

THE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES IN SERBIAN ORGANIZATIONS: GENDER INFLUENCE

Vesna Stojanović-Aleksić^{1*}, Milan Stamenković², Marina Milanović²

¹University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Economics,
Department for business administration and management, Kragujevac, Serbia

²University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Economics,
Department for statistics and informatics, Kragujevac, Serbia

*vesnasa@kg.ac.rs

Abstract

The objective of this study is to explore the role and relevance of leaders' gender in their choice of dominant leadership style in Serbian companies and institutions. The categories we use in our research are based on the two most popular classifications of leadership styles, established in Iowa and Ohio studies (which identified authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire style and task-oriented or relationship-oriented leadership style respectively). For data collection we used a 31-statement questionnaire, applying the method of proportional stratified random sampling. The sample contained responses of 79 randomly selected respondents (leaders) from randomly selected organizations in Serbia. To determine whether there is statistically significant dependence between the identified dominant leadership styles and leaders' gender we applied the Chi-square test of independence as a quantitative statistical method. Our results confirmed statistically significant interdependence between the observed pairs of categorical variables. More precisely, they indicated that female leaders incline towards task-oriented and authoritarian leadership styles, while male leaders prefer relationship-oriented and democratic styles.

Key words: leadership, leadership styles, leaders' gender, organizational behaviour, Chi-square test of independence.

АНАЛИЗА ЛИДЕРСКИХ СТИЛОВА У СРПСКИМ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈАМА: УТИЦАЈ ПОЛА

Апстракт

Циљ ове студије је да истражи улогу и значај пола лидера у избору доминантног лидерског стила у српским компанијама и институцијама. Категорије које смо користили у нашем истраживању засноване су на две најпопуларније класификације стилова вођства, установљене у Ајова и Охио студијама (које су идентификоване као аутократски, демократски и *laissez-faire* стил, те стил оријентисан на задатак или међуљудске односе, тим редом). За прикупљање података користили смо 31 упит-

ник, применом методе пропорционалног стратификованог случајног узорка. Узорак садржи одговоре 79 случајно одабраних испитаника (лидера) из случајно одабраних организација у Србији. Да би се утврдило да ли постоји статистички значајна зависност између идентификованих доминантних стилова лидерства и пола лидера, примењен је хи-квадрат тест независности, као квантитативна статистичка метода. Наши резултати су потврдили статистички значајну међузависност посматраних парова категоријалних варијабли. Тачније, они указују на то да су жене лидери склоне ка ауторитарним стиловима вођства и стиловима оријентисаним на задатак, док су мушкарци лидери они који радије бирају демократске стилове вођства.

Кључне речи: лидерство, лидерски стилови, пол лидера, организационо понашање, хи-квадрат тест.

INTRODUCTION

Competitiveness and unpredictability of world markets has made leadership, specific integrative mechanism which promotes the stability of an organization and unity in employees' attitudes and efforts to realize defined business objectives, one of the most valuable resources of business organization (Stojanović Aleksić, 2007). The essence of leadership is to help establish and develop a clear and complete system in order to identify and activate the organization's resources, among which human resources stand out as the most important (Kiboss & Jemiryott, 2014).

Experts have for years been attempting to explain the complex relations between leaders and other organization members. In their studies, they have examined variables such as power, trust, task- or relationship-orientation, and participation in decision-making, etc., as basic parameters of these relations (Stojanović-Aleksić, 2007). Their efforts resulted in different leadership styles classifications based on factor categories identified as dominant in a leader's behaviour and his/her relationships with the followers. Generally speaking, leadership style can be defined as the manner in which relationships between leaders and followers are established, or how the leader provides both, direction for the followers, and motivation for them to accept a particular model of behaviour. In other words, leadership style can be understood as leaders' dominant pattern of behaviour, or their response or reaction to a large number of various, both interior and exterior, factors (Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson, 2013).

In addition, numerous studies have been conducted in order to provide a deeper insight into leadership behaviour in different organizational and national contexts by identifying key factors that determine the adoption of a particular leadership style. Generally, which particular style a leader will choose depends on a number of personal characteristics, his/her abilities, social surroundings, staff characteristics, business environment, as well as other cultural, ethnical and historical aspects. Leaders' gender, as one of the personal characteristics, in relation to leadership style has recently

been explored in many theoretical and empirical studies, and produced interesting debates in referent literature and academic community (see: Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson, 2013). Empirical evidence accumulated over the years reveals a relatively unclear picture displaying ambiguous findings, and in some cases, contradictory conclusions.

Majority of these leadership studies apply the classifications obtained from the earliest and most famous studies in the area of leadership. More precisely, they use the Iowa studies, according to which leadership styles are classified as authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire style, and Ohio studies, where a distinction is made between the behaviour of leaders oriented to either tasks or relationship (i.e. employees) (for details, see: Stojanović Aleksić, 2007; Dulčić & Vrdoljak-Raguž, 2007; Gonos & Gallo, 2013)

It is exactly these classifications (Iowa and Ohio studies) that we used in this empirical research. The objective of our study was to investigate the role and relevance of leaders' gender for adopting a specific dominant leadership style in Serbian companies and institutions. More precisely, our research objective is twofold and explores the following two research questions:

(1) *Is there a statistically significant dependence between a leader's gender and his/her dominant leadership style, as defined by Ohio studies (task- or relationship-oriented);*

(2) *Is there a statistically significant dependence between a leader's gender and his/her dominant leadership style, as defined by Iowa studies (authoritarian, democratic or laissez-faire).*

This research is all the more important since empirical studies of leadership, leadership styles and influence of certain personality characteristics on the adoption of particular leadership behaviour in Serbian organizations and institutions are relatively rare (Mitrović, Milisavljević, Cosić, Leković, Grubić-Nesić & Ivanišević, 2011; Glomazić, 2011), although there is a number of papers exploring these issues from theoretical perspective (Lojić, Karović, & Đurić Atanasievski, 2013). Results of our study will contribute to a better understanding of this topic, and possibly, serve as a useful basis for evaluation and comparison of the results of future similar studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Considering that leadership style is a set of distinctive behavioural aspects adopted by individuals in formal leading positions which directly determines how the leader treats, communicates and cooperates with the followers in order to motivate and direct them towards successful goal implementation within an organization (Sawati, Anwar, & Majoka, 2013),

and that it is a result of the influence of numerous personal, social, situational and other factors, it is not surprising that scientists, scholars and experts are increasingly interested in studying and understanding this complex aspect of leadership. This increased interest also resulted in a large number of research papers focusing on whether the dominant behaviour style of female leaders differs from that practiced by male leaders. In other words, do differences in the attitudes and behaviour of members of the opposite sexes determine the selection and adoption of a particular style of leadership in modern organizations?

Eagly and Johnson (Eagly & Johnson, 1990) conducted a meta-analysis of 162 different studies (published between 1961 and 1987) investigating relationship between the classical leadership styles classifications and leaders' gender. Their results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female leaders when task- or relationship-oriented leadership is concerned. However, when it comes to classification into authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire style, they found that female leaders more often adopt a democratic style, as opposed to male leaders, who show a greater tendency towards authoritarian style of leadership (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992). These somewhat inconsistent findings are in line with more recent results obtained by Mitrić-Aćimović et al. (Mitrić-Aćimović, Vujić, & Dostanić, 2012) and Kotur and Anbazhagan (2014).

The detection of dependence between leadership styles and leaders' gender brought about a new (stereotypical) distinction between typically 'male' (task-oriented and authoritarian) and 'female' (relationship-oriented and democratic) leadership styles (for more details, see: Dulčić & Vrdoljak-Raguž, 2007; Elias, 2013). More specifically, while 'male' styles of leadership are primarily focused on tasks and their execution (interpersonal relationships having secondary role), 'female' leadership styles are characterized by a soft approach in managing and motivating followers (Pološki, 2003) and based on cooperation, understanding, developed interpersonal skills, encouragement of participation, support and help, willingness to delegate power, teamwork, etc., (Rosenber, 1990). These terms for leadership styles reflect stereotypes regarding typically 'male' behaviour (e.g. aggressiveness, initiative, independence, dominance, rationality) or 'female' characteristics (concern for others, generosity, empathy, understanding, affection) (Elias, 2013). Needless to say, 'female' style is not only peculiar to women, nor is 'male' the exclusive style of men (Dulčić & Vrdoljak-Raguž, 2007).

Many researchers, however, disagree with the conclusions above, and point out that there are no differences (or that they are very small and negligible) in the way that male and female leaders lead and guide their followers (Van Engen, Van der Leeden, & Willemsen, 2001; Van Engen & Willemsen, 2004; Noor, Uddin, & Shamaly, 2011). In their opinion,

distinction between ‘male’ and ‘female’ leadership styles is not the result of fundamental gender differences (since every leader displays characteristics of both styles), but mainly a consequence of the organizational context where leaders work, the type of organization (typically ‘male’/‘female’ organizations¹), as well as the methodological framework within which the research is set (Dobbins & Platz, 1986; Klenke, 1993; Powell, 1999).

For instance, Tatlah et al. (Tatlah, Quraishi, & Hussain, 2010) observed leadership styles of primary and secondary school teachers found that there was no statistically significant dependence between gender and observed leadership styles (task- / employees-orientation). In addition, in their study Dulewicz and Higgs (2005) conclude that leadership styles and selected leaders’ socio-personal characteristics (gender and nationality) are independent. Similar results of the analysis of leaders’ gender, leadership styles and type of organization they belong to, are presented by Van Engen et al. (2001). However, the findings obtained by Gardiner and Tiggeman (1999) and Cuadrado et al. (2008) reveal that in organizations numerically dominated by men, female leaders show a greater tendency towards typically ‘male’ styles (task-oriented, to be specific) although they incline towards interpersonal style when working in ‘female’ organizations.

To conclude, the empirical evidence gathered so far is ambiguous since the applied classifications and methodological approaches to leadership style analysis are diverse. Consequently, the conclusions obtained in this manner are relatively unclear and sometimes even contradictory (see: Snaebjornsson & Edvardsson, 2013; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To empirically analyze dependence between the dominant leadership style and the leader’s gender we collected primary data by means of a questionnaire. The statements were selected and adapted following Northouse questionnaire models (Northouse, 2012), which identify different leadership styles as task- or relationship-oriented (according to Ohio studies) or as authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire (according to Iowa leadership styles classification). The questionnaire also contained statements pertaining to general information about the leaders, including their gender.

The total of 31 statements was divided into three sections. Section 1 of the questionnaire comprised three items pertaining to general information about the respondents: their position in the organization, gender and the length of time spent in a leading position. The question pertaining to respondents’ position within an organization was used as eliminatory to

¹ Classification of organizations on typically ‘male’ and ‘female’ is made in terms of the numerically dominant gender among the employees in the observed organization (Cuadrado, Morales, & Recio, 2008).

identify them as members of the target population, i.e. as leaders. The second section of the questionnaire, consisting of ten statements, served to identify the respondent's dominant leadership style as task-oriented or relationship-oriented. The last section includes eighteen statements. The degree of subjects' agreement/disagreement with these served to identify the dominant leadership style in terms of Iowa studies classification and to divide the subjects into the following three categories: authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership. More precisely, the statements in Sections 2 and 3 were taken from Northouse questionnaire models: *Task and Relationship Questionnaire* and *Leadership Styles Questionnaire* (Northouse, 2012) respectively, and modified for the purpose of this research. To measure respondents' agreement with questionnaire statements we used five-point Likert scale (for Section 2 items: 1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – sometimes, 4 – often, and 5 – always; for Section 3 statements 1 – I strongly disagree, 2 – I disagree, 3 – I neither agree nor disagree, 4 – I agree, and 5 – I strongly agree). Data analysis and statistical calculations were conducted using statistical software package for social sciences, SPSS version 17.0.

The questionnaires were distributed in February and March 2015 to 97 target group members holding a leading position in a randomly chosen small, medium or large private enterprise, a state institution or a non-profit organization. The sample consisting of an approximately equal number of male and female respondents was formed by disproportionate stratified random sampling method in order to ensure accuracy and validity of results. Prior to this, the questionnaire's intelligibility was checked so that imprecision or ambiguity could be detected and corrected. It was tested on five randomly chosen target population members, whose suggestions significantly helped to improve its final version. Since eighteen respondents failed to submit their answers on time, the total of 79 valid questionnaires was collected.

To measure reliability and internal consistency of the Section 2 and 3 items we used the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. We prepared the raw data to examine the dependence between the leadership styles and given personal characteristic of the leaders (gender) by summing the responses to Section 2 and 3 items. The dominant leadership style was thus identified and the respondents were classified into the corresponding leadership style category. Finally, we conducted the non-parametric Chi-square (χ^2) test of independence to explore whether there is statistically significant dependence between different leadership styles and the respondents' (leaders') gender.

RESULTS

When it comes to the sample structure and general respondent information (*Table 1*), we observed a slight prevalence of male respondents (54.43%). Furthermore, a high percentage (51.9%) of the respondents have

held a leading position for over 10 years, which adds relevance not only to the validity and importance of their responses, but also to our findings.

The internal consistency of the Section 2 and 3 statement sets was measured by means of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. For the ten items in Section 2 the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.855, while for the eighteen Section 3 items its value was 0.801. These values are considered relatively high since they exceed 0.7 (Pallant, 2009) and they confirm high reliability and internal consistency of the items measuring the respondents' attitudes towards the analyzed aspects of leaders' behaviour.

*Table 1. General sample structure
(according to the leaders' personal characteristics)*

Personal characteristics	Category	f_i	%
Gender	Male	43	54.43
	Female	36	45.57
Length of time (total) spent in leadership position	Under 5 years	15	18.99
	Between 5 and 10 years	23	29.11
	More than 10 years	41	51.90

Note: f_i – frequencies, % – percentage;
Source: authors' calculations, SPSS 17.0

The data was prepared for valid application of the non-parametric chi-square (χ^2) test of independence for categorical variables of the leadership style and leaders' gender by summing up the responses to the Section 2 and 3 items. Based on those sums, we identified the dominant leadership style (for details about the procedure, see: Northouse (2012)) and classified the respondents accordingly into the corresponding category.

For each of the two proposed research questions, the corresponding null (H_0) and alternative hypotheses (H_1) were formulated.

For the first research question:

H_0 : There is no statistically significant dependence between the leader's gender and dominant leadership style (i.e. task-oriented and relationship-oriented styles); and

H_1 : There is statistically significant dependence between the leader's gender and the dominant leadership style (i.e. task-oriented or relationship-oriented).

For the second research question:

H_0 : There is no statistically significant dependence between the leader's gender and dominant leadership style (i.e. authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire style); and

H_1 : There is statistically significant dependence between the leader's gender and dominant leadership style (i.e. authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire style).

Since we are examining the dependency between two categorical variables (namely leaders' gender, X_i , and dominant leadership style, Y_j) from two different classification angles, it was necessary to pair corresponding data for each unit of observation in the sample for each set of variables. More specifically, for each of the two leadership style classifications, every respondent was described by a specific pair of modalities (x_i, y_j), measured on a nominal scale. The modality of the variable leaders' gender (x_i) remains the same for each respondent, while other (y_j) differs (according to the applied classification of styles). The number of the respondents who are characterized by the i^{th} modality of the variable X and j^{th} modality of the variable Y , for each combination of modalities, represents particular empirical frequency (f_{ij}) whose distribution is presented in the $r \times k$ type of contingency table, where r denotes the number of rows, and k is the number of columns (Lovrić, 2009). Accordingly, for the first pair of hypotheses there were two modalities for gender (male and female) and dominant style (task-oriented and relationship-oriented), so a contingency table type 2x2 was formed (Table 2). For the second pair of hypotheses, there were three modalities for dominant style (authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire) so that the corresponding contingency table was 2x3 (Table 3). In order to verify the underlying conditions for a valid application of the χ^2 test of independence, a calculation of the corresponding theoretical (expected) frequencies (f_{ij}') for each of the identified empirical frequencies (f_{ij}) was also conducted, using the formula (1) (Soldić-Aleksić, 2011), and the obtained values are displayed in the contingency tables below (Tables 2 and 3):

$$f_{ij}' = \frac{(\text{the sum of the } i^{th} \text{ row}) \times (\text{the sum of the } j^{th} \text{ column})}{\text{the sum of all empirical frequencies in the table}}, \quad (1)$$

where, f_{ij}' is the expected frequency for the cell in the i^{th} row and the j^{th} column in the table.

Table 2. Contingency table for the first pair of statistical hypotheses

Leaders' gender (X_i)	Dominant leadership style (Y_j)				Total (Σ)
	task-oriented behaviour ($j=1$)		relationship-oriented behaviour ($j=2$)		
	f_{ij}	f_{ij}'	f_{ij}	f_{ij}'	
Male ($i=1$)	15	20.1	28	22.9	43
Female ($i=2$)	22	16.9	14	19.1	36
Total (Σ)	37		42		79

Note: f_{ij} – empirical frequencies and f_{ij}' – expected frequencies.

Source: authors' calculations, SPSS 17.0

Table 3. Contingency table for the second pair of statistical hypotheses

Leaders' gender (X_i)	Dominant leadership style (Y_j)						Total (Σ)
	Authoritarian ($j=1$)		Democratic ($j=2$)		Laissez-faire ($j=3$)		
	f_{ij}	f_{ij}'	f_{ij}	f_{ij}'	f_{ij}	f_{ij}'	
Male ($i=1$)	12	17.4	22	19.1	9	6.5	43
Female ($i=2$)	20	14.6	13	15.9	3	5.5	36
Total (Σ)	32		35		12		79

Note: f_{ij} – empirical frequencies and f_{ij}' – expected frequencies.

Source: authors' calculations, SPSS 17.0

Considering that the sums of the empirical and theoretical frequencies are equal for both sets of statistical hypotheses and that the individual theoretical frequencies are higher than five, it can be concluded that all the requirements for valid application of the Chi-square test of independence are met (Lovrić, 2009). However, due to the fact that the contingency table for the first pair of statistical hypotheses was type 2x2, it was necessary to include the Yates' correction for continuity in calculating the test statistics. Therefore, we applied the following expression (Soldić-Aleksić, 2011):

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{(|f_{ij} - f_{ij}'| - 0,5)^2}{f_{ij}'}, \text{ where, } r = k = 2. \quad (2)$$

On the other hand, in the case of the second pair of statistical hypotheses, since the contingency table is of the type 2x3, the Chi-square test statistics does not include the Yates' correction, and is calculated by the expression (3), (Lovrić, 2009):

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^k \frac{(f_{ij} - f_{ij}')^2}{f_{ij}'}, \text{ where, } r = 2, \text{ and } k = 3. \quad (3)$$

Table 4. The results of the Chi-square test of independence

Method	test statistics	df	p-value
First pair of statistical hypotheses			
Pearson Chi-square test	5.213	1	0.020
Yate's continuity correction	4.411	1	0.036
Fisher's Exact test	/	/	0.025
Second pair of statistical hypotheses			
Pearson Chi-square test	6.747	2	0.034

Note: df (degrees of freedom) = $(r-1)*(k-1)$,

r – number of rows, k – number of columns in contingency table.

Source: authors' calculations, SPSS 17.0

Regarding the first pair of hypotheses, the results of the χ^2 test of independence (*Table 4*), more precisely, the value of the Yates' continuity correction (4.411) and resulting *p-value* (0.036) with the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, suggest that there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative (H_1) that there is a statistically significant dependence between the leader's gender and his/her dominant orientation to tasks or employees, since *p-value* is less than α . This conclusion is confirmed by the exact probability obtained using the Fisher's exact test (0.025), which is recommended as an alternative to the χ^2 test in the case of type 2x2 contingency table (Soldić-Aleksić, 2011).

When it comes to the second pair of hypotheses, the value of the Pearson Chi-square test statistics (6.747), the corresponding *p-value* (0.034), and the level of test significance $\alpha = 0.05$, also lead us to conclude that there is enough evidence to accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that there is a statistically significant dependence between the leader's gender and his/her dominant leadership style (authoritarian / democratic / laissez-faire), as *p-value* is less than α .

Since both null hypotheses were rejected, confirming that there was statistically significant dependence between the observed pairs of variables, it was necessary to determine its strength by means of dependence strength indicators. For the first pair of the variables the value of the *Phi coefficient* (ϕ) was used, while the values of the *Contingency coefficient* and the *Cramer's V coefficient* were used for the second pair of observed variables. The use of different coefficients is the result of different types of contingency tables that were used in the hypotheses testing. The values of the selected dependence strength indicators are presented in *Table 5*. The values of these indicators indicate that there is a moderate level of dependence between both pairs of the observed variables².

Table 5. The values of the indicators of the strength of dependence between the observed variables

	Indicators	Value
First pair of statistical hypotheses	<i>Phi coefficient</i>	0.262
Second pair of statistical hypotheses	<i>Cramer's V coefficient</i>	0.292
	<i>Contingency coefficient</i>	0.281

Source: authors' calculations, SPSS 17.0

In addition, *Figure 1* and *Figure 2* show that female leaders dominate the task-oriented leadership category, and more readily adopt the authoritarian

² The values of the observed coefficients are ranging from 0 to 1. Higher values of coefficients indicate stronger dependence between the observed variables, and vice versa (Lovrić, 2009).

leadership style, while male leaders predominantly fall into the category of relationship-oriented and democratic style of leadership, based on a sample data.

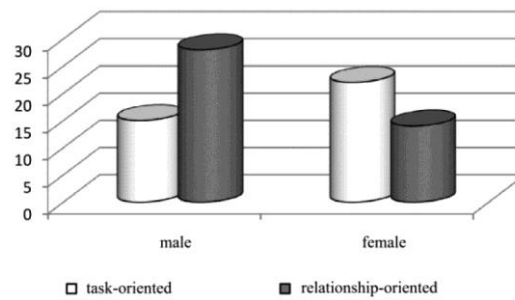


Figure 1. Sample structure according to combined leader's gender and dominant leadership style (task-oriented / relationship-oriented)

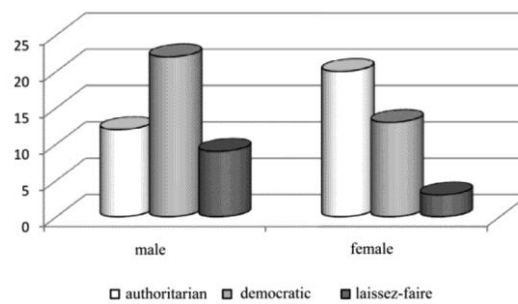


Figure 2. Sample structure according to combined leader's gender and dominant leadership style (authoritarian / democratic / laissez-faire)

CONCLUSION

In testing the presence of a statistically significant dependence between the two observed pairs of variables ((1) the leaders' gender and his/her dominant orientation towards tasks or employees (i.e. human relations), and (2) the leaders' gender and his/her dominant orientation towards authoritarian, democratic or laissez-faire style), the alternative hypothesis was confirmed. In other words, there is a statistically significant dependence (relation) between the leaders' gender and leadership styles (as established by either Ohio or Iowa studies). More precisely, the assumption that the leaders' gender influences the leaders' dominant tendency towards the adoption of particular leadership styles is confirmed, and the strength of the identified relation is moderate.

The obtained data reveals that female leaders show inclination towards the task-oriented behaviour and authoritarian style, opposite to the pronounced tendency of male leaders towards the relationship-oriented behaviour and democratic leadership style (*Figures 1 and 2*).

The observed pattern of the leaders' behaviour in Serbian business organizations and institutions differs from the findings of Eagly and Johnson's meta-analysis (1990) as they failed to detect dependency between the leaders' gender and preferred leadership style (task- or relationship-oriented). They did, however, detect dependency when examining authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire styles, but it was inverse to that identified in our study. Our results also conflict with those obtained by Eagly et al. (1992), according to which female leaders are more inclined to the democratic style, while men more frequently adopt the authoritarian ('male') style.

Our findings are corroborated by Gardiner and Tiggeman (1999), who have identified the same type of dependence between the leadership styles and leaders' gender. In fact, according to them, the reason behind leaders' preference for particular style lies in the type of organization where they work. More specifically, the results of their study indicate that in the organizations considered as typically 'male', female leaders show a greater tendency towards adopting the so-called 'male' styles of leadership. In other words, the differences in leadership styles and preferences are not due to fundamental differences in the sexes, but primarily to the internal business environment. Similar findings were presented by Cuadrado et al. (2008).

In our opinion, the possible cause of female inclination towards 'male' leadership styles might lie in predominantly traditional, patriarchal values and norms that characterize countries in the Balkans, including Serbia (Mašnić, 2011). In order to succeed in such an environment, most female leaders might choose to display 'male' qualities in organizations. In other words, the social specificities and traditional views to which men and women have been exposed for decades (and centuries) set quite different requirements before them and therefore determined, to a considerable extent, their unequal social roles. To overcome this, women 'had' to adopt the styles of behaviour primarily peculiar to men: women had to develop strength and determination so that they could prove themselves as successful and respectable leaders. However, the fact that Serbian male leaders opt for 'softer' leadership styles might indicate an ongoing change in this traditional society which is currently striving to adopt European values such as women's rights and equality. Unable to remain isolated and resist the modern social tendencies, male leaders are trying to counterbalance the 'toughness' of their female colleagues by choosing flexibility, companionship and persuasion over aggressiveness, unresponsiveness and dominance. Convergence of female leaders' styles to the male leadership styles may be due to more pronounced orientation of our society towards gender equality

and promotion of strengthening of the leadership role of women in all institutions, and therefore in business organizations. This is a positive trend that is reflected, among other things, through the results of this study, which shows that female leaders have adopted forms of leadership behavior that were previously, predominantly typical for the male leadership roles. Giving answers to the question – why the men began to incline ‘softer’ leadership styles, in addition to the above presented possible explanation, requires deeper psychological and sociological analysis, which may be the subject of future research. In addition, although the presented statistical analysis was conducted on a random sample, it does not mean that different sample of leaders would not suggest different results, since the sample, even random one, can never be perfectly representative.

Certain limitations of this study should be pointed out together with the directions for further research. The survey’s major limitation pertains to the size of our sample. It is a direct consequence of the respondents’ (un)willingness to participate in the research. It is, therefore, recommendable to conduct a larger-scale study in the future to provide more thorough and comprehensive findings. Moreover, the questionnaire should be further expanded to include more items pertaining to additional leaders’ socio-personal characteristics and various aspects of leadership, the type of organization that leaders belong to, etc. In addition, experts from the fields of sociology, psychology and other relevant scientific domains can also be included in the analysis, regarding their different perspective in analyzing formulated research problem, which, in this paper, is viewed from the perspective of the authors in the field of business economics and management.

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АНАЛИЗА ЛИДЕРСКИХ СТИЛОВА У СРПСКИМ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈАМА: УТИЦАЈ ПОЛА

Весна Стојановић-Алексић¹, Милан Стаменковић², Марина Милановић²

¹Универзитет у Крагујевцу, Економски факултет,

Катедра за менаџмент и пословну економију, Крагујевац, Србија

²Универзитет у Крагујевцу, Економски факултет,

Катедра за статистику и информатику, Крагујевац, Србија

Резиме

Циљ ове студије је да истражи улогу и значај пола лидера у избору доминантног лидерског стила у српским компанијама и институцијама. Категорије које смо користили у нашем истраживању засноване су на две најпопуларније класификације стилова вођства, установљене у Ајова и Охио студијама (које су идентификоване као аутократски, демократски и laissez-faire стил, те стил оријентисан на задатак или међуљудске односе, тим редоследом). За прикупљање података користили смо 31 упитник, применом методе пропорционалног стратификованог случајног узорка. Узорак садржи одговоре 79 случајно одабраних испитаника (лидера), из случајно одабраних организација у Србији. Да би се утврдило да ли постоји статистички значајна зависност између идентификованих доминантних стилова лидерства и пола лидера, примењен је хи-квадрат тест независности као квантитативна статистичка метода. Наши резултати потврдили су статистички значајну међузависност посматраних парова категоријалних варијабли. Тачније, они указују на то да су жене лидери склоне ка ауторитарним стилима вођства и стилима оријентисаним на задатак, док мушкарци лидери радије бирају демократске стилове вођства.