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**Review of the Ph.D. dissertation of Anna Koval entitled: *Impact of communication style compatibility on leadership outcomes in multinational organizations*, submitted to the University of Warsaw, Faculty of Management**

**1. Initial remarks**

The formal and legal basis for the review are: art. 13 ustawy z 14 marca 2003 r o stopniach i tytule naukowym w zakresie sztuki (Dz.U. 2017 poz. 1789) and a relevant invitation from prof. Grzegorz Karasiewicz – the Head of the Scientific Council of the Discipline of Science on Management and Quality at the University of Warsaw, dated 2.02.2022. The subject matter of the assessment is whether the dissertation constitutes an original solution to a scientific problem, whether it demonstrates the candidate's general theoretical knowledge in a given scientific discipline, as well as the candidate's ability to carry out self-reliant scientific work. The submitted doctoral dissertation is classified - in terms of its substance - in the discipline of management and quality sciences.

**2. Selection of subject, justification of research problem, and objectives of doctoral dissertation**

The doctoral dissertation submitted for review and assessment and written by Anna Koval is an interesting work in terms of its content and the research performed for its purposes. The selection of the subject of the dissertation should be considered relevant and current as it addresses the role of communication style on leadership outcomes which is the point of concern, not only for multinational companies but each organization. The recommendations and solutions proposed by Author may be of cognitive and application significance.

The author pointed out that the research objective of this work is to „*explore how congruence in communication styles between supervisor and employees impacts leadership outcomes, particularly organizational trust and well-being that employees experience at work within a multinational environment (p.9)*”. It should be noted that „research objective” doesn't mean the „aim of dissertation” that consist from empirical, but also from theoretical part.

Moreover, the objective of this dissertation could have been enhanced by more detailed goals such as: empirical, cognitive, and applicable which were fulfilled by Author in this dissertation. Also, general research questions would help the reviewer to follow the flow of narration.

### 3. Assessment of the literature review related to the topic of the dissertation

The structure of this thesis is divided into theoretical and empirical parts. The first one consists of its first three chapters. In the first chapter, the Ph.D. student presented the definitions, approaches, theories of leadership, and the relationship between leaders and managers and their competencies. She focused on presenting differences between 63 competencies of managers and leaders for Simonte&Tett(2013), but the conclusion is surprising as the Author wrote *„I will use both the words -manager and leader as both of them are used within organizations to denote a certain set of responsibilities..(p.21)*. In my opinion, this logic is not compatible (*nomen omen*) with the theoretical part underlining „differences”-instead of focusing on „similarities” between these two distinct terms: „leader” and „manager” which have quite a distinct connotations in the literature of the subject. The chapter is missing the conclusion, and summary underlying the clux of 36 first pages of this thesis.

Chapter 2 focuses on defining communication theories, and styles. It would be more attractive for readers to draw some figures, and use charts while presenting the process of communication. Visualization of theory is also the skill of the researcher and shows her understanding of theoretical issues. In this part, Anna Koval also presented in detail the most well-known scales and inventories used in measuring communication styles. Subchapter 2.3 is truly a list of communication styles’ questionnaires, specifically these applied in the empirical part of this thesis, but has no conclusion, summary, or just a few sentences explaining what was the most important for Author in this chapter.

Chapter 3 combines the two former chapters and presents the issues of communication in the context of leadership (eg. effectiveness, satisfaction of leader’s communication style, and the role of a sense of humor in mutual communication). Anna Koval presented here also the two important theories that state behind the empirical part of the thesis:leader-member exchange theory and person-environment fit theory. About the aim of the dissertation which is the congruence in communication styles between supervisor and employee, the choice of these theories I found reliable and appropriate. They show the level of trust, motivation to be understood by both sides of the communication process, and adjustment to personal, organizational, and group environments.

The weakest point of the theoretical part and literature review is referring to the old, historic publication from the 70s., and 80s. , citing PWC Survey from 2011 (p.41). It seems that in the era of digital scientific resources, and easy and free access to open sources, there is no justification for using outdated sources for proving Author's research questions, hypotheses, or exact models applied. Also, the lack of clear, synthetic conclusions in each subchapter is the weakness of this part. The structure of each chapter is also not symmetric f.eg. 3.1 takes 1 page while 1.3 has 20 pages. The synthesizing of the theory is a very valuable competence of Ph.D. students, as it shows the author's understanding and valuing of what is more and less important on several pages of the dissertation. This skill should be enhanced by Anna Koval and I believe she will develop it through further research experience.

### **3. Assessment of the empirical part of the dissertation**

The empirical part of the dissertation consists of four chapters, in which the methodology of the process is discussed. The introductory chapter 5 presents the justification of the research problem and approaches to measure it.

The methodology of the research process has been discussed extensively, both in the initial research (Study 1) and the actual research (Study 2).

In Study 1, the Author decided to make a preliminary investigation of communication style (CS) compatibility. A Ph.D. student applied an experiment on 249US participants using social media tools like M-Turk. The goal of this experiment was to test hypotheses H1 and H2 (p.105). The participants were presented with 2 scenarios of a hypothetical manager with a dominating style and a non-dominant communication style (Table 11). The participant was asked to read these scenarios and imagine that it describes the managers they had to work with. To check the experimental manipulation, the respondents were asked to rate Manager X's dominant communication style. The dependent variable was the attitude towards manager X consisting of such components: 1) emotions expected if working with Manager X, 2) willingness to work for Manager X, 3) Expected satisfaction with manager X's communication style, and 4) Expected trust towards Manager x. There were high correlations between the above four components which indicated a positive attitude of respondents towards the described leader. The dominant CS was measured with the scale developed by Norton (Appendix 2). The results confirmed the other findings in the literature on the subject and the author concluded that: „*the high CS dominance of a leader negatively impacts employees' perceptions*” (p.144)

In Study 2 Anna Koval extended her investigation to a wider range of communication styles relevant to the daily leader-follower interactions and their components: openness, confidence, dominance, preciseness, friendliness, frankness, contentious, attentiveness, and expressiveness). These components were elaborated and the Author presented the state of research concerning f.eg friendliness in communication. In this background, she proposed hypotheses H3 and H4 (p.115). This study aimed to obtain the communication style data for the leader-follower dyads and explore how the leadership outcomes such as job well-being and trust depend on the CS compatibility. There were 151 participants -29 leaders and 122 team members who filled in the questionnaire prepared by the author based on Norton and Yuan scales (Appendix 10).

The research results were in detail presented in the Tables and Appendixes. The Author performed 16 multinomial regression analyses concerning the 9 components of interactions. Additionally, a surface analysis developed by Shanock et al. (2010) was applied by Anna Koval, which made the presentation of the results more visible and clear for readers. The findings say that while the lowest level of trust and employee well-being were observed for leader-employee dyads that were characterized by a large discrepancy in their dominance (especially when a leader was much less dominant than an employee), the most positive outcomes were visible for the higher levels of similarity. The role of fit was also shown for preciseness, friendliness, and confidence.

In concluding this part of the author pointed to study limitations and future research (8.1). I highly valued this part of the work as it shows the mature approach of the researcher to science. The fact that the Ph.D. student did not intend to confine himself to a broad analysis of the results of the conducted research, but she also supplemented them with proprietary proposals to improve the whole process of communication between leader and employees, is worth mentioning.

Anna Koval presented some obstacles -mainly methodological ones but she also tried to remedy these problems by giving her explanations. One of the mentioned limitations was the fact that the respondents in Study 2 represent 11 different nationalities as they were all employees of the multinational company. My question in this regard is the following: *What cultural competencies are needed from leaders and followers to reach compatibility in their mutual communication?* And second question: *Can this model be applied only to MNCs, because the Author mentioned that MNCs can be even more skeptical of problems arising from CS incompatibility.* (p.145)

My third question is about pointing out some pros and cons of the experiment method.

#### 4. Assessment of the formal and technical part of the dissertation

Along with the reviewer's responsibility, I am obliged to point out several mistakes in this domain, as the formal side of the dissertation does raise many objections, like:

- The structure of the dissertation is not symmetric-some chapters are of 1 page while the others of 20s. It is not so visible in the Table of Content because it is not full
- Table of content is not compatible with the content of the whole thesis: f.eg. chapter 1.3 has 9 subchapters-1.3.9 which are not visible in the Table of content
- extensively used bullets and numbers in text what „storm the flow” of reading and comprehension of the logic idea (f.eg. 1.3.4 until 1.4 is mainly about listing various leadership attributes. The last page of chapter 1.4 (p.48) ends up with bullet points without even 1 sentence of conclusion or summary. Thus it is pretty difficult for readers to catch the logical arguments of the Author
- excessive use of bold font make an impression that everything is very important and worth underlining
- instead of using 1st person in the whole work (eg. *I found...According to me...In my opinion...*) passive voice should be used (*It was found... One may argue...*)
- The language of the work is good although some truisms in the Ph.D. dissertation could have been avoided: eg. „Leaders and managers spend most of their time communicating with each other” (p.83) or „Leading and managing is about talking” (p.80).
- There are also Tables (p.45, p.64, p.75) that appeared suddenly- without earlier announcement and further summary.
- The footnotes are not correct-it would be more effective to use the Harvard style of references in the text)
- The bibliography -as mentioned earlier in this Review- is mostly updated ( the most 3 recent publications were from 2019)
- The dissertation attachments, which are questionnaires addressed to respondents were presented at the end of the thesis-what brought in more details concerning the methodological process.

This dissertation could be better prepared if it concerns the formal criteria. Although the merit of this thesis is valuable, the formal and technical mistakes decrease the overall impression of the whole work.

## 5. Summary of the substantive evaluation of the dissertation

I find the topic of this dissertation very important and valuable as there is scarce publication showing the compatibility level of communication style and leadership outcome. The combination of these two broad topics was challenging. Analyzing such big theoretical phenomena as communication and leadership, the author had to omit and resign from some issues, but then more precise justification and arguments should be delivered.

Anna Koval contribute to the methodology of the management sciences as she used the experimental design of Study 1 (which is rarely used in management sciences (Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2016<sup>1</sup>)) but this method allowed to confirm the validity of previous results showing that the dominance of the leader might differentially affect employees depending on their level of dominance. In Study 2 the author used a polynomial regression with response Surface analysis in a three-dimensional space. This technique provided a detailed outlook on the complex relationship between a variety of combinations of two predictor variables and an outcome variable.

Thirdly, based on Norton and Yuan scales, the author developed a new communication styles questionnaire.

The valuable contributions are the practical recommendation and hints for business practice. The author concluded that managers and employees should be aware of their CSs and how they (mis)fit can affect their well-being. (p.147) . From this point of view, I hope the dissertation will be required reading for managers of all organizations, while the conclusions drawn from it could be universal.

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<sup>1</sup> Stańczyk-Hugiet E., (2016) Metody eksperymentu i symulacji w naukach o zarządzaniu, w: Podstawy metodologii badań w naukach o zarządzaniu, red.W.Czakon, NieOczywiste,Warszawa

## 6. Conclusion of the review

I confirm that the doctoral dissertation of Anna Koval meets the statutory requirements for the qualification work for the degree of doctor of social sciences in the discipline of management and quality. The dissertation contains an original solution to a scientific problem, and the Ph.D. student has demonstrated general theoretical knowledge and the ability to independently conduct scientific work. I assess the Ph.D. student's research workshop and the proposed methods as good and appreciate the Ph.D. student's awareness of the limitations of her research process. A certain drawback of the dissertation is its stylistic and technical setting, which I proved from the reviewing obligation. Undoubtedly, the ability to synthesize, and formulate conclusions and summaries is a weakness of the Ph.D. student, however, such an ability is acquired during the years of research experience. Therefore, I hope that further unique research problems undertaken in the future by Ms. Anne Koval will contribute to the development of this competence.

To sum up, I am asking the High Scientific Council of the Discipline of Management and Quality Sciences of the University of Warsaw to accept her doctoral dissertation and admit Ms. Anna Koval to her public defense.

Stwierdzam, że rozprawa doktorska Pani Anny Koval spełnia wymogi ustawowe stawiane pracom kwalifikacyjnym na stopień doktora w dziedzinie nauk społecznych w dyscyplinie nauki o zarządzaniu i jakości. Dysertacja zawiera oryginalne rozwiązanie problemu naukowego, a Doktorantka wykazała się ogólną wiedzą teoretyczną, a także tym, iż posiadała umiejętność samodzielnego prowadzenia pracy naukowej. Warsztat badawczy Doktorantki i zaproponowane metody oceniam dobrze i doceniam u Doktorantki świadomość ograniczeń własnego procesu badawczego. Pewnym mankamentem rozprawy jest jej oprawa stylistyczno-techniczna, co wykazałam z obowiązku recenzenckiego. Niewątpliwie zdolność syntezy, formułowania konkluzji i podsumowań, jest słabą stroną Doktorantki, jednakże taką umiejętność nabywa się w toku wielu lat doświadczeń pracy badawczej. Żywię zatem nadzieję, że kolejne równie unikatowe problemy badawcze podejmowane w przyszłości przez Panią Anne Koval przyczynią się do rozwoju tejże kompetencji.

Podsumowując, wnioskuję do Wysokiej Rady Naukowej Dyscypliny Nauki o Zarządzaniu i Jakości Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego o przyjęcie rozprawy doktorskiej i dopuszczenie Pani mgr Anny Koval do jej publicznej obrony.

Sylvia Przytuła