

## Chapter 8

# The Hierarchy of Managers' Personal Values and Universal Management Attributes: Empirical Evidence From Austria, Poland, and Slovenia

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### ABSTRACT

*The main purpose of this chapter is to examine and compare the importance of managers' personal values and universal management attributes in organizations from Slovenia, Austria, and Poland. In this study, the analysis of results focuses on (1) personal values of managers, where 57 variables were verified, which were measured on a nine-point Likert scale and (2) evaluation of selected, universal management attributes that determine managerial behavior in organizations, whose measurement was performed on eight-point semantic scales. In order to compare the significance of managers' personal values and universal management attributes between respondents' groups from Poland, Slovenia, and Austria, the method of one-way analysis of variance and t-test for independent groups were applied.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the broad sense “values” refer to what people find significant in life (Cieciuch & Schwartz, 2020). People create organizations, so there are no organizations without values (Shein, 2004), and managers activities could not be analyzed without taking into consideration their personal values as well. According to the most popular definition, values can be defined as “guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity” (Schwarz, 1994, p. 21). The individual and organizational dimensions of values are interrelated and they mutually affect each other (Argandona, 2002, p. 2).

The way in which personal values influence behaviors has been for a few decades a focus in literature across the management science from marketing to human resources management, but despite the widely shared belief that a relationship between personal values and organizational performance does exist, very few empirical examinations of this relationship has been carried out (Glew, 2009). Furthermore, studies in this field are mainly based on practices of well-developed Western economies. Thus, when turning to emerging economies in Central Europe, these issues are becoming way less investigated (Dabic, Potocan, Nedelko, & Morgan, 2013).

The general purpose of this chapter is to examine and compare the importance of managers' personal values and universal management attributes in organizations from three central European countries. The specific purpose is to establish the hierarchy of managers' personal values and universal management attributes in Slovenia, Austria and Poland, and to indicate existing differences between them.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Personal values have gained a lot of attention during the last three decades in management and organizational behavior works. According to Schein (2004), understanding of organizational culture is fundamental to study what goes on in organizations, how to run them and how to develop them. A big interest into values in the literature is proven with plethora of contributions examining the role and importance of personal values, using different theoretical backgrounds. Based on the overview of papers the most commonly used approaches to investigate personal values include cultural dimensions from Hofstede (2001), Schwartz theory of basic values (Schwartz, 1992), Rokeach value theory (Rokeach, 1973), and Ronen and Shenkar (1985) approach.

The various disciplines of psychology and the social sciences (i.e. social psychology, developmental psychology, cross-cultural psychology, sociology, management science, organizational behavior science) are building on and extending the knowledge of personal values (Cieciuch & Schwartz, 2020). Some recent volumes by Brosch and Sander (2016), and Nedelko and Brzozowski (2017) attests to the centrality of values in human life by bringing together various perspectives and knowledge on values being developed by such different sciences as neurology, economics, political science, music, and psychology.

Psychologists perceive values as an aspect of personality that underlies and motivates attitudes and behavior (Cieciuch, Schwartz, & Davidow, 2015). Personal values are motivational in nature and define what is essential to people (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 2006). Schwarz and Bilsky defined values as “*central desires and beliefs regarding final states or desirable conducts that transcend specific situations, guide the choice and evaluation of our decisions and, therefore, of our conducts, becoming an integral part of our way of being and acting, to the point of shaping our character*” (1987).

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