LEADERSHIP STYLES IN QAZAQTAN'S ORGANISATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Since gaining independence, Qazaqtan's business sector, as part of the global economic system, has been developing and becoming increasingly complex. The country's economy is undergoing significant changes, which are reflected in the expansion and complexity of businesses, the adoption of new technologies, and the emergence of new directions. Consequently, the perception of leadership from a managerial perspective is also evolving.

The main objective of this research is to examine the value-cultural model of leadership behaviour, leadership styles, and their impact on corporate culture and organisational communication systems. Data was collected through surveys and interviews.

The findings indicate that in Qazaqtan, the concept of a leader is most often associated with a formal manager holding a specific position. However, leadership styles across organisations vary by economic sector. In the public and quasi-public sectors, a rigid hierarchy and adherence to rules and regulations prevail. In contrast, the private sector tends to be more flexible and focused on enhancing competitiveness.

At the same time, leadership styles are gradually shifting. More leaders are beginning to adopt a democratic approach. Nevertheless, there remains a need for further development of leadership competencies among managers, including training in delegation, as well as the advancement of strategic management concepts, employee engagement, and motivation.

Keywords: Leadership, Effective Leader, Behavior Model, Key Competencies, Management, Human Resources.

INTRODUCTION

The development of a competitive national economy in today's VUCA world is impossible without the advancement of leadership, which remains one of the key conditions for achieving the long-term strategic goals of both the state and individual organisations. Effective leaders inspire employees with enthusiasm, foster engagement, and motivate them to put in extra effort for the benefit of the organisation. In contrast, weak leadership has the opposite effect: it demotivates teams, leading to increased staff turnover and absenteeism—both due to sick leave and unexplained absences (Hay Group, 2011).

Qazaqtan is a young, dynamically developing country in which the Soviet type of leadership has been replaced by the Kazakh type of leadership. And this emerging domestic leadership style is the subject of various studies (Kuppaeva and Zhaksybekov, 2014; Jason and Lewis, 2019).

As the historical analysis of sources in Qazaqtan shows, the semantic definition of leadership is more political in nature (Parker and Tazhina, 2012; Ermekov, 2013; Tazhina et al., 2018; Silvan, 2020; Jussupova et al., 2020; IFC, 2022). In other words, leadership is viewed from a

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more global perspective, in which attention is more focused on government and political governance, rather than on the business context.

At the same time, we believe there is a need to examine the influence of managers' behaviour on organisational management processes in order to identify correlations between leadership style and the organisation's managerial and operational dynamics.

Based on this premise, the primary objective of this study is to explore the value-cultural model of leadership behaviour, leadership styles, and their impact on corporate culture and organisational communication systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on research conducted by various authors, leadership is recognised as essential for fulfilling an organisation's mission and achieving its strategic goals (Harris and Spillane, 2008). To date, eight leadership styles have been thoroughly described in the literature: democratic, authoritarian, strategic, transformational, transactional, bureaucratic, situational and non-intervention style (Laissez-Faire)[2]. Each style has its own advantages and disadvantages. Leadership skills are generally viewed as a combination of characteristics, traits, and behaviours that leaders employ to interact with their subordinates (Mitonga-Monga and Coetzee, 2012).

Leaders play a significant role in shaping a company's corporate culture. According to Cameron and Quinn (2006), depending on the dominant type of corporate culture within an organisation, leaders adopt different roles. In organisations with a hierarchical culture, leaders act as coordinators and organisers. In market-oriented cultures, leaders often assume roles as firm and demanding managers, competitors, or producers. In family-type cultures, leaders serve as mentors or educators. In project-based or adhocratic structures, leaders take on the roles of innovators and entrepreneurs.

What, then, determines leadership effectiveness? According to several scholars, it primarily depends on possessing the appropriate set of competencies. However, there is no universal set. For instance, based on a study of over 1,000 leaders, the Center for Creative Leadership identified 13 competencies, five of which were considered critical: effective communication, performance and results orientation, influence, strategic perspective, and the ability to work across boundaries. According to a McKinsey (2016) study, each level of organisational development requires a specific set of leadership skills that must be mastered.

Thus, the literature review revealed that, first, there is a wide variety of leadership styles; second, the choice of leadership style is influenced by numerous factors, including the level of organisational development; third, leadership competencies are a dynamic construct that evolves alongside personal development and changes in the external environment; and fourth, leaders' behaviour has a significant impact on organisational success.

RESEARCH METHODS

The theoretical basis
In our research, we relied on the concept of Cameron and Quinn (2006), which identifies four types of corporate culture: family, project, hierarchical and market. Based on this concept, we

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[2] Top 6 Types of Leadership Styles for Managers. https://www.peoplegoal.com/blog/effective-leadership-styles-for-managers-in-2019; Vasilescu, M. (2019). Leadership Styles and Theories. In An Effective Management Activity, Annals - Economy Series, Vol. 4, 47-52, https://ideas.repec.org/a/cbu/jrnlec/y2019v4p47-52.html

have attempted to determine the type of corporate culture in Qazaqtan organisations and the dominant leadership style.

Methods

The research employed two primary methods:

- An expert survey of executives from various Qazaqtani organisations;
- In-depth interviews with experienced managers and HR professionals.

A total of 56 respondents participated in the survey, the majority of whom were line managers (61%). Most respondents were between 30 and 50 years old, and two-thirds were women. The survey was conducted online. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of three sections:

- An assessment of leadership style and organisational characteristics;
- Identification of the predominant type of corporate culture;
- Determination of the most appropriate behavioural styles for managers within their organisation.

Additionally, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with the aim of:

- Identifying the actual value-cultural model of managerial behaviour across different sectors of the economy (public, quasi-public, and private);
- Determining managerial strengths and areas for development;
- Identifying the most common type of corporate culture in Qazaqtani organisations.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: An authoritarian leadership style and a family-hierarchical type of corporate culture will prevail in the public and quasi-public sectors, whereas a family-market type of corporate culture will dominate in the private sector.

Hypothesis 2: The majority of leaders in Qazaqtani organisations perceive themselves primarily as professionals focused on setting and solving tactical tasks, achieving results, and managing deadlines, rather than as managers who achieve results through others by continuously enhancing team efficiency through feedback, motivation, and leadership development.

Hypothesis 3: Most leadership development programmes in Qazaqtan are focused on managing oneself, others, and the organisation, with the leader being viewed more as a manager emphasising control rather than the development of people.

RESULTS

Corporate culture

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that a hierarchical type of corporate culture—with elements of both family and market cultures—prevails in the public and quasi-public sectors. In contrast, the private sector is characterised by the dominance of market and family types of corporate culture.

These findings imply that managerial behaviour must align with these cultural frameworks: maintaining a clear hierarchy, ensuring accountability, assigning specific tasks to each employee, focusing on performance and results, and closely monitoring execution.

Moreover, it was found that Qazaqtani organisations tend to prioritise operational tasks over articulating a clear strategic vision or developing a career management system. Managers also demonstrate relatively low levels of focus on developing subordinates through feedback and

continuous learning.

In terms of motivation systems, organisations do have mechanisms to reward new ideas and promote a motivational climate. However, involvement in and contribution to decision-making processes are not consistently incentivised. This suggests that decision-making is typically centralised, with leaders setting goals and tasks independently, without engaging subordinates in dialogue.

It is also important to note that not all organisations have established systems for leadership development. At the same time, there is strong evidence of team cohesion and mutual support among colleagues during difficult situations, reflecting the traits of a family-oriented organisational culture. To further support these findings, the following section presents data from in-depth interviews focused on four areas: teamwork, operational activity, motivation systems, and feedback (see Table 1).

Leadership as management

In the Qazaqtani organisations that participated in the study, the highest ratings (responses "I agree, at the moment this is the case") were given to factors such as customer orientation, clear goal-setting by management, and corporate culture. Just over half of the respondents (56%) indicated that work within the organisation is structured in a way that each employee has a clear list of tasks, and immediate supervisors clearly set goals and assign tasks. These behavioural patterns are consistent with the indicative leadership style described in the Hersey-Blanchard model.[3]

Although the survey results revealed that managers employ various leadership styles, the majority are result-oriented, achieving goals by mobilising all available resources, assuming individual responsibility for outcomes, and focusing on a strategic vision for solving the challenges they face. It was also noted that more than half of the managers adapt their work style according to the situation and are open to learning and implementing innovations. Furthermore, 69% of respondents indicated that their organisations' management is committed to the continuous improvement of customer service. On the other hand, the lowest ratings were found in areas such as strategy translation, HR process development, and communication and interaction.

It is also evident that most managers perceive subordinate management primarily as task-setting and control, rather than focusing on development and improvement. However, this approach is no longer sufficient in today's rapidly changing world. In order to survive and thrive, it is essential to embrace change and improvement, involving managers at all levels in the decision-making process within the organisation.

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[3] https://trainingtechnology.ru/situacionnoe-liderstvo

Table 1. The results of the expert interviews on the 4 criteria.

Criteria	Characteristic		
	General	Quasi-public and public sector	The private sector
Teamwork	Most managers work with a team, but not in all organisations managers are directly involved in cohesion and take personal part, rather it is provided for within the organisation, as already established processes of working with the team. It also depends on the level of development of the organisation and the goals that it faces, at the stage of formation or major organisational changes, more pressing tasks are being solved to a greater extent, for example, related to the regulation of wage systems. Considering the personal involvement of managers in the life of the team, it can be concluded that managers are divided into those who: − personally participates in events and moves the team towards the goal; − it does this formally, (experts especially highlighted the quasi-public and public sectors); − In principle, he/she does not participate in such events, putting these issues on the shoulders of HR.		
Operational activities	In companies, everything depends on the level of the leadership position, the top management primarily notes the solution of strategic tasks, the rest descends to lower levels. However, there are many managers who solve more operational tasks, and there is a tendency towards micromanagement.	Most quasi-public and public sector organisations have development strategies, missions, and values, while it was noted that most of these are declarative in nature.	Private organisations do not always have prescribed values, but recently this trend has been supported in these organisations, and at a certain stage of development, when the company has some experience in the market.
Motivation system	Considering the motivation system used by modern managers in Qazaqtani organisations, they most often note financial incentives, which include both bonuses, a bonus part, and training at the expense of the company, while it is worth noting that there are still issues related to subjectivity or excesses in evaluating the effectiveness of employees and, in general, the motivation system in different organisations.	Interview: in most quasi-public and public sector organisations, there is a well-established system of financial motivation, which is based on KPIs. An important part of the incentive is the non-financial encouragement of employees, including awards, letters of appreciation, regardless of the sector. To a greater extent, managers take part in awards and public events related to the presentation of awards.[4]	In private organisations, everything is simpler, fees are paid in accordance with an oral or written agreement based on the results of the work. The opinion was also highlighted that the motivation system depends on the experience of the manager.

[4] It should be noted that a slightly different result was obtained during the screening. The decision on awarding is made based on the evaluation of the employee's performance based on the results of a certain period. At the same time, in some public sector organisations there is no built-in performance assessment system, decisions on bonuses and promotions are made by the direct supervisor, which can affect the objectivity and fairness of awards and recognition, which consequently reduces the motivating effect.

	However, in both the public and quasi-public sectors, employees are cautious and selective in offering new ideas and suggestions, as they understand that in the future, they will be responsible for the successful implementation of this task. Due to the complexity and scale of the task, as well as the lack of support, these methods lose their motivational effect, since it is more profitable for employees not to propose an idea than to take full responsibility for its implementation. Some companies in the quasi-public sector noted the need to develop a more personalised motivation programme, in particular, instead of diplomas and awards, which are formal in nature, to offer the opportunity to take training courses of interest and receive certifications.		
Feedback	According to the results of an in-depth interview, the feedback system in different organisations is built in different ways, but there are gaps in providing feedback to employees. In the quasi-public sector, a similar system works, but the issue of quality remains. In the private sector, feedback takes on an oral form most often, as it is necessary to quickly solve the problem, understand if everything is correct and move on.		

Strategy broadcast and strategy trust

According to the results of the study, only 42% of respondents believe that management consistently communicates the organisation's strategic directions, policies, and values to employees, while 46% always trust the strategic decisions made.

The highest ratings were given to indicators such as "management sets a good example for its employees" and "managers motivate and energize others to perform their job better." These results suggest that managers position themselves as leaders who lead by personal example and act as mentors. However, there was limited progress in providing regular feedback to subordinates, as well as in developing a clear strategic vision for the next 5-10 years.

Processes and procedures, interactions and communications

Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that reporting and evaluation are regular procedures in the organisation's operations. One-third of respondents also noted that the organisation has a control system in place. However, communication channels for creating a clear understanding of organisational development and management processes are underdeveloped.

Leadership competencies

The study identified the following key competencies of a modern leader: leadership, strategic thinking, effective communication, as well as the ability to introduce changes, impact and influence, and the development of both, oneself and others.

The five most relevant values that a modern leader should uphold are: professionalism, rationalism, high ethical standards (including decency and honesty), sensitivity toward subordinates, and business efficiency.

Based on the survey results, we categorised domestic managers as outlined in Table 2.

According to the Leadership Maturity model,[5] Qazaqtani organisations are positioned between the Basic Leadership and Integrated Leadership stages. This conclusion is supported by the fact that 50% of respondents reported that their organisations' current practice is to consider internal candidates for senior positions, while 25% noted the presence of a clear recruitment and career development system.

Table 2. Categories of managers in Qazaqtani organisations.

Public and quasi-public sector:	Private sector:
1. Managers with extensive work experience, with a broad strategic vision, delegating tasks to subordinates, achieving goals by activating available resources, creating an atmosphere in which everyone tries to prove themselves as much as possible. However, they do not always provide feedback to subordinates (market culture prevails).	1. Young managers who use modern working methods, are open to everything new, flexible, and focus on daily work, but lack sufficient experience and strategic vision (project culture prevails).
2. Line managers: focus on daily work, achieve goals, use proven methods, and are afraid to take risks (hierarchical market culture).	2. Managers who have work experience, understand the development strategy, are flexible, while focusing on achieving goals and an atmosphere of mutual assistance (family-market).
	3. Managers who rely on already proven working methods, motivate with bonuses, and are independently responsible for the result, with little work experience (market-hierarchical).

[5] https://action.deloitte.com/insight/1122/the-leadership-maturity-model-what-level-is-your-organization

4. Managers who have extensive work experience, while using old methods, are not flexible, share responsibility with the team, are focused only on results and create competition in the team (hierarchical culture prevails)

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the conducted research, it can be concluded that Hypotheses 1 and 2 are confirmed, while Hypothesis 3 has been partially confirmed.

In general, the following conclusions can be drawn from the research findings:

- in Qazaqtan, the concept of a leader is most commonly associated with a formal manager holding a specific position.
- the leadership style in Qazaqtani organisations varies depending on the economic sector.
- in the public and quasi-public sectors, a rigid hierarchy prevails, with a strong emphasis on compliance with norms and rules. managers in these sectors tend to focus on maintaining standards, are precise and attentive to details, and are willing to work on improving methods and processes.
- the private sector is characterised by a more flexible organisational and managerial structure, with a strong focus on increasing competitiveness.
- there is a slow transition in leadership styles within Qazaqtani organisations, with managers beginning to adopt a democratic leadership style aimed at creating a more favorable team environment and enhancing productivity.
- in the private sector, the organisational and managerial culture largely depends on the leadership of the first head, whereas in the public and quasi-public sectors, the culture is influenced not only by senior managers but also by all line managers.
- forecasting is largely viewed as a process of task substitution and setting, rather than as a tool for long-term development.
- a gap has been identified between the strategic goals understood by managers and subordinates. while goals are cascaded down to subordinates, due to a lack of a clear strategic vision and understanding of the goals' significance, they are often either not achieved or achieved with shortcomings.
- feedback mechanisms are underdeveloped, as most managers limit interactions to the minimum necessary. as a result, motivation, support, and emotional contact are not prevalent, while strictness, distance, and task-focused communication are more common.
- team spirit and mutual support are well-developed across all types of organisations.
- experts highlight that the key competencies required by a modern leader include leadership, strategic thinking, effective communication, the ability to implement changes, and the development of both one and others.
- the main values that could serve as a strong foundation for successful leadership include professionalism, high ethical standards, decency and honesty, rationalism, and sensitivity toward employees.

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