

# The influence of leadership on the motivation and performance of employees and the organisation

**Valentina Poljak**

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia  
poljak.valentina94@gmail.com

**Assist. Prof. PhD. Gregor Jagodič**

International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia  
gregor.jagodic@mfdps.si

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## Abstract

*Effective leadership is what drives the organisation to success. The leader's knowledge, skills, and approach are necessary for this. He must know how to plan, organise and encourage employees to be more successful and efficient. Furthermore, he must know how to motivate employees to work, create, learn, refine, develop and research. With the master's thesis, we investigated the influence of leadership on the success of the organisation's operation and the realisation of its set goals. We obtained the data with the help of a focus group, in which we included store managers. The results showed that managers have a respectful, correct and trusting attitude towards employees. According to them, employees are most motivated to work in a relaxed environment and teamwork. When assigning tasks, they consider the employee's abilities and their more substantial areas. They are open to different opinions and suggestions and mostly make decisions together. They are also used to provide feedback on the work that takes place daily during the conversation.*

**Keywords:** leadership and styles of leadership, tasks of successful leadership, motivation, efficient organisation, successfulness

## INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is what drives the organisation to success. Leadership is defined by Kovač, Mayer and Jesenko (2004, p. 17) as directing individuals by influencing their behaviour for the joint realisation of set goals. The effectiveness of management is, therefore, highly dependent on the manager and his knowledge, management skills and personal approach.

A successful leader is a person who invests his time and energy in leadership-oriented tasks, as well as in the relationships with the individuals he leads (Irwin, 2019, p. 24). Malik (2009, pp. 173–258) emphasises leadership's effectiveness, which manifests through the fulfilment of tasks such as advocating for goals, organising, making decisions, controlling and encouraging. The manager must have appropriate professional knowledge. In the management process, the extent to which the manager takes care of employee motivation is crucial.

Because of what has been written, motivation is essential, and without it, there is no effective management, employees, or organisation. Therefore, motivating employees is one of the priority tasks and concerns of the manager. Managers motivate employees to be more successful and efficient in their work, and the organisation as a whole will also achieve the set goals. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage employees to perform their tasks easily and efficiently, to use them better and transfer their knowledge, skills and experience to each other. With that, they will successfully achieve the set goals, strengthen their capabilities and realise the constant need for growth and development. An essential prerequisite for realising the organisation's goals, efficiency and comprehensive growth and development is that motivated employees are ready to work, learn, improve, create, develop and research. In any case, motivated people represent the driving force of the organisation (Mihalič, 2010, pp. 4–7).

The article aims to investigate how the manager encourages, motivates and influences employees in the realisation of the organisation's goals and, with his leadership style, influences the performance of the organisation and the achievement of its set goals.

To this end, we have set ourselves the following goals:

- based on the literature, examine and define the leadership, motivation and performance of the organisation,
- research leadership methods and motivational factors that lead to tremendous organisational success,
- conduct a focus group with executive leaders on how they lead and influence employees,
- analyse data using statistical methods,
- present findings and provide possible improvements based on leadership in connection with employees' interest in achieving the organisation's common goals.

As part of the task, we asked ourselves the following research questions:

- RQ1: How does leadership affect employee motivation?
- RQ2: In what ways do managers increase the work performance of employees?

In the theoretical part, we studied our research problem with the help of literature. Namely, we used the descriptive method to describe and explain concepts from leadership, motivation and performance. We used the comparison method to compare theories, leadership styles and processes, and motivational

factors. Finally, with the help of the compilation method, we summarised various authors' knowledge, viewpoints and findings.

In the qualitative part of the research, we implemented the focus group method, with 5 store managers representing the sample. The meeting took place via the ZOOM video conference system. For the implementation, we prepared open-ended questions in advance, which, if necessary, we supplemented with possible sub-questions so that the participants explained their positions, opinions and thoughts.

## **THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Definition of leadership**

Leadership is influencing, motivating and directing employees to successfully perform tasks and realise the organisation's goals (Kralj, 2003, p. 443).

Leadership must focus on work tasks, creating an appropriate division of labour between employees and making decisions within their responsibilities. In addition, it strives for employee satisfaction, establishes open communication and mutual trust between employees, and encourages personal development and greater belonging in the organisation (Senič and Meško Štok, 2016, p. 388).

We interpret leadership as guiding individuals by influencing their behaviour and communication in or between groups to realise set goals (Kovač, Mayer and Jesenko, 2004, p. 17).

Rozman and Kovač (2012, pp. 351–353) describe leadership as a relationship and a process of influence (direction, enthusiasm, communication) by a leader on employees to achieve set goals. It is a process between a leader and followers or those who follow. Leadership depends significantly on the manager and is the most difficult to learn, so it is considered one of the more complex managerial functions. The leader expects to achieve goals, while the associates expect their virtues to be realised through shared pursuits. Managers use various methods of influencing when managing subordinates, such as:

- a rational explanation of the need for a meaningful performance of the task,
- benefits presentation to the subordinate that the manager shows the coordination between the performance, personal development and the help of the associate to perform the task,
- inspiring associates by the manager by referring when assigning a job to the compliance of the derivation with the company's vision and values,
- mentoring, where the manager helps the subordinate with various advice and guidelines on how to carry out the task,
- an exchange approach, where the manager offers the subordinate specific benefits, for example, free hours, in exchange for the performance of the job,
- an incentive when the manager gives help to the subordinate, for example, by providing additional resources for the performance,
- a personal request, where the manager asks an associate to perform a task,
- sneaky approach, where the manager excessively kindly praises the subordinate for gaining his interest in carrying out the job,
- a precise method where the manager refers to procedures, rules and regulations,
- group pressure of the leader with the support of like-minded people on the subordinate to perform the task.

## **Leadership styles**

Based on the leadership style, leadership is responsible for the realisation of the goals of a particular organisation. This responsibility has the right and the need to control the decisions made and the tasks assigned to the individual. Therefore, depending on the leadership style, leadership enables decisions that the job will be realised (Florjančič and Ferjan, 2000, p. 140). Lipičnik (1998, p. 313) adds that each leadership style only results if considered in a specific organisational culture.

In an autocratic leadership style, the leader decides everything himself and demands obedience from subordinates. They are usually not consulted, so employees often fear them (Lipičnik, 1998, p. 315). Such a leadership style is frequently encountered in large and hierarchical organisations, where there is almost no personal contact between the leader and subordinates (Kovač et al., 2004, p. 24). Možina (1994, p. 47) calls such a leader an autocrat, who, in addition to independent decision-making, is characterised by demanding from employee's flawless compliance with instructions, critical judgment, disdain for disputes, and simultaneously pressing direct results.

Bratušek (2009, p. 26) says that teamwork is a group of individuals with a common goal, where all members participate in decision-making and mutual assistance in setting and achieving goals. Bizjak and Petrin (1996, pp. 139–140) add that teamwork is inspired by the principle of »first among equals«, where cooperation is emphasised to realise set common goals. This leadership style is typical in creative and more complex tasks. In this case, the manager is the coordinator of the work activities.

In leadership by exception, the manager does not interfere in the work of the employees, except in cases where something goes wrong; usually when they do not achieve the set goals. The manager gets involved in the employees' work when he wants to change something. In principle, they do not have time to think about rewards as they deal with unclear goals and the uncertain environment in which they operate. Thus, two models were developed. The first one is active when the manager is looking for new methods and rules for more efficient operations, and he gets involved in the work when it does not bring any effect and results. The second is passive, when the manager gets involved in the job when the employees do not follow the goals and, as a result, do not complete their work (Crosby, 1997, p. 81).

Leadership with motivation is described by Lipičnik (1998, p. 313) as a leadership concept that uses the individual's desire for self-affirmation to influence an individual's behaviour. For example, employees are expected to be more active if they can learn and improve at work, have exciting jobs, have a lot of responsibility and independence, and can examine their results. That creates a relationship between the manager and the employees, called a partnership.

## **Management processes in the organisation**

The management process must be divided into leadership and management to achieve the set goals. The leadership process involves organising the work of employees, checking, communicating, giving feedback, directing employees to specific actions, arranging and coordinating tasks, motivating, rewarding for completed work, the possibility of decision-making and joint decision-making, and elimination and resolution of potential conflicts (Kovač et al., 2004, p. 20). Therefore, the leadership process is divided into organising, deciding, planning, controlling and motivating (Bizjak and Petrin, 1996, pp. 141-142).

Bizjak and Petrin (1996, pp. 144–145) believe that organising is one of the most critical managerial tasks. It is necessary to ensure the exciting development of all processes, whereby the goal is the realisation of the planned objectives. Možina (1990, p. 17) defines organising as the goal-directed management of relationships, the connection between components in the organisation and the harmony with the environment. Organising takes place by setting goals, then developing a path that enables the realisation of these goals, and only then designing an organisational plan, followed by their fulfilment and management.

The decision-making process comprises the decision problem, the possible alternatives and the decision. First of all, it is necessary to determine what the manager wants to decide. Decisions can be diverse, but before making a final decision, we must also evaluate and judge all possible options. The decision must be documented appropriately for further monitoring of its implementation. We usually make decisions about using goals, solving problems, doing tasks, etc. We define the problem, apply a problem-solving process, and ensure the appropriate solution. Only then does problem-solving follow, whereby we examine the possibilities of solving them with other procedures. Based on the content, we distinguish between decisions about disposal, that is, about capital, machines, facilities, and decisions about execution, for example, about a specific project, the purchase of new technology, or the sale of production (Bizjak and Petrin, 1996, pp. 148-151).

»Planning is the conscious determination of action based on the anticipation of the future. « It includes the resolution of action goals and the formation of business policy and methods for their realisation. Therefore, goals are an essential factor in organisational performance. Success is thus manifested through goals that must be clear, understandable, feasible, and expressed as a result that depends on work and not as ideals or values (Možina, 1990, p. 16).

Evaluating the adequacy of operation and correcting errors is a control process. In this case, the criteria for assessing correctness must be designed already when planning the goals. By evaluating what has been achieved, we can discover essential deviations from the plan and the causes of variations, ensuring help in improving results (Možina, 1990, p. 17). Bizjak and Petrin (1996, pp. 156–157) also believe excellent and convincing leadership requires supervision. In the leadership process, goals and methods must be determined. We must know what we are controlling and also know the criteria.

Možina (1990, p. 18) presents the motivation process as supporting employees with specific resources, whereby they will perform assigned tasks with pleasure. Encouraging the performance of duties must be related to satisfying the needs of individuals. Positive motivation includes rewards, recognition, and stimulation, while threats and punishments represent negative motivation. Bizjak and Petrin (1996, pp. 160–161) also describe motivation as an essential leadership function, whether positive or negative. Motivations are intended for the individual and must be interesting for the worker; they depend on his values and needs, which are aimed at realising the organisation's goals.

### **Motivation in leadership**

Motivation is a process that takes place according to natural laws in an individual. The essence of motivation is to get individuals to behave in a certain way so that they will do what the »motivator« envisioned. Therefore, the strength and direction of the actions of individuals in the organisation depend on motivation (Meško Štok, 2009, p. 90).

The goal of motivation is for employees to perform their work as efficiently and successfully as possible, as they contribute to the organisation's overall success. It is advantageous if employees are motivated and desire work, education, research, improvement, development and personal growth. All this is necessary for the realisation of the goals, development and growth of the organisation. Motivated employees represent the organisation's driving force, which depends on the employees' success (Mihalič, 2006, pp. 6-7).

As a motivator, a manager must know the needs of his employees and be aware that each individual is motivated by different motives, desires, interests, attitudes and goals. A successful manager takes care of employees to a great extent by getting to know them and following their needs. This way, it identifies the factors influencing an individual's motivation (Cimerman et al., 2003, p. 58). For employees to be successful and efficient in performing their tasks, it is the manager's task to encourage, inspire, support, encourage, inspire, reward, offer help, congratulate on achievements, praise, show trust and, above all, mutually motivate employees within the group. As a result, the leader increases individual satisfaction and develops a positive team atmosphere (Mihalič, 2014, p. 39). Nedelko (2013, p. 46) adds that it is an essential part of leadership to motivate employees to achieve the organisation's goals. For managers, it is vital to know the behaviour of subordinates because, in this way, they will be better and more successfully motivated to work.

Because of what has been written, motivation is essential, and without it, there is no effective leadership, employees, or organisation. Therefore, motivating employees is one of the priority tasks and concerns of the manager. Managers encourage employees to be more successful and efficient in achieving the set goals. Therefore, it is necessary to motivate employees to perform their tasks efficiently and to use and transfer their knowledge, skills and experience to each other. With that, they will successfully achieve the set goals, strengthen their capabilities and realise the constant need for growth and development. A vital prerequisite for realising the organisation's goals, efficiency and comprehensive growth and development is that employees must be motivated to work, learn, improve, create, develop and research. In any case, motivated people represent the driving force of the organisation (Mihalič, 2010, pp. 4–7).

### **Approaches to leadership and necessary personality characteristics of leaders**

A good leader is a person who listens to what others say, is an example to his employees, stands behind his words, gives understandable instructions, is open to suggestions, knows how to take appropriate action, motivates his employees and plans and organise work (Bizjak and Petrin, 1996, p. 140). Kovač et al. (2004, pp. 53–55) add that successful managers can multitask. Among the more important character traits, they highlight dominance, which is considered an internal need for power and authority over others. For a good leader, openness is also an important characteristic, which is the basis of communication, relaxation, fun, creating mutual relationships, emotional expressiveness, cooperation, making new acquaintances easily, etc. A noteworthy feature is creativity, manifested in successful leaders who do not want to submit, explain what they think, tackle tasks precisely and are stubbornly determined.

Možina (1994, p. 27) believes that the performance of the organisation is influenced by the capabilities of the manager, such as:

- Technical skills: Emphasis is placed on using special procedures, methods and techniques for performing particular tasks, with special knowledge, analytical skills and the ability to solve problems in the professional field.

- Interpersonal human resources leadership skills: The mentioned skills are the basis for working with people and the success of work within the group. A leader can work with people to encourage decision-making and decisive and fearless expression, while it is important not to humiliate them. Human resource management skills include leadership, communication, motivation and problem-solving.
- Ability to think conceptually: Knowledge enables understanding of the organisation as a whole and the relationships within its parts. Conceptual skills, including information processing, planning, and long-term method design, are more challenging to develop.
- Communication skills: Leaders must be skilled in communication, as it involves perceiving thoughts, feelings and information. Communication skills can be oral or written, verbal or non-verbal.

### **Organisational performance**

Performance is the degree to which an organisation's goals are achieved and means doing the right things that lead to performance. In this case, consumers must determine success objectively outside the organisation. Therefore, success can be defined more expediently as the realisation of objectively set goals (Rozman and Kovač, 2012, pp. 81-82). We distinguish several types of performance.

The financial performance of the organisation is most often measured based on profitability, which is a schematic factor, as it refers to the previous organisation's performance. After the summit, the market conditions in the working environment are increasingly improving due to the development of new technologies. Nevertheless, organisations still heavily rely on financial data to facilitate control and coordination of activities. That is mainly an assessment of the realised financial results of the previous period. Still, the economic evaluation cannot be the most appropriate performance criterion due to the leadership and employees' various motivational factors and interests (Jagodič, 2018, p. 88).

Like financial performance, marketing performance is a crucial indicator of business performance. Market performance can be demonstrated by increasing market share. It has been proven to positively impact marketing channels and develop the company's efficiency and responsiveness. In this way, the company's market share increases. Cooperative and coordinated behaviour in networks can improve financial performance and increase market share by sharing market information and controlling benefits (Chi and Seock-Jin, 2017, pp. 19-40).

Gruban (2002) believes that current methods are too focused on measuring and evaluating performance in the past but do not provide practical guidelines for the organisation's further activities. In his opinion, it would be good to adapt the approaches and change the methods so that they predict future achievements based on previous results and the obtained and studied information. The critical criteria are related to the motivation and satisfaction of employees since the organisation's success depends precisely on them. Today, organisations cannot create a competitive advantage based on new, technologically advanced and innovative products, as competitors can offer this. Still, it is precisely the employees of the organisation who represent the factor of its competitive advantage and success.

Organisational performance and the techniques used in management and measurement represent important areas in theory and practice. Performance measurement primarily includes implementing and monitoring the organisational strategy, which regulates the essential relationship between the stated goal and the obtained results. Organisational systems for measuring organisational performance enable

managers to unite employees and departments with the same purpose and connect corporate strategies with managing the organisation's operations. Thus, the performance evaluation system should also contain various dimensions so that they are all consistent with the same goals of the organisation. With this purpose, the organisation's performance evaluation system should introduce a review of the organisation as a whole to encompass all the essential factors of the organisation (Carneiro-da-Cunha, Hourneaux and Correa, 2016, pp. 224-225).

### **Definition of the research questions asked**

The basis from which we drew the research questions is how the manager encourages, motivates and influences employees in realising the organisation's goals.

The first research question, »how does the way of leadership affect the motivation of individuals« is based on the assumption that a manager is effective when he invests his time and energy in tasks aimed at leadership and relationships with the individuals he leads. The manager manages a healthy and pleasant atmosphere in the organisation, but knowing that a hostile atmosphere can quickly arise is necessary. In this case, the manager's job is to remove disruptive individuals, although such individuals are pursuing goals that are important to the organisation (Irwin, 2019, pp. 24–137).

The second research question, »in what ways do managers increase the work performance of employees« comes from the manager's ability to encourage, support and inspire employees, help, lead, praise and congratulate them on performing their work more efficiently (Mihalič, 2014, p. 39).

We sought answers to the posed research questions from several authors who researched the field and, of course, also with our primary research, which we conducted with the help of a focus group.

## **RESEARCH**

### **Presentation of research**

In the article, we researched leadership, the characteristics of a good leader and approaches to leadership, motivation in leadership, and the organisation's success. We assumed that through qualitative research, we would collect data that would help us discuss and provide answers to the research questions. Furthermore, we believed that participants would give truthful answers. Otherwise, we saw a limitation in this, as dishonest answers would reduce the credibility of the results. We have also assumed that the already collected data of the conducted research and the findings of other authors are adequate, and we will not check them.

In the qualitative part of the research, we implemented the focus group method, with 5 store managers representing the sample. The meeting took place via the ZOOM video conference system. For the implementation, we prepared open-ended questions in advance, which we supplemented with possible sub-questions when the participants needed to explain their positions, opinions and thoughts. The discussion was recorded with the participant's consent, and the debate transcript helped us analyse it. We then examined the collected data with the help of qualitative content analysis - determining categories, which led to data coding. The final results were related to the specifics of managing certain stores, and the results cannot be generalised from the perspective of managing organisations.



## **Discussion of the research questions posed**

Our first research question RQ1 was: how does leadership style affect employee motivation?

First, managers say they have a good, honest, respectful and fair relationship with their employees. They like to be able to turn to them when they have a problem and to be able to confide in them. Some people have an individual in their team who can disrupt the whole system, but this is a challenge because they learn to be a fair leader from such an individual. When they plan and organise work, they assign tasks according to employees' abilities, what they prefer to do, what their strengths are, and make sure they are not overloaded or overworked. In making proposals and decisions, they tend to work in teams. They seek to consult together, making joint proposals and decisions. Except where matters are specific to their function, the manager's function, then they manage it themselves. They also note that employees are much more motivated to work as a team.

That implies that the leader uses teamwork. A team consists of a group of individuals with a common goal, where all members participate in decision-making, goal-setting and goal-achievement (Bratušek, 2009, p. 26). It is vital that the manager knows the needs of their employees and enables them to meet them. It is essential to realise that everyone is motivated by different things. One person's motivator is a reward, and another's a punishment. A successful leader must be committed to their employees, getting to know them and monitoring their needs (Cimerman et al., 2003, p. 56). Covey (2000, pp. 51-52) highlights the effective distribution of tasks to subordinates. It believes staff should be given clear and precise descriptions of their duties and responsibilities. To this end, clear targets and a timetable for achieving performance shall be set.

Employees feel safe when they trust their manager and work most effectively. A successful leader creates motivation together with their employees. Employees tend to be motivated and incentivised in intangible ways when they respect their manager and care about the organisation and its goals. Managers should give praise when they feel that an award is warranted. It must also be able to give criticism when it wants employees to change their behaviour. The essential determinant of job satisfaction is the interpersonal relationships between employees. The best motivation is the intrinsic satisfaction of the employee that they feel capable, proud, and successful and are growing with the organisation (Kim, 2001, pp. 52-53).

The second research question asked in RQ2 was: how do managers improve employee performance?

Managers feel that a relaxed working environment motivates employees most to work. It means a lot to them to have a good and fair relationship with their employees and to feel safe and accepted. They also mentioned humour during breaks to make employees more relaxed. Most managers work as a team, as employees are more motivated to work this way than individually. For some, employee performance is also monetised through incentives and rewards. We expected all managers to mention praise as an important motivational factor, but in the end, only one person mentioned it. We also asked the remaining managers about their views, and they were unanimous that praise significantly impacts employee performance, emphasising that it should not be too frequent but should be given on the occasion of a significant project. They added that it is necessary to feel when it is appropriate to give praise.

Mihalič (2010, p. 15) argues that praise has a solid motivational effect on employees and notes that managers do not use it enough in practice. It would help to praise your employees for every successful

activity, task and behaviour in line with the work's quality, scale and importance. On the one hand, praise should not be skimmed on, but on the other hand, it should not be too frequent, as it will reduce employees' effectiveness. Templar (2009, pp. 86-87) agrees that employees should be praised for their performance. However, it must be submitted immediately after the successful completion of the assignment or, at the latest, the following day. Praise should be personal, so the leader should use the pronoun »I« to avoid the term »leadership«.

Alongside praise, there are also monetary rewards, which reward job performance, accuracy, ingenuity, capacity, targets met, excellent results, unique achievements, etc. It is recommended to use them after completing a project, training, education, further training, sales growth, new product development, new customer acquisition, etc. In this context, it is reasonable that cash bonuses are derived from a proportionate part of the salary linked to the employee's performance and efficiency. The higher the proportional salary share, the more significant the motivational impact of wages (Mihalič, 2010, pp. 13-14). Rogelj (2003, p. 25) argues that employees are more motivated to work when the manager observes employees doing a good job, encourages them, is a good listener, and trusts and believes in them.

### **Discussion of findings and suggestions**

The survey shows that managers are committed to teamwork. Employees prefer to work as a team, as it motivates them to work. Managers respect and trust employees. They are open to different opinions and suggestions, and most decisions are taken together. They consider the individual's skills, which are used as a basis for assigning tasks, and also pay attention to their areas of strength. Regular feedback is given daily during the conversation. We suggest that managers use the "sandwich" technique. That means that they start with the individual's positive qualities, continue with the negative and end with the positive. We also suggest that all managers introduce self-evaluation and annual interviews. That would allow staff to review the past year with their manager and to thoroughly examine where there are potential gaps and where improvements could be made. It is also crucial for employees to tell their manager what they miss at work, what they aspire to and what they want.

### **CONCLUSION**

The success of an organisation depends on both the leader and the employees. What matters is the leader's success in leading and motivating employees to achieve shared success. In addition, the employees' skills and their interest in the job are also essential.

A leader is successful when they know their role, understand their tasks, have the proper knowledge, give clear instructions, are open to suggestions, can take responsibility, motivate employees and organise work. It is a role model for employees and offers them continuous development and learning opportunities. A leader's job is to invest their time in tasks focusing on leadership and relationships with the people they lead. They ensure a relaxed atmosphere in the organisation, are committed to achieving objectives, organise and supervise work, take decisions and motivate employees.

Our survey results showed that managers have a good, fair, trusting and respectful relationship with their employees. They stress that communication and trust are vital to them. They work as a team, especially when making proposals and taking decisions. Above all, managers need to hear the views of their employees. When assigning tasks, they consider employees' previous knowledge, experience and skills and pay attention to areas of work so that employees perform duties in an area that is close and

familiar to them. They distribute tasks evenly among employees so that one doesn't have too much to do and another too little to ensure they are not overloaded while working. Managers believe that some employees are most motivated by a relaxed working environment, while others are motivated by money in the form of incentives and rewards. They notice that they are more motivated when they work as a team than individually. They also mentioned praise, which they believe should be given on important projects and tasks well done, but not too often.

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