

THE IMPACT OF THE VALUES OF TOP MANAGERS UPON THEIR SUBORDINATES VALUES

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Abstract. Psychologists, sociologists, economists, management scholars, as well as other researchers from other disciplines have been attempting to find answers to two fundamental questions how to get better result out from people so that these people themselves would appreciate the methods used to manage/lead them and would be happy to act in their owners, managers/leaders favour. One key factor, which has been talked about, is values and especially shared values. If the employees and their managers have common/shared values the working together would be at least emotionally easier.

Keywords: methods of management, values

1. Introduction and background of research problem

Intensive global competition, higher customer expectations and greater focus on quality have resulted in much greater requirements placed upon employees today than decades ago [1]. This pressure may seem especially high for employees from former soviet countries, because these demands are fundamentally different to those made under the Soviet regime. During this period the soviet state was responsible for guaranteeing work for everyone and so enterprises were internally overstaffed and passive and work places were over-secured [2]. According to [3], the emergent change to processes in transforming countries can only be truly understood by examining the constitutive practices of individuals and groups at the local micro levels of the economic system. Research in countries going through transformation has shown that the transfer of knowledge from market-economy practices often fails because of institutional and cultural tensions and conflict [4].

The research problem is, how values held by managers influence their subordinates' commitment, effectiveness and satisfaction. A conceptual framework for the study will be presented followed by the results of empirical study in Estonian companies.

The post-communist transformation provides settings, which are in the process of being demolished, that are very different in their characteristics and within which discontinuities are more fundamental and change is less constrained by institutional frameworks. In this paper transformation has been seen as a social process of fundamental political, economic and cultural change to structures and values at all levels of society. Therefore the author applies institutionalism in order to understand the behaviour of organisations.

Estonia, the smallest of Baltic states, had practiced democracy and market economy and enjoyed living standards comparable to the Scandinavian nations already before unlawful incorporation into Soviet Union in 1940 [5]. Although wages, income, housing and productivity in Baltic republics were higher than in the

rest of European republics of SU [6]. Soviet occupation had brought significant decline in the standards of living [7]. Soviet regime was successful in eliminating private enterprise but what did not disappear was a dim sense of having lost something valuable. This sense was anchored in a Protestant work ethic that was much more deeply rooted than Lutheranism itself and was felt to be part of the besieged national culture [8].

Estonia was a forefront of reforms in SU. Radical reforms in Estonia started in 1987-88 when a group of theoreticians and practitioners debated the idea of economic autonomy for Estonia. In 1990 an important change occurred in the strategic aim of the reforms in Estonia: economic autonomy was replaced by independent statehood and the restoration of a market economy. The transition to a market economy was supported by the re-establishment of independence in August 1991.

The process of economic reform was radical and quick. The beginning of 90-ies was the serious decline in the Estonian economy, GDP declined about 14% in 1991, 18% in 1992 and 2% in 1993. In 1994 GDP finally started to grow [9].

Research results from Estonian organisations indicate that this specific environment during the Soviet era had an impact on peoples' value system. A survey of values conducted in the second half of the nineties indicated that Estonian business students underestimated social values when compared with Finnish students [10]. These researchers found this typical for representatives of post-socialist countries in comparison with representatives from countries without a socialist experience.

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tiveness and satisfaction. A conceptual framework for the study will be presented followed by the results of empirical study in Estonian companies.

2. Theoretical bases

In the introductory speech of 10th Chemintz East Forum which was titled The End of Transformation (2003) professor R. Lang proposed the model to describe, how society influences individual values during transition in Central and East Europe (Figure 1).

Transformation has been described as social transience – a process, in which a complex set of normative and operating principles, embodied in historical structures, systems and practices becomes replaced by another unknown set, providing its members with a very ambiguous and uncertain period [11].

According to the institutional perspective, the functioning of organisations can be described using the open-system approach, in which the organisation may be seen as answering the challenges of a new environment. Institutions find expression in society through social constructions: formal institutions at the macro level in a market economy include private property and the free market; formal institutions at the micro level are organisations. Individual organisations are under the technical and normative influence of institutionalised environments.

Institutions could be seen from both the structural and social perspective. From the structural viewpoint institutions exist as institutionalised forms of 'external social constraints'. From the social perspective institutions can be understood as operating to enforce behavioural definition, which may take the form of either 'cultural accounts' or 'cultural rules'. This means that institutions are accounts of how the social world

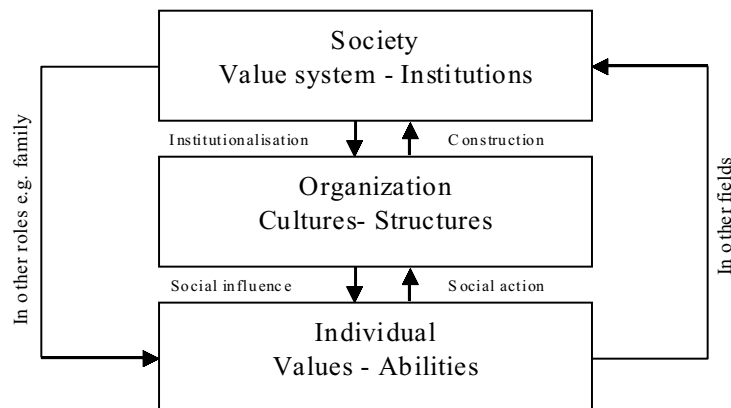


Fig. 1. Different Levels of Transformation of Values. Source: Lang 2003

works and embody normative principles and social values [12].

Socio-economic transformation, at both macro and micro levels, could be understood as institutional change, from both the structural and social perspective, embracing both structures and social values. The elements of an institution may lose credibility and need redefining – the processes of *deinstitutionalisation* and *reinstitutionalisation* take place.

From this institutional view, social transformation may be interpreted as the period between the effective demise of one institutional system and the point at which another institutional system has been established and accepted on new cognitive and normative grounds. Such circumstances create acute social and psychological problems for the social actors and this period has been called *social transience* [11].

According to social scientists, behaviour is a function of the meaning of a given situation. Participants in social events bring to them prior meanings and stereotypes, which can be understood only in a historical and cultural context [12]. Organisational climate and culture scholars have been concerned with how the sense-making process, the filtration, processing and attachment of meaning in organisations, occurs [13]. Sense-making is an emergent process [14] and is to some extent institutionalised.

The history of research into organisational culture is the history of how a field dominated by scholars steeped in psychology and sociology has learned from cultural anthropology [14]. Discourse about organisational culture has come to be about the way an organisational context shapes the meanings and actions of organisational members.

In cross-cultural management studies term 'Culture' is used as an explanatory variable to explain the differences between employee behaviours and attitudes as well as management practices. Generally, culture is used by social scientists to refer to a set of parameters that differentiate collectives from each other in meaningful ways. Collectives thus differentiated are regarded as distinct cultures [15].

Management is the process of getting things done through (other) people. In order to manage, one has to know "the things" that must be done and one has to know the people who have to do it. Understanding people means understanding their backgrounds – from which present and future behaviour can be predicted. A useful way to look at people in organisations is in terms of the socialisation they have received before joining the organisation and the socialisation they re-

ceive at work. Differences in socialisation explain why equally gifted persons will act quite differently in a given situation. In the socialisation process, four elements of culture are transferred (from superficial to deep) symbols, heroes, rituals and values [16].

Values are "constructs representing generalised behaviours or states of affairs that are considered by the individual to be important [17]. In work-place settings values can affect decisions about whether to join an organisation, organisational commitment, relationships with co-workers, and decisions about leaving an organisation. It is important for leaders that it be possible for individuals in the same working unit to have considerably different values, especially since values cannot be seen directly, but only inferred on the basis of people's behaviour [17].

Values represent the deepest level of culture. They are broad feelings, often unconscious and not discussible, about what is good and what is evil, beautiful or ugly, rational or irrational, normal or abnormal, natural or paradoxical, decent or indecent. These feelings are present in most of the members of a culture, or at least in those persons who occupy pivotal positions [16].

According to Milton Rokeach, a leading researcher into values, a value is "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end state of existence." [18] defines an individual value system as an "enduring organisation of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance. Rokeach divided values into instrumental and terminal values. Instrumental values are alternative behaviours or means by which we achieve desired ends (terminal values). Terminal values are end-states or goals the individual would like to achieve during his/her lifetime, basically, what life is all about.

Managers have to be aware of three types of value conflict in themselves and their co-workers – intrapersonal, interpersonal and individual-organisation value conflict [16].

While values represent global beliefs that influence behaviour across all situations, attitudes relate only to behaviour directed toward specific objects or situations. An attitude is defined as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object. Attitudes tend to be consistent over time and across related situations. Values and attitudes are generally in harmony, but not always. Because our cultural backgrounds and experiences vary, our attitudes and behav-

our also vary. Attitudes are translated into behaviour via behavioural intentions [16].

According to [19], each person's values reflect contributions made by diverse inputs, including family, peers, the education system, the media, science and technology, geography and current events. Although one's values can change throughout one's life, they are relatively firmly established by young adulthood.

[14] writes that one issue of major concentration in the values literature has to do with distinction between values (in the general sense) and work values – a concept that implies the existence of particular sets of values that govern employee work behavior, in all of its forms. Most conceptions and definitions of work values are consistent of most general definitions of values in the broader sense, but they focus on work, work behavior and work related outcomes.

GLOBE research project specifies connections between societal culture and organizational culture.

3. Globe research project

In Calgary in 1994 at the international meeting of Globe Country Co-Investigators, and based on the discussion and deliberation of 84 social scientists and management scholars representing 56 countries, a definition of leadership was formulated as follows: 'Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organisation of which they are members' [15].

The specific criteria used to differentiate collectivities (cultures) usually depend on the preferences of the investigators and the issues under investigation, and tend to reflect the discipline of the investigator. For the GLOBE research program culture was defined as the common experiences of individuals, which result in shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations (meanings) of significant events [15].

For the purposes of the GLOBE research programme, culture is operationally defined as the use of measures reflecting two kinds of cultural manifestations:

- a) The commonality (agreement) among the members of the collectivity with respect to the attributes (values, beliefs, etc) of culture.
- b) The commonality of observed and reported practices by entities such as families, work organisations, economic and legal systems and political institutions.

The theoretical basis that guides the GLOBE research is an integrated construct of several theories. A diagram of this integrated theory is presented in Figure 2.

The integrated theory consists of the following assertions:

- 1) Cultural values and beliefs provide incentives, cues, guidance, constraints and reinforcements for selected behaviours and practices.
- 2) The implicit motives that are stressed in the culture result in the differential social learning of implicit motives by members of the culture.
- 3) Jointly, the dominant cultural values, beliefs, assumptions, and implicit motives endorsed by cultures give shared meaning to leader attributes and behaviour and organisational practices. They provide meaning in the sense that selected behaviours and organisational practices are understood in a particular way in each culture.
- 4) The shared meaning, values, beliefs and motives take on the status of norms, which are socially learned, communicated, and enforced by members of the culture. These norms are cultural level variables that guide individual behaviour and the evaluation of such behaviour.

According to [20] the result must, where Central and Eastern Europe is concerned, be placed in the context of recent history. Their results provide some evidence

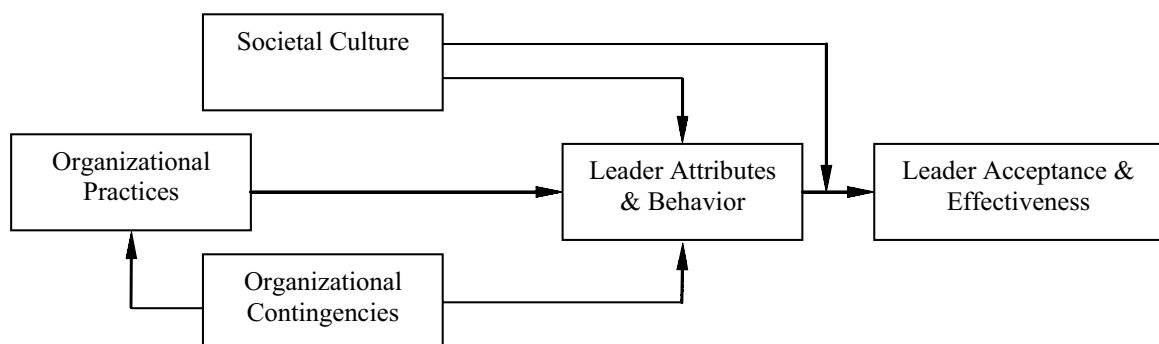


Fig. 2. Theoretical model of research. Source: House et al. 1996: 6.

that preferred leadership styles vary according to culture. Clusters of European countries that share similar cultural values were shown to also share similar leadership prototypes [21].

4. The empirical study in Estonian organizations

The authors formulated the following research questions:

- (1) Do managers/leaders have common, that is, shared values with their subordinates?
- (2) Are the values of subordinates related to the motivation of subordinates?
- (3) Are the values of managers/leaders values related with the motivation of subordinates?

During the second half of 2001 Estonia (and the author of this article) joined phase II of the Cross Cultural CEO Leadership Study carried out by Robert J. House and his colleagues of the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Program (GLOBE). GLOBE is a long-term project directed toward the development of systematic knowledge concerning how societal and organisational cultures and subcultures affect leadership and organisational practices.

The design of the Cross Cultural CEO project required 20 CEOs from entrepreneurial firms and 20 CEOs from non-entrepreneurial firms or larger organisations. Heads of divisions in domestic companies were not considered CEOs and did not qualify to be included in the sample.

In 2001 more than 60 companies were visited. Complete research kits, including interviews, CEO questionnaires and all the required questionnaires for subordinates (2 from type c, d, e), were returned from 40 companies. This data was sent to the University of Pennsylvania for further investigation related to the subject of cultural differences and leadership. More than 240 questionnaires were completed by subordinates in addition to the 40 questionnaires completed by the CEOs.

The study involved interviewing the CEOs; the interviews were recorded on audiotape and transcribed onto written protocols. Questionnaires were also administered to at least those subordinates immediately below the chief executives.

30 % of the data gathered during the field research did not meet the requirements of the Cross Cultural CEO project. The main reason for this was that some of the questionnaires distributed to the subordinates did not come back.

5. Results

Connections that were discovered between the values held by managers and the values and motivation of their subordinates were in some cases interesting, in some cases predictable and in some cases confusing.

Firstly, a cluster analysis of the values was conducted and based on this the values could be divided into four major groups as follows:

- a) values related to the welfare of society;
- b) values related to the short-term welfare of the organisation;
- c) values related to the long-term welfare of the organisation;
- d) values related to religion and supernatural powers.

Results according to received clusters are shown in Table 1.

The most important values for the CEOs of Estonian companies were values related to short-term welfare (on the seven-point scale $m = 5,58$) followed by long term welfare values ($m = 5,11$) and those related to the welfare of society ($m = 3,8$). Least important were values related to religion ($m = 1,9$).

When we compared the mean values of the two groups – managers/leaders and their subordinates – it turned out that their rating of the importance of values in each group was practically the same. The fact that there is no difference is theoretically a good grounding for establishing leader acceptance and effective outcomes.

The result of the comparison of managers and subordinate values are shown in Table 2.

For answer to the first research question – Do managers have common or shared values with their subordinates? – the following correlations were found. The most significant connection was the shared values concerning *contributions to the economic welfare of the nation* ($r = .322$). This was followed by *employee professional growth and development* ($r = .250$) and then *the welfare of the local community* ($r = .210$).

In addition to the previous question about shared values we investigated how the managers/leaders were perceived by their subordinates. And as a result we can say that, in Estonian context we can not talk about leadership yet. At the moment, Estonian CEOs are characterised as managers. The subordinates see them as directive information sources (see Table 3), but do not yet see them as leaders.

While conducting research into the values held by subordinates and their levels of motivation (2) the follow-

Table 1. Clusters of Values (Note: the scores are given on scale from 1 to 7)

Cluster	Value	Mean CEOs	Std. Deviation	Mean Subord.	Std. Deviation
Welfare of society	Economic welfare of the nation	4,15	1,04	3,99	1,24
	Economic welfare of the local community	4,33	1,11	4,14	1,17
	Effect on female employees	3,61	1,47	3,67	1,35
	Effect on minority employees	3,12	1,30	3,20	1,40
		3,80		3,75	
Long term welfare of the organisation	Employee relations (well-being, safety, working conditions)	5,18	0,10	5,28	1,04
	Effect on relationships with other organisations	5,07	0,82	5,07	0,97
	Effect on the environment	4,53	1,12	4,30	1,25
	Ethical considerations	5,09	1,16	5,05	1,28
	Employee professional growth and development	5,18	0,85	5,28	1,02
	Effect on long-term competitive ability of the organisation	5,6	0,86	5,43	1,07
	5,11		5,07		
Short term welfare of the organisation	Effect on product quality	5,59	1,09	5,77	1,04
	Effect on sales volumes	5,33	1,06	5,49	1,48
	Effect on firm profitability	5,73	0,89	5,56	1,13
	Cost control	5,31	1,01	5,31	0,94
	Customer satisfaction	5,96	1,23	6,09	0,96
	5,58		5,64		
Religion	Pleasing, respecting, not offending a divine being (god, idol)	2,44	1,62	2,30	1,43
	Effect on supernatural forces	1,54	0,91	1,58	1,06
	1,99		1,94		

ing observations were noted. Satisfied customers and high sales volumes are the things that motivate personnel the most. One reason for this could be that their monthly salary or bonus is directly connected with sales ($r = .251$) and sales figures are definitely related to the existence or non-existence of satisfied customers ($r = .250$). It is also logical that when product quality ($r = .231$) is taken as a motivator there cannot be satisfied customers or high volume sales if the goods sold are of an unacceptable quality (See Table 4).

One interesting thing that was proven as the result of this research was that values held by managers are practically not connected to the motivation levels of their subordinates at all. There was only one value held by managers that was in positive correlation with the motivation of their subordinates and that was – *Effect on relationships with other organisations with which you do serious business* – for example suppliers, government agencies, strategic alliances ($r = .161$). However, even this connection was quite low.

When we analyse the values held by managers and the way they are perceived by their subordinates we find many connections. In Table 5 the most important connections can be seen and from them it seems that most of the correlations are related to the value attributed

to cost control by managers. This could be related to the fact that at the moment, after ten years of experience with a free market economy, we have reached that turning point where the efficiency and final result of a company does not depend so much on sales but on cost control. If we go back to Clusters of Values (see Table 1) and look what was important for the CEOs of Estonian companies – values related with the short term welfare of the organization where belongs also cost control. Cost control is perceived by subordinates as autonomous autocrat who has to be at least diplomat to get things done or can be described by integrity. CEO is not perceived as humane or power sharing or charismatic person. As we discussed before Estonians are not yet seeing values behind short-term effects, what cost control definitely is, and may be we even do not need charismatic, future oriented leaders yet but diplomatic managers are enough and which is useful also in process of doing business with other organizations

When talking about being ethical, then a manager even if he/she is still not a leader has to be fair which is perceived also by the subordinates while economic welfare of the nation is related with the fact of being communicative and human person.

Table 2. Values shared by subordinates and their managers/leaders

Values of Subordinates	Values of Managers	
Cost control	Effect on the long term competitive ability of the organisation	0,223
Values of Subordinates	Values of Managers	
	and business, for example suppliers, government agencies, strategic alliances	
Customer satisfaction	Employee professional growth and development	0,213
	Effect on the long term competitive ability of the organisation	0,167
	Effect on the environment	0,146
Employee relations issues such as employee well-being, safety, working conditions	Effect on the long term competitive ability of the organisation	0,195
	Employee professional growth and development	0,175
	Employee relations issues such as employee well-being, safety, working conditions	0,165
Contributions to the economic welfare of the nation	Contributions to the economic welfare of the nation	0,322
	Employee relations issues such as employee well-being, safety, working conditions	0,211
The welfare of the local community	Contributions to the economic welfare of the nation	0,232
	The welfare of the local community	0,210
	Employee relations issues such as employee well-being, safety, working conditions	0,183
Employee professional growth and development	Employee professional growth and development	0,250
Pleasing, respecting, not offending a divine being - a god or an idol for example	Pleasing, respecting, not offending a divine being – a god or an idol for example	0,197
Effect on the environment	Effect on the environment	0,189
	Contributions to the economic welfare of the nation	0,158
Ethical considerations	Employee professional growth and development	0,174
	Ethical considerations	0,167
Effect on firm's profitability	Effect on firm's profitability	0,207
	Effect on the long term competitive ability of the organisation	0,189
Effect on product quality	Ethical considerations	0,225
	Customer satisfaction	0,193
	Effect on the long term competitive ability of the organisation	0,184
	Employee professional growth and development	0,180
	Effect on firm's profitability	0,153
Effect on sales volume	Effect on firm's profitability	0,24

Table 3. How subordinates perceive their managers

Perception	Mean	Perception	Mean
1. Directive	5,53	5. Shows self-confidence	5,24
2. Information Source	5,45	6. Administratively Effective	5,24
3. Communicator	5,35	7. Follower Confidence	5,24
4. Visionary	5,30		

Note: The scores given are on a scale from 1 to 7

Table 4. Connections between values held by subordinates and their motivation level

Values held by subordinates	r		Values held by subordinates	r
Customer satisfaction	0,251	7.	The welfare of the local community	0,172
Effect on sales volume	0,250	8.	Effect on the long term competitive ability	0,168
Effect on product quality	0,231	9.	Employee professional growth and development	0,162
Effect on female employees	0,191	10.	Cost control	0,151
Effect on relationships with other organisations	0,179	11.	Effect on the firm's profitability	0,151
Contribution to the economic welfare of the nation	0,177	12.	Ethical considerations	0,150

Table 5. The values held by managers and their subordinate's perception of them

	r>0		r<0
Cost Control			
Autonomous	0,258	Humane	0,298
Autocratic	0,216	Power Sharing	0,295
Integrity	0,208	Charismatic effects	0,272
Diplomatic	0,165	Fair	0,253
		Information source	0,239
		Inspirational	0,228
		Administratively effective	0,221
		Non contingent praise	0,208
		Communicator	0,203
		Follower confidence	0,186
		Decisive	0,184
		Visionary	0,182
		Shows self-confidence	0,174
		Status conscious	0,173
		Face saver	0,169
		Directive	0,165
		Intellectually stimulating	0,158
		Role clarification	0,156
Contribution to the economic welfare of the nation			
Decisive	0,275	Autonomous	0,302
Communicator	0,217	Diplomatic	0,267
Humane	0,189	Malevolent	0,237
		Power sharing	0,203
		Integrity	0,196
		Autocratic	0,189
		Role clarification	0,162
Ethical considerations			
Fair	0,163	Autocratic	0,208
		Integrity	0,240
		Power sharing	0,148
		Role clarification	0,188
Effect on the long term competitive ability of the organisation			
		Status conscious	0,209
		Intellectually stimulating	0,202
		Team oriented	0,156
Effect on relationships with other organisations with which you do serious business			
Diplomatic	0,203	Indirect	0,346
Bureaucratic	0,248		

6. Conclusions

The most important values for the CEOs of Estonian companies during transition period from centrally planned economy to free market economy were values related to short-term welfare followed by long term welfare values and those related to the welfare of society. Least important were values related to religion.

This kind of rating of values is probably connected with the fact that during the period of transition the main aim of the management of companies is to ensure short term results – profit – achieved by sales and cost control. When talking about sales we need a satisfied customer and this is achieved via quality products.

After the short-term welfare of an enterprise, of course, comes the long-term welfare. To provide a continuous, long-term competitive advantage new variables such as employee relations, inter-organisational relations, environmental protection and ethical aspects gain importance.

When we draw some parallels with results of World Value Survey [22] we can also see the fact that Estonians are interested in short term results as for example salary and they do not have “dreams” about working hard. The issue of belief has also the same result in World Value Survey as in our research.

When we compared the mean values of the two groups – managers/leaders and their subordinates – it turned out that their rating of the importance of values in each group was practically the same. The fact that there is no difference is theoretically a good grounding for establishing leader acceptance and effective outcomes.

The current study indicates that managers' values do not have a direct impact on subordinates' motivation during transition from centrally planned economy to free market economy in Estonian society. But managers' values influence subordinate motivation through mediating variables. Managers' values are transferred to subordinates and those values held by subordinates correlate with subordinate motivation. Also, values held by managers have an impact on the perceptions subordinates have about their managers and these perceptions correlate with subordinate motivation. Also the subordinates' own value estimations influence their perception of their superiors, which in turn, influences subordinate motivation.

The main conclusion of this research is that values held by Estonian leaders do not affect subordinate

motivation directly, but indirectly through the values held by their subordinates and how their subordinates perceive their leaders.

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