
THE ORGANIZATIONAL JUDGMENT OF THE LEADERSHIP MISTAKES RELATED TO WORK SAFETY IN THE AGRICULTURAL UNDERTAKINGS

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ABSTRACT

The vital factor in the life of a given organization is the safety of workers, the advanced safety culture and the daily optimum safety climate. The author's research area is the safety culture and safety climate. In this paper the author published the results of the examination dimension of mismanagements' effects on occupational safety and health (OSH). The author examined the perceptions and judgments of leaders and workers in 18 agricultural organizations. The author draws attention to the continuous transmission of the organizational official safety attitudes and values by the leadership. He found that the representatives of various management levels give greater importance from the mismanagement factors which on their own managerial level their competence is expressed. The first-level managers have felt the greatest responsibility in their judgment in connection with occupational safety mismanagement factors. The author found that the safety management functions are mainly delegated on first-level managers in the examined organizations. In the issuing of the security tasks and in the safety information transmitting the leading style is a very important factor. It is important to have greater emphases on interpersonal skills development of first-level managers mainly in connection with safety management tasks.

1. INTRODUCTION

The advanced safety culture and the daily optimal safety atmosphere are the indispensably important factors of the work safety in a given farming organization. The organizational leadership play a very important role in the formation and maintenance of these factors. Good performances of the managerial tasks have generally positive effect on work safety and safety climate within the organization. At the same time wrong and/or deficient performances, may have negative effect on work safety. One of the indicators of this phenomenon inside the organisations is the change of labour protection safety climate. The safety climate has many dimensions, which are mostly connected with human factors of the organisation's safety culture. According to Zohar (1980), safety climate is the sum of the employees' perceptions on the organization and its numerous peculiarities. These safety perceptions have direct effect on the prevention of accidents and on safety behavior. Zohar (1980) also stated that the safety climate is a safe type of organizational climate. It means that he compares the safety climate mainly to such organizational climate where the central elements are the safety and the safe working environment. Based on this interpretation, many definitions were developed in the past years that emphasize the human factors of safety climate. For example Brown and Holmes (1986), and Cooper and Philips (1994) have mainly emphasized the role of safety perceptions and beliefs, while Dedobbeleer and Béland (1991) have somewhat limited these dimensions to the working environment. Later Niskanen (1994) put the emphasis primarily on the official organizational safety commit-

ments. In his conceptualization the safety climate can be identified as a characteristic set, which is perceptible in a specific working organization and was developed from the organization's policies and practices, and that applies to the workers and supervisors. Cabrera et al. (1997) found similar patterns, but they interpreted it from the organization members' point of view. It is clear from their statements that the safety climate is actually a provisional and/or current status of the safety culture. The current status of the safety culture we can be inferred from the qualitative and quantitative surveys of the visible and perceptible human behavioral components of the safety culture. By this means, the important dimensions of safety atmosphere status examinations are the perceptions, opinions and judgments of the organization's members regarding the managerial safety commitments, and the judgments of the OSH related managerial tasks. This proves that these dimensions have relevant effect mainly on the safety behavior. Juhász and Demcsák (2006) suggests that employees take into consideration the leaders' intentions and actions regarding their work and personality, especially if the leaders reinforce trust and understanding. Therefore, it is very important that leaders pay special attention on the quality of managerial work while performing their tasks (Berde, 2001). By doing so they can reinforce the current organizational safety expectations towards employees.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper I examined 18 agricultural organizations in Hajdú-Bihar County. One of the main aims of the examination was to measure the safety culture related perceptions of farm-workers and their leaders. In order to do so, I conducted 460 personal interviews with farm-workers and 92 personal interviews with leaders. For the interviews I used questionnaires which contained closed questions and statements. To the characterization and evaluation of the qualitative factors a Liker-type scale (-3...0...+3) (Malhotra, 2005) was used. The dimensions of safety culture and atmosphere what the research examined were sense of risk, safety related attitudes, values, optimism, pessimism, contentment with the OSH conditions, etc. The main consideration in the compilation and arrangement of the questionnaire was to choose such statements that are in close connection with the examined OSH related safety culture and atmosphere dimensions. One of these research dimensions is the judgment of leadership mistakes. To the assessment of the collected data I applied descriptive statistics and related hypothesis examinations.

3. OWN RESULTS

3.1. Leaders judgment

For the elaboration of the subject I have selected those managerial tasks which are directly affected by managing processes of production and services and within this, safety management. Thus, in one hand, I had questions regarding the elements of process management tasks – planning, decision making, direction, organization and supervision (10.2., 10.3., 10.5., 10.10.). On the other hand I have selected some factors from the human resource management tasks in order to carry out comparisons. These factors were related to the formation and analysis of the sphere of activity (10.1.,10.4.), conflict management (10.7., 10.8., 10.9.), and performance evaluation (10.6.). Because the reliability of questions of the test, based on Cronbach-alfa value (0,800), was suitable for creating index scale numbers from the leadership mistakes variables average values. By creating scale

numbers we can have a picture on the judgment of leaders regarding those leadership mistakes that effect work safety. The intervals of the index scale: from -3 to -2,6 = extremely weak effect, from -2,5 to -0,6 = weak effect, from -0,5 to +0,5 = medium effect, from +0,6 to +2,5 = strong effect, from +2,6 to +3 = extremely strong effect.

The judgments in connection with effects of leadership mistakes on work safety among the circle of leaders are showed in Table 1.

Table 1. The judgments in connection with effects of leadership mistakes on work safety among the circle of leaders in descending order

Leadership mistakes variables	Average	Standard dev.
10.2. Bad decision making	+1,57	0,886
10.10. Supervision faultiness	+1,52	1,049
10.3. False instructions	+1,39	0,954
10.9. Communication difficulties	+1,30	0,916
10.5. Wrong directions; the job is too difficult or too complicated or not suitable for professional field	+1,30	1,072
10.8. Insufficiency in the relationship of leaders and workers	+1,24	1,079
10.6. Bad targeting of daily standard	+1,22	0,987
10.7. Bad leadership style	+1,17	1,122
10.1. Unclear sphere of authority among the leaders	+1,15	1,135
10.4. Creation of insufficient working schedules	+1,09	0,784
Index scale values (from -3-to +3)	+1,29	-

Source of data: own results 2009

In Table 1, it appears that leaders found all selected leadership mistakes variables relevant, in connection with their affect on work safety as they gave them higher than medium level values in their answers. It means that they considered them strong effect factors. According to leaders estimations the strongest factors are the *decision making, supervision and instruction leadership mistakes*. Communication difficulties and bad job distributions as operative level leadership mistakes, were also considered meaningful factors by the leaders. According to leaders judgment the least affecting factors are the *creation of insufficient working schedules, the unclear sphere of authority among the leaders and the bad leadership style*, which were selected from the human resource management tasks. The composed index scale number from the average values are +1,29, which indicates that the leadership mistakes have a strong influence on work safety. This result shows the strength of attitudes and estimations of the leaders in connection with the leadership mistakes as well.

There were some deviations among leadership levels. The assessment of the impact that leadership mistakes have on work safety while carrying out leadership tasks, by leadership levels is shown in Table 2. Based on index values, which were calculated from the leadership mistakes variables average values, it can be proved that the operative leaders give the greatest importance to the influence of leadership mistakes on work safety compared to the middle and top managers. Table 2 shows that, based on the Kruskal-Wallis test, the operative leaders gave significantly higher values to *false instructions, bad leadership styl,* and the *bad targeting of daily standard* contrary to middle and top managers who put the *bad decision making* factor to the first place. The influencing effect of *bad leadership style* was put to the last place by middle managers, while top managers put it to the second place together with *supervision faultiness* and *insufficiency in the relationship of leaders and workers*.

Table 2. The judgments in connection with effects of leadership mistakes on work safety by the leadership-levels

Leadership mistakes variables	Workplace position			Kruskal-Wallis Test Sign.
	Operative managers	Middle managers	Top managers	
10.1. Unclear sphere of authority among the leaders	+1,56	+1,07	+1,00	0,236
10.2. Bad decision making	+1,78	+1,48	+1,60	0,376
10.3. False instructions	+1,89	+1,33	+1,10	0,017
10.4. Creation of insufficient working schedules	+1,44	+1,00	+1,00	0,068
10.5. Wrong directions; the job is too difficult or too complicated or not suitable for professional field	+2,11	+1,11	+1,10	0,001
10.6. Bad targeting of daily standard	+1,78	+1,11	+1,00	0,011
10.7. Bad leadership style	+1,89	+0,93	+1,20	0,007
10.8. Insufficiency in the relationships of leaders and workers	+1,78	+1,07	+1,20	0,088
10.9. Communication difficulties	+1,44	+1,33	+1,10	0,318
10.10. Supervision faultiness	+1,78	+1,56	+1,20	0,138
Index scale values (from -3-to +3)	+1,74	+1,15	+1,15	-

Source of data: own results 2009

By analyzing the conducted interviews and questionnaire it can be proved that in connection with work safety the representatives of the different leader levels found those leadership mistake factors important, which are under their direct competence due to their managerial-level.

It also appears from the results that the operative leaders are in more direct connection with safety management and/or safety and health work tasks than other representatives of leading levels. This phenomenon indicates that the safety management tasks are mainly delegated to this level.

3.2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEADER'S AND WORKER'S JUDGMENTS

As I previously mentioned, in this question group I selected those leadership tasks, which are relevant and directly involved in production and services management and within this in safety management. Table 3 shows the results of the comparisons of leaders and workers judgments about the effects of the leadership mistakes on work safety. From the results it can be proved that there are two significant differences in case of the 9 and 10 variables. Among these two variables the "supervision faultiness" shows the most significant difference in both tests. To the effects of leadership mistakes on work safety the leaders gave significantly bigger scale values than the workers. This phenomenon is perhaps a logical result especially if we consider the differences in organizational competences of the two groups. Based on the results of the variance analysis (ANOVA) and 2-taild T-test, there are significant differences in terms of "Communication difficulties" as well. To this variable, similarly to previous ones, leaders gave significantly bigger scale values than the workers did.

Table 3. The judgments in connection with effects of leadership mistakes on work safety in circle of leaders and workers

Leadership mistakes variables		Average value	Standard deviation	Asymp. Sign. (Mann-Whitney test)	Sign. (2 tailed test)
1. Unclear sphere of authority among the leaders	Leaders	+1,15	1,135	0,623	0,578
	Workers	+1,04	1,279		
2. Bad decision making	Leaders	+1,57	0,886	0,557	0,297
	Workers	+1,35	1,355		
3. False instructions	Leaders	+1,39	0,954	0,733	0,488
	Workers	+1,24	1,377		
4. Creation of insufficient working schedules	Leaders	+1,09	0,784	0,910	0,736
	Workers	+1,02	1,354		
5. Wrong directions; the job is too difficult or too complicated or not suitable for professional field	Leaders	+1,30	1,072	0,852	0,474
	Workers	+1,14	1,442		
6. Bad targeting of daily standard	Leaders	+1,22	0,987	0,373	0,287
	Workers	+1,00	1,333		
7. Bad leadership style	Leaders	+1,17	1,122	0,499	0,312
	Workers	+0,94	1,488		
8. Insufficiency in the relationships of leaders and workers	Leaders	+1,24	1,079	0,884	0,486
	Workers	+1,07	1,573		
9. Communication difficulties	Leaders	+1,30	0,916	0,087	0,048
	Workers	+0,87	1,440		
10. Supervision faultiness	Leaders	+1,52	1,049	0,001	0,001
	Workers	+0,73	1,529		

Source of data: own results 2009

The difference of the judgments between the two variables can indicate the differences of expectations. That is due to the fact that the listed ten mistake-variables otherwise contain those leadership role expectations and attributes, which are generally, characterize a leader who has good safety management skills. From the results it can be stated that the leaders have higher expectations for their own leadership role in work safety communication and supervision than their workers do. This phenomenon reflects the identification with the roles in the examined leader stratum.

In the cases of basic variables, which were generated in the course of sampling, it can be seen that there are significant differences by age categories and educational levels. In connection with age categories there was one significant difference in the case of judgment of "bad decision making" mistake variable. Figure 4 shows the analysis results of leaders' and workers' judgments in connection with "bad decision making" mistake variable by age categories. Figure 4 shows that the young and the elderly age groups gave the least scale values to the "bad decision making" mistake variable. Between the other age groups there are no significant differences.

Variable: **Bad decision making.**

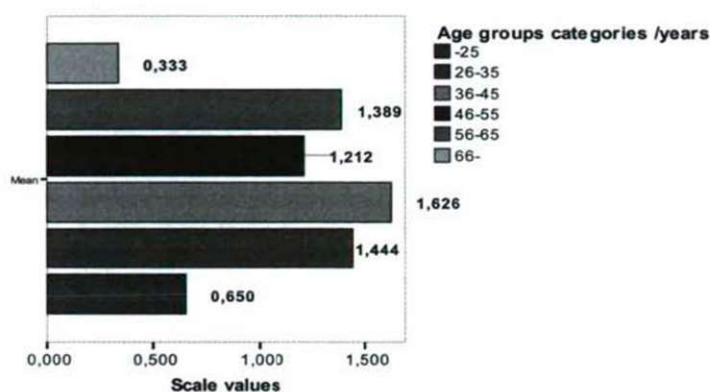


Figure 4. Analysis results of the leader's and workers' judgments in connection with "bad decision making" mistake variable by age categories

Source of data: own results 2009

While analyzing the mistake variables by the educational level basic variable, significant difference occurred in the judgment of "communication difficulties". Result is shown in Figure 5.

Variable: "communication difficulties"

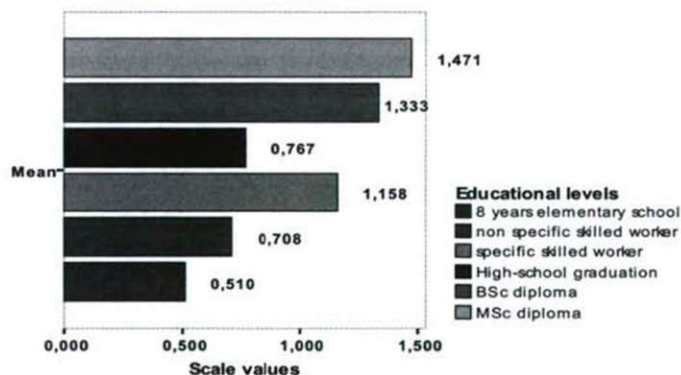


Figure 5. Analysis results of the leaders' and workers' judgments in connection with "communication difficulties" mistake variable by educational levels

Source of data: own results 2009

It can be seen in Figure 4 that values given to the effects of leadership "communication difficulties" on work safety grew parallel with the participants' educational level. Therefore participants with BSc or MSc diploma valued it the most. Presumably this phenomenon is in connection with the level of one's communicational skills which is correlated with one's educational level. Presumably those people who have weak communicational skills have considered it less important than those who have strong communicational skills.

4. CONCLUSION

- According to the results of the examinations the leadership mistakes may significantly influence the state of the organizations' safety climate. Therefore it is necessary to aim for the minimization of these mistakes by all leaders.
- It is verifiable that the representatives of the different leader levels found those leadership mistake factors important, which are under their direct competence due to their managerial-level.
- Among the leadership tasks, leadership mediation of the official organizational safety commitments has to play an important role. One of the important elements of this is the leadership communication.
- Within the organizational leadership communication it is necessary to give bigger emphasis to the communication of safety decisions, instructions and task distributions. This finding is especially apply in terms of undereducated employees.
- Where it is possible, it is expedient to synchronize the competences among leadership levels. In connection with this it is also necessary to review the delegated safety management leadership tasks and the structures of those. Leadership style is a very important factor in safety tasks communication and in giving orders and instructions. The related problems are perceived mostly by the representatives of the operative leadership level.

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