. b. make their behavior contingent upon situational forces. c. follow universal managerial principles when faced with contingencies. d. create backup plans to deal with human resources problems. d. discards old ideas that no longer fit the circumstances.

3. Baxter, a chief operating officer, practices contingency leadership when he a. warns workers in advance about potential punishments. b. maintains an optimistic, positive attitude. c. challenges the use of ne