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The Influence of Uncertainty, Anxiety and Self-Awareness on an individual's preferred Leadership Style

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Abstract

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This thesis describes the quantitative research that aims to find out whether a high level of perceived uncertainty by an individual is correlated to one's preference for autocratic leadership. This relationship is hypothesised to be mediated by the variable Anxiety. This study also attempts to research whether there is a moderating effect of the variable (Low) Self-Awareness on the relationship between Anxiety and the Preference for Autocratic Leadership. The study is conducted using an online cross-sectional survey research among 105 individuals from mainly European and North-American countries. The quantitative results, analysed using the programs SPSS and Macro Process, showed that the only hypothesis supported in this study confirms a relationship between Uncertainty and Anxiety. However, the output displayed other interesting information and relations that will be discussed at the end of this study, together with considerations for future research in this area. Furthermore, suggestions and implications for managers and those involved in leadership and communication in organisational settings are being made.

Key words: Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Leadership Styles, Anxiety, Uncertainty, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness, Democratic Leadership

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Título da dissertação: **A Influência da Incerteza, Ansiedade e Autoconhecimento no Estilo de Liderança preferencial de um individuo**

A presente tese descreve uma investigação quantitativa que visa descobrir se um elevado nível da percepção de incerteza por um indivíduo está relacionado com a sua preferência por uma liderança autocrática. Esta relação é pressuposta de ser mediada pela variável de Ansiedade. Além do mais, este estudo tenta investigar se há um efeito mediador da variável de (Baixo) Autoconhecimento na relação entre Ansiedade e na Preferência por uma Liderança Autocrática. Este estudo foi conduzido usando um questionário online de investigação transversal entre 105 indivíduos, maioritariamente de países Europeus e Norte Americanos. Os resultados quantitativos, analisados através do uso dos programas SPSS e Macro Process, aferiram que a única hipótese suportada pelo estudo confirma a relação entre a Incerteza e a Ansiedade. Contudo, o resultado apresentou outra informação interessante e outras relações que serão discutidas no final deste estudo, juntamente com as considerações para uma futura investigação nesta área. Além disso, serão feitas sugestões e implicações para gestores e para os envolvidos na liderança e comunicação das configurações organizacionais.

Palavras-chave: Liderança, Liderança Autocrática, Estilos de Liderança, Ansiedade, Incerteza, Inteligência Emocional, Autoconhecimento, Liderança Democrática

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1. Business Context: Leadership in the Contemporary World

In the 21st century, one of the results of rapid globalization was convergence of needs, customs, rituals and general lifestyle among (mainly young and middle aged) people from different countries and with various backgrounds. People from Manhattan, New York, watch the same movies, read the same books and eat the same Asian noodles as teenagers from Warsaw, Poland or Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Our ideas, behaviours and customs are becoming more and more similar. The mental and physical boundaries between countries and cultures are becoming less important and even disappearing. Literally disappearing, because in the part of European Union that is united under the Schengen agreement, we do not even have to stop for a passport control any more. All this cohesion would lead us to believe that around the world, if people have similar ideas about high fashion, food trends, business practices and trade policies, the fundamental parts of our society would also start to look alike. One of these fundamental concepts are interpersonal communication, organisation of work and social behaviour. The concept of social behaviour and group dynamics brings us further to the concept of leadership.

Different leadership styles have emerged during the history and, depending on the cultural values, time in history, social context and structure and personal characters, they differed on many levels. Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Cleopatra, Napoleon Bonaparte, Winston Churchill, Lech Walesa, Margaret Thatcher, Nelson Mandela, Steve Jobs. These people are only examples of many leaders that affected a great number of human beings during their, sometimes short, lives. They lived in distant times, in different parts of the world and had distinctive personalities and stories that motivated them to do what they did. Even though the history saw various amount of leaders with very opposite character traits - cruel, noble, inspirational, violent, large-hearted - it is possible to see a pattern and a trend in the evolution of the leadership style in the Western World after the ending of the World War II and then also after the collapse of USSR. The democratic and participative leadership seemed to be what societies needed after the tyranny of Adolf Hitler and rigorous rules of communist ideology. Our (Western) world started to move forward with more and more women in the leadership roles in multinational companies and more acceptance of people with various sexual orientations. One of the biggest breaking points for the democratic United States of America was when in 2008 Barack Obama was elected the first African American President. A true democrat and a born leader and speaker.

To shortly portrait the essence of differences between leadership styles, the three leadership styles of Lewin, Lippit and White (1939) will be used: the *Democratic, Laissez-Faire and Autocratic* Leadership. Democratic leader invites and includes the others in decision making process. He/she develops people's skills and can be a great motivator. Due to the participation process, this approach can slow up the speed and fluency of operations, although the results tend to better due to differentiated feedback and more than one point of view taken into account. It is a suitable style when teamwork and high quality are valued more than the speed. A person with the laissez-faire leadership style is in favour of non-interference policy, freedom and does not have a fixed way of reaching goals. An *autocratic leadership*-style is a perfect style to ensure productivity and 'order'. Although, according to Hayers (2000), workers who felt under pressure while at work, often reported autocratic supervision as the leadership style used by their employers/managers. According to the research done by Bhatti et al. (2012), autocratic leadership style leads to employees who feel threatened and often punished, since these kind of practices are believed to be the most effective way to reach organisation's goals in the eyes of an autocrat. Their study also showed that autocratic leaders do not involve their employees in the decision making process. Other findings suggested that employees feel uneasy while doing their job under an autocratic leader. All these findings and specifics of each style, described above, make it understandable why democratic leadership style, and democracy in general, are very popular and praised (mainly in the Western World).

While the western society was very proud and relieved because of these developments at the beginning of the 21st century, a big part of the world was and still is leaving in poverty and financial distress. A lot of countries were/are in the hands of totalitarian, often corrupted regimes, which were not interested in letting their power go into the hands of common people. These countries were not only some small states in Africa, Asia or Latin America. The biggest competitor of the USA in the run for the title of "The Boss of the World", Russia, was still ruled in a way that is based on the communist ideology and the long autocratic history of the Russian empire. While in the United States the democrats were celebrating the election of Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin was retiring from his Russian presidency that started in 1999. Not for long, because in 2012 Putin became the President again. Strong, powerful, calm - according to Cannady and Kubicek (2014) Putin has embraced patriotism, power and statism to be able to justify centralisation of power and his authoritarian policies. A big part of the Western World was hoping that after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of

the USSR in 1991, Russia will transform rapidly into a more democratic state and will follow the lead of their Western neighbours. However, we live now in the year 2019 and although Russia is developing its economy, social systems and changes slowly, but surely, into a country more and more open to the world, Vladimir Putin still seems to be the dream leader of most Russians. Why? How? A lot of Western societies were surprised by his influence, ongoing power and unquestionable support from such a big group of the citizens in Russia. How could *this* kind of a leader still manage to keep his rigorous and, in opinion of some, 'outdated' style relevant in the 21st century? Are the Russians blind? Do they not see how they are being manipulated into thinking they are progressing, while their country is being govern in an dictatorial, tyrannical way? This could never happen in the USA. In 2016, the Americans elected Donald Trump.

After 8 years of the presidency of the democrat Barack Obama, who, in opinion of many, is a well-spoken, open minded and humble leader, the people decided that the narcissistic, heat-headed and impulsive republican Donald Trump is the right choice for the country. Apparently, there is something about his autocratic leadership and domineering nature that attracts people as well. The society often desires strong leaders in times of crisis and the autocratic narration often comes across as stronger than the democratic one. The same stands ground when it comes to the organisational structures in companies. An important driver that can stimulate the growth of authoritarianism is the growing precarization, uncertainty and anxiety. This thesis is going to research whether people who live in uncertainty and anxiety with low levels of self-awareness prefer to be led by autocratic leaders. The chapter 2 will explain the relationship between uncertainty, anxiety and leadership. In the chapter 3, the approaches and theories regarding leadership will be discussed, ending with the emotional and relational dimensions. The method and the procedures of the research are going to be presented in chapter 4 and the results in chapter 5. This will be followed by discussion in chapter 6, recommendations for future research in chapter 7 and some managerial implications in chapter 8. This thesis will be concluded with the presentation of results and learnings in chapter 9.

2. Uncertainty, Anxiety and Leadership

The following chapter will explain the concepts of the feeling of uncertainty and anxiety, show the relation between them and make an introductory link in regard to the effect of these two factors on the preferred leadership style. The main research question and the model analysed in this thesis will be introduced at the end of this chapter.

2.1 Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory

The Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (referenced to as AUM) provides an explanation for an effective interpersonal and intergroup communication. According to this theory, the abilities to manage both uncertainty and anxiety are directly influencing our capabilities to communicate effectively with other people (Gudykunst, 1995). It states that the degree to which we, as individuals, are able to communicate with each other effectively, is positively correlated to how well one can manage his/her anxiety and identify other people's behaviours and feelings. These findings suggest that anxiety and uncertainty management are not only powerful tools when it comes to gain better communication skills, but are crucial in obtaining effective communication (Stephan, Stephan & Gudykunst, 1999).

Effective communication is important in interpersonal relations and thus also within organisational structures, such as team communication or supervisor-subordinate relationships. One can describe effective communication as a "process involving the exchange of messages and the creation of meaning" (Stephan, Stephan & Gudykunst, 1999, p. 616). The effectiveness of the communication is the extent to which there is a similarity between the interpretation of the message done by the receiver and the actual meaning originally designated by the sender. When these two are aligned, the communication between them can be called effective.

The phenomenon's Anxiety and Uncertainty used in the AUM theory, touch the cognitive aspect of Uncertainty and call Anxiety the emotional equivalent of the first one (Stephan, Stephan & Gudykunst, 1999). In this study we are going to focus on the general feeling of anxiety and uncertainty within people, not necessarily touching the subject of the in-group communication skills related to it. What the AUM theory shows us is that Anxiety and Uncertainty are related to each other and influence our behaviours and reactions related to

our environment and people in it. This relation is an important building stone of the conceptual framework of this research.

The next subchapter is explaining this relationship further, showing as well what can create those feelings by linking them to the Precarization.

2.2 Precarization, Uncertainty and Anxiety

Precarization happens when one loses autonomous control over his/hers own situation. The definition describes the precarity as a condition of existence without predictability or security. In short, it is a state of *uncertainty*. In political and managerial context, it is a shift from autonomous to heteronomous control with as aim to overcome certain problems connected to, for example, productivity (Lorey, 2010). It means that someone else, a leader or a manager, has the control over your work situation in order to increase performance control.

The precariat is caused by the economic and political shifts that happened in the last decades (in Europe). There was a rise of importance of economic goals such as increasing the role of market driven economy, improving productivity and competitiveness. The instruments, used to strive for accomplishment of these goals, from the managerial and economic perspective, were implementing flexibility, lowering security in job and stability of social relations and in the end, they were also the causes of the precarization process (Nørreklit, 2016). This process is characterised by insecurity, uncertainty, difficulty and delicacy. In politics, this terminology refers to living and working conditions without any guarantees (Nørreklit, 2016). This kind of uncertain environment is creating people who lost their ability for autonomous decision making, because they question their role, work performance and capability of making decisions on their own. In a society or organisation where a lot of people are confused about their future, there is a chance of increased feeling of anxiety and a loss of confidence in one self. The shift in control and rise of insecurity over one's own life and conditions is resulting in increased anxiety in general, but also about one's own capabilities, causing low self-esteem. Unstable people with low self-esteem tend to prefer to put their trust in hands of powerful others and thus prefer autocratic leadership over the democratic one. People with high self-esteem are more optimistic and believe that their input could help in solving a certain problem and that is why they generally prefer a democratic, participative leadership style, where their opinions and ideas are valued by other

group members. These are the people who in general possess a very important dimension from the emotional intelligence; self-awareness. Even in uncertain times and under the burden of anxiety, people with high self-awareness are able to recognize and handle their own emotions by themselves. They are aware of their weaknesses and this awareness makes them more confident (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002). On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem do not believe that their potential suggestions could contribute in solving problems and reducing uncertainty, so they prefer to trust others to make decisions for them. They are not trusting their own decision making process and thus they search for an autocratic leader who they find capable of reducing the uncertainty (Schoel, Bluemke, Mueller & Stahlberg, 2011).

These findings explain why Donald Trump was able to convince so many American citizens to vote for him. United States of America likes to portray themselves as preachers of democracy and the biggest democracy in the world. Donald Trump's leadership style is, in contrast to the general idea of his country, very autocratic. However, this is apparently what America needed in 2016. According to an article from BBC news, written by Anthony Zurcher in November 2016, there were several reasons why Donald Trump managed to win the elections and a lot of them are related to the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty in a large amount of voters in the United States. Working-class white people without college education felt overlooked by the establishment and left behind by the 'coastal elite'. The immigration crisis, lack of public health care and economic distress are other reasons for the increased feeling of confusion, uncertainty and anxiety. One can say that most of the Trump-voters were not sure about the stability of their life and work conditions and needed a strong leader to reduce their uncertainty. Donald Trump knew that for people who live in uncertainty and are looking for a powerful role model to follow, the truth does not really matter - it is about the tough appearance, hard words and self-confidence to make people choose you to take the lead.

This example is used to illustrate how autocratic leadership can emerge very rapidly as the most effective leadership style, even if it was preceded by a democratic one. This case shows that an autocratic leadership style can be caused by various factors, however, also according to the literature, a very important driver is the feeling of uncertainty and anxiety within the followers.

There are other factors, that contribute to emergence of autocratic leadership style, or any leadership style in general, that were not pinpointed before. A very big part of our code of conducts, our behavioural patterns in group situations and towards other individuals are determined by our personal character traits. Our characters often prescribe the ways in which we approach problems, solve them and treat other people. In western society, we are taught that democratic behaviour is the correct one in the political, organisational and private spheres. It is thus also not surprising that under the normal circumstances, the democratic leadership is preferred in Western societies (Schoel, Bluemke, Mueller & Stahlberg, 2011).

2.3 Leadership and Character Traits

In 2010, Spears stated that we can observe a rapid shift from the traditional, autocratic leadership to so called servant leadership, which is based on interpersonal relationships, ethics and the wellbeing and personal development of the employees. This was portrayed in the context of business, but this could be true for the general development of leadership. Looking at the way business students are being taught about group projects and working together in the most prestigious Business Schools in Europe, we seem to value participation, mutual respect for each other's opinion and ability to understand other points of views and adapt to various environments and situations. We do not value lack of flexibility, ethnocentrism, arrogance or ignorance. Dictatorial and no cooperative leadership attributes are seen as negative leader attributes (House et al. 2004). The ways in which we are being educated during our business courses creates for us an image of a perfect leader; positive, trustworthy, dynamic, decisive, coordinative, team builder, encouraging, honest. We learn that democratic leadership is the one who often embraces these positive leader attributes. Unconsciously, business students start to believe that being a democratic leader is the only way to assure successful leadership in the future and thus also competitive advantage and prosperous path of one's career in business. It sounds very promising and seems like a relatively easy way to guarantee success in our future career. However, the concept of leadership is a little bit more complex, since the environmental factors also influence the way we perceive leadership.

There are a lot of studies done on leadership with the aim to understand its nature and examine its outcomes. Leadership is a process whereby an individual uses social influence upon a group of people to get a voluntary approval from the group to guide them towards organisational goals (Bhatti et al, 2012). The academics developed ways to conceptualize

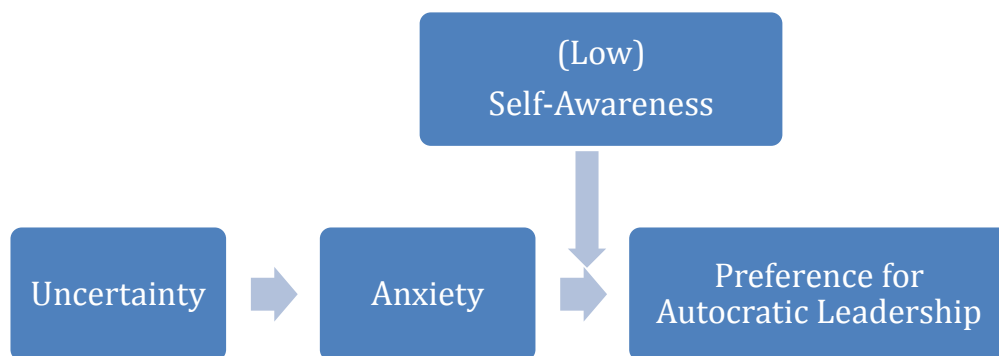
leadership and educate young (business) students on how to become a better leader and an effective guide. However, what kind of leader you are going to become does not only depend on how well you study the topic but it is also, if not mainly, related to your personal character traits, (organisational) culture, the cultural dimensions of the country you are based in, personality factors (Judge et al., 2002), emotional intelligence (Shankman & Allen, 2002), situational factors and more. Thousands of studies were done on the topic of leadership in the last century. There are different theories that try to explain why and how one becomes a leader. Scientists also developed various approaches to explain how one can be a better leader. Various studies were considered with the followers-side in the leadership relations, trying to find out which way, and when, is the most desired one. These theories and research led to categorizations of leadership into styles and conceptualization of the topic into different approaches. This paper is showing the multiple layers of the study on leadership topic over the years. Based upon all these theories and findings, presented at a later stage in this paper, one can state that what kind of leader one becomes or should become is largely dependent on factors that are outside of his/her power. It also argues that there is no one “right” leadership style, no “most relevant ” approach and that not everyone necessarily desires or needs the same kind of leader.

2.4 Autocratic Leadership Style and Anxiety

This research is focussing on the factors that lead a person to desire an autocratic leader. Based on the literature review, this study hypothesizes that the feeling of uncertainty in the environment of an individual will lead to a feeling of anxiety. As described above, anxiety is a stimulator for a person to give up their decision making privileges into the hands of others, since they feel like they are not in power to handle the situation. The study hypothesizes that this feeling of anxiety will thus have a mediating effect between uncertainty and preference for autocratic leadership, since this is the leadership style where rules and structures are of high importance and the leaders prefer clear hierarchies and to be the only decision makers. The literature shows that uncertainty and anxiety in the society is a factor that plays in favour of autocratic leadership. Moreover, it is hypothesized that the effect of anxiety on preference for autocratic leadership will be higher if the individual does score low on the dimension of emotional intelligence called self-awareness, since this is a tool that could help in dealing with anxiety and give the individual more self-confidence. This reasoning has led me to construct

the following conceptual framework (Figure 1), hypotheses and the main research question: Does Uncertainty, with a mediating effect of Anxiety, lead to a Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style, which relation to Anxiety is being moderated by Low Self-Awareness?

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Hypothesis 1: High levels of perceived Uncertainty lead to higher levels of Anxiety within a human being.

Hypothesis 2: High levels of Anxiety lead to a Preference for Autocratic Leadership.

Hypothesis 3: Anxiety has a positive mediating effect in the relationship between Uncertainty of a person and Preference for Autocratic Leadership.

Hypothesis 4: Low levels of Self-Awareness have a moderating effect on the relationship between Anxiety and the Preference of an Autocratic Leader.

3. Leadership

Leadership as a concept has been researched by scholars for decades. Different definitions were formulated to describe leadership. In 1990, Bass wrote: “Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members” (pp. 19). However, it is by far not the only definition out there. In 2006, a team of researchers reviewed 160 articles and books with definitions of leadership to find an integrative definition of leadership since, according to the writers Winston and Patterson (2006), it seemed that all the previous articles (they refer to an amount of about 26000 articles on leadership) seem to describe only certain parts of it and certain dimensions but failed to capture all of it. Their article is a very long and detailed description of leadership, but for the purpose of this research, the following sentence is considered precise enough to summarize their findings, relevant to the topic of this paper: ”A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization’s mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives.” (p. 7).

Leadership is complicated to describe exhaustively in short due to the fact that it is multidimensional, personal and flexible in its nature. It can change due to the personalities of the people involved in the interaction, situational factors, people’s skills, culture and more. In short, one can state that “leadership is a process of influence” (Chemers, 2001, p. 376). This chapter will shed light on the different approaches in defining, conceptualizing and using leadership with focus on explaining its various characteristics, dimensions and styles.

3.1 Leadership Styles

Three leadership styles were mentioned in the introduction: *democratic, laissez-faire and autocratic* (Lewin, Lippit and White, 1939). However, more leadership styles exist and are often quite contradictory in their nature: transactional vs transformational, autocratic vs democratic, hereditary vs charismatic. There are crucial differences between these styles, that can be caused by the supervisor-employer relationship, national culture, character traits of the individuals, organizational culture etc. To portrait what kind of personality and which

character traits could be linked to a specific leadership style, it is necessary to understand the biggest differences and similarities between the various styles.

3.1.1. Transactional, Transformational and Laissez-Faire Leadership

According to Burns (1978), the difference between transactional and transformational leadership theories lies in what followers and leaders can offer each other. The transactional leaders focus on offering resources to the followers, that they desire, in exchange to resources/actions the leader wants to receive. The transformational leaders try to look further than the extrinsic rewards proposed by the transactional leaders. The transformational leadership theory suggests that intrinsic rewards are more important because they motivate the follower to align their needs with the ones of their leader. This creates a situation where the followers work not only for the leader, but also for themselves since they identify with the leader (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). When transformational leadership applies, the leader is giving the followers something they want in exchange for something the leader wants. This can result in lack of identification, motivation and loyalty. As soon as the extrinsic reward is not satisfying the employer/follower any more, there is no reason for him/her to work hard since he/she does not identify with or believe in the cause.

There are four dimensions related to transformational leadership: charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). These dimensions are all related to the empowerment of the follower; the leader wants the followers to act in accordance with his vision, however, he/she wants the followers to not do it for him/her but for themselves. The key here is to show the followers that the mission of the leader is the mission of all of them and that they choose freely to be a part of it. The leader cares for his followers personally and wants to let them know how important every single one of them is as an individual, not only as a group.

The dimensions corresponding to the transactional leadership style are: contingent reward, management by exception (active) and management by exception (passive) (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). The contingent reward is the name of the concept described above; setting up a proper reward system for the desired performances carried out by the follower. There is a difference between the *active* and *passive* nature of the dimension 'management by exception', according to Howell and Avolio (1993). The intervention-timing plays a role here.

The leaders with an active attitude tend to monitor the followers and, through anticipation and prediction, try to implement corrective and necessary actions to prevent possible and serious problems. The passive leaders will rather await the outcome of the actions of the followers and react afterwards, if any difficulties occurred and their intervention is needed. One can conclude that these dimensions sound very regulatory, organised and hierarchic.

Transactional leadership sounds more straightforward and appears to have a clearer structure than the transformational style, although the transformational seems to assure higher and long-term follower satisfaction. It suggests that a leader needs to take into account the trade-offs which occur while choosing one over the other. However, do the leaders need to choose between those two?

Bass (1985) suggests that it is not necessary to distinguish between applying the transactional or transformational leadership style. According to him, these two theories are separate concepts and are not on the opposite ends of a single continuum. He suggests that the best leaders are the ones who use and mix both leadership styles.

There is yet another form of leadership style, which is also called a non-leadership style: Laissez-Faire leadership. “Laissez Faire” comes from French and means “Let Do”. The translation to English illustrates well the very nature of this style. Laissez-Faire leaders let the followers decide on their own, avoid making decisions and can appear absent when needed (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). It is very passive, although it should not be confused with the passive version of management by exception (transactional leadership). In this case there is a lack of leadership of any kind, both transactional and transformational.

3.1.2 Democratic and Autocratic Leadership

Leadership has also been described as “an instrument of goal achievement” (Bass, 1990, pp. 15-16). However, not every leadership style seems to fuel this positive mechanism of motivation in the same way. According to Gastill (1994), many authors such as Bass (1990), Anderson (1959) or Hollander and Offerman (1990), underlined the importance of democratic and participatory leadership, putting it in contrast to authoritarian, supervisory and others to show how the undemocratic leadership styles cause trouble at the work floor. What are the characteristics of democratic and autocratic leadership styles and what makes them so fundamentally different?

Kurt Lewin with his colleagues formulated a classic definition of the democratic leadership style (Lewin & Lippitt, 1938; Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939; White & Lippitt, 1960). Gastil (1994) summarizes their findings, stating that the democratic leadership style distinguishes itself from autocratic style in the area of decision making process, member involvement, honest communication and social relations. Democratic leaders rely on the opinions and ideas of the group members while making decisions, they encourage members to be active, they are fair and honest in their feedback and they try to create real social and emotional bonds with their followers. According to Gastil (1994), this way of leading is called democratic because it includes basic democratic principles, such as self-determinations, inclusiveness, equal participation and deliberation (Dahl, 1989; Fishkin, 1991). Democracy is something close to home; in most of the Western World countries, democracy is the building stone of our society and many find it crucial to defend and nurture it. It is a concept that is deeply rooted in our contemporary value system. The components and characteristic of the democratic leadership style a very relevant and important when it comes to successful leadership because it has been proven that the organizational functionality and group functionality are highly dependent on the happiness and motivation of the group members to achieve collective welfare (De Cremer, 2006). Furthermore, according to De Cremer and Tyler (2005), it is of high importance that the group members feel intrinsically motivated to pursue this common goal of their group or organization; if their need to perform is coming within and they believe themselves in the cause, it increases the quality of performance and cooperation. This motivational approach, focused on intrinsic rewards, can be linked back to the transformational leadership style, which also focuses on emotional condition of the followers. This way of leading is thus believed to increase job satisfaction and job performance.

The autocratic leadership style describes an authoritarian way of leading. Authoritarian leaders use the power they get from their position in the hierarchy to put their opinions forward and make sure they are the (final) decision makers. Formal relationships, clear hierarchy, structured society and rules are being valued and nurtured by autocratic leaders (Alas, Tafel & Tuulik, 2007). This leadership style is being criticized for many reasons and on various grounds by the leadership literature. It has been identified by multiple authors as a style, that does not focus on socio-emotional dimensions of groups (De Cremer, 2006). It has a destabilizing influence when it comes to groups, which is caused by its procedural rather than distributive aspects (Van Vugt, Jepson, Hart & De Cremer, 2004). It scores low on the

factor of consideration, according to the famous Ohio State studies (Judge, Piccolo & Ilies, 2004). According to Judge et al. (2004), consideration is related to satisfaction, motivation and effectiveness. Lower consideration has thus a negative influence on the followers' performance.

The biggest difference between democratic and autocratic leadership style lies, according to Bass (1990), Van Vugt et al., (2004) and other researchers, in the *amount of control* that the group members have regarding the decision-making process. This notion is essential and can be easily explained, using the characteristics and outcomes of research, described in this paper before. To improve group quality and performance, it is necessary for the followers to be motivated intrinsically so they feel connected to the common goal and they identify with the mission of their leader. To be really involved in this mission, the goal and thus the whole process, the followers must also feel like they can contribute and have a saying in the decision making process that is crucial on the path to reach the common goal. If they are being excluded by the leader, their opinions are not being taken into consideration and their emotional well-being is being neglected, their performance might drop. This correlation is backed up by yet another research. According to Van Vugt et al. (2004), autocratic leadership has a negative influence on group stability and effectiveness. Also group climate and general happiness are suffering under an autocratic leader (Bass, 1990).

Given all of the negative outcomes regarding autocratic leadership, it is not surprising that teaching, motivating and applying democratic leadership is more popular nowadays. Especially in context of business, companies want to structure their operations and groups in a way to maximize profit and effectiveness. Scientific research, also mentioned above, suggests that autocratic leadership is not the way to achieve this.

3.1.3. Charismatic Leadership

Charismatic leadership, family of “transformational”, “visionary” and “inspirational” leadership, started to be interesting for many scholars around 1980's. Those new theories emerged when researchers began to focus on the leaders with extraordinary capabilities in area of influence and motivation. These leaders were able to inspire people to fully commit to the collective interests of the group/organisation and identify with the leader's mission. The followers were highly involved in the cause of their leader, forgetting their self-interests and

ready for personal sacrifices to support the common mission. This new wave of leadership theories was called 'charismatic' because charisma was a central element in all of them (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993).

The charismatic theories focus on the emotional attachment of the followers to the leader; the followers are being emotionally aroused, their self-esteem rises, they have trust in their leader and are being intrinsically motivated. These new theories emphasize the importance of symbolic leader behaviour, visionarity of the leader, nonverbal communication, appeal to ideological values and other behaviours in relation to emotional and inspirational arousal. Charismatic leaders expect a lot from both themselves as well as from their followers (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993).

According to De Cremer (2006), 'self-sacrifice' is one of the core aspects of charismatic leadership. 'Self-sacrifice' can be defined as one's willingness "to suffer the loss of types of things to maintain personal beliefs and values" (Yorges, Weiss, & Strickland, 1999, p. 428). Charismatic leaders expect follower's self-sacrifice and performance beyond the call of duty. This kind of leadership is providing followers with a meaningful environment at work and in the organisation. The way they inspire the followers makes them want to commit and speaks to their morals and values (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). This level of follower commitment and thus group cohesion is unlikely to reach when the leaders are using material, extrinsic incentives or solely believe in the power of reinforcement behaviours.

3.2 Categorization and Conceptualization of Leadership

Different theories and types of leadership styles were described. Some of them are related to each other and every single one of them is represented by distinguished elements and factors. Most of them are related to the personality of the leader and could also seem to be a choice. However, the concept of leadership is more complex than that. Other factors might affect the ways in which leaders try to influence their followers. These factors can be both external and internal. Also, researchers tried to study leadership by examining it from different angles. In the literature, one can find that since the beginning of the 20th century, different approaches to the concept of leadership were used in attempt to explain and conceptualize the fine art of leading.

3.2.1 Trait Approach

Trait approach was one of the first systematic attempt to study leadership. It has its base in the believe that leaders possess different characteristics from “ordinary people”. To understand why this assumption was born, we need to go back in the history of leadership. In the 19th and 20th century, men believed in the so called ‘great man’ leadership theory. This assumed that great leaders are born with superior characteristics, inherited from their ancestors. In the 20th century, this theory started to sound implausible and outdated and evolved into the trait-theory. These theory argues that there are certain characteristics, patterns of behaviour and capacities that leaders tend to possess, but it does not focus on whether they are inherited or acquired (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991). An important element of the trait theory became the 5-factor personality model, also called the Big Five. Norman (1963) and Tupes and Christal (1961) are usually the ones to be credited with the final replication of the model and can be called its founders. The dimensions in this model are Extraversion (tendency to be sociable, assertive and to have a lot of positive energy), Conscientiousness (tendency to thorough, organized, decisive and dependable), Openness to Experience (one is informed, creative and curious), Agreeableness (a person who is accepting, nurturing, conforming and can be trusted) and Neuroticism (tendency to focus on negative emotions, to be depressed, anxious, insecure and hostile) (Goldberg, 1990). According to the study on the correlation between the Big Five Model and successful leadership by Judge et al. (2002), the factor most strongly associated with leadership is Extraversion and thus it can be called the most important trait of a leader. Then follow the factors called Conscientiousness and Openness. Low Neuroticism and Agreeableness are closing the list, with the last one only weakly related to leadership.

According to Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), there are six traits that distinguish leaders from non-leaders; Drive, Desire to Lead and for Achievement, Honesty/Integrity, Self-Confidence, Cognitive Ability and Knowledge of the Business. Other important traits, although with weaker research support, are: charisma, creativity/originality, flexibility.

To find the right leaders, companies use so called ‘personality assessments’; they try to find the ‘right’ people with desired traits for specific positions, assuming that this will increase the organisational effectiveness. One of the instruments to measure the traits is the Leadership Trait Questionnaire (LTQ) (Northouse, 2018). Another method to find out what kind of personality type one has, is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which is a self-report

questionnaire, which takes into account psychological preferences in how one perceives the world around him/her and based upon what he/she makes decisions. It classifies people into one of the possible 16 groups, based on the four dimensions, where people choose whether they are/prefer either; Extrovert (E) or Introverted (I), Sensing (S) or Intuitive (N), Thinking (T) or Feeling (F), and Judging (J) or Perceiving (P) (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

3.2.2. Skills Approach

The Skills Approach is a rather descriptive approach to the concept of leadership, describing the skills necessary to provide effective leadership, on different levels in an organisation. Leadership skills can be defined as an ability to use one owns capabilities, competencies and knowledge to reach certain goals. Research was done on different perspectives. A summary of three of them is given below.

With the three skills approach Katz (1955) suggested in his research that the importance of certain skills varies, depending on where the leader is positioned in the management hierarchy. According to him, there are three major skills: *technical*, *human* and *conceptual*. Technical skills are concerned with hard skills and include being fluent in a specific type of task or activity. A person with technical skills has analytical ability to be proficient in his/her job and knows how to use adequate tools and techniques. Technical skills are most important at the lower levels of management. Human skills are about one's knowledge of people and ability to work with them. Managers with human skills are aware of both their own as much as of other's perspective at the same time. They support cooperation and make sure the whole team is focused on the common goals. They want to be trusted by the employees and aspire to empower them. This skills is said to be important *AT ALL* levels of management. The last set of skills described by Katz (1955) are the conceptual skills. These skills include the ability to mental work to formulate and shape meaning of the organisation's mission and policies. It requires understanding of abstract and hypothetical issues and concepts. It is essential in creating a strategy for the company. This is also why this set of skills is the most relevant at the top management levels.

Mumford, Campion and Morgeson (2007) argued in their research that it is necessary for every leader to have higher levels of all skills when he/she is positioned at the higher levels in hierarchy.

The last proposition says that the outcomes of leadership are a result of leader's competencies in problem solving, social judgement & knowledge (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding et al. (2000).

Skills approach differs from the trait approach in that skills are possible for leader to accomplish, whereas traits is rather who leaders are (Northouse, 2018). Although, since there are different levels of management and not all sets of skills are needed on all of them, it can be assumed that even though it was argued to be possible to acquire those skills, not every manager takes action to do it. It can be caused by the lack of necessity due to his/her position on the organisational ladder, but it is also not wrong to argue that it is easier for some to require and develop certain sets of skills than for others. This can be related to the personality and thus traits of the people; an extroverted person will have less difficulty in talking and managing people and will be surely more efficient in the human skills than an introvert.

Katz (1955) with his three skills approach made a statement, which is very relevant for this research. He states that the Human Skills are necessary for every level of management, which suggests they should be an universal set of skills for all the people in leading positions. This makes even more sense, when you look at the most popular leading styles of the 21st century. The description of human skills can be linked to Transformational, Democratic and Charismatic leadership, which underlines the importance of social capabilities, human relations and emotional connection between the leaders and the followers.

3.2.3 Style Approach

The Style Approach puts emphasis on the behaviour of the leader and focuses mainly on what leaders do and how they act. This approach is based on two general types/groups of behaviour: *task behaviours* and *relationship behaviours*. Task behaviours are the behaviours focused on goal accomplishment and which serve as a support mechanism for group members/followers in achieving objectives. Relationship behaviours take into account the human factor. They assistance the subordinates in feeling comfortable with themselves, within the group and in different situations.

A good representation of how to conceptualize these behaviours and explain in which way they coexist is the Blake & Mouton's Managerial (Leadership) Grid (Blake, Mouton &

Bidwell, 1962). It was designed to explain how leaders can guide their organisations to reach their goals. The Components of the Grid are:

- Authority-Compliance (9,1)
- Country Club Management (1,9)
- Impoverished Management (1,1)
- Middle-of-the-Road Management (5,5)
- Team Management (9,9)
- Paternalism/Maternalism (1, 9; 9,1)
- Opportunism

The two numbers you see behind the name of a leadership ‘method’ is the representation of the distribution of two concerns in his/her managerial behaviour; the first number represents the *concern for production* and the second one the *concern for people*. *Concern for production* shows how big the concern is of the leader to reach organizational goals and fulfilling the tasks. The *concern for people* dimension shows how much the leader cares about his/her relationships with the members of the organisation which are working on achieving the goals.

The grid suggests that it is not necessary the one or the other when it comes to the styles developed using these two dimensions. Leaders can behave in very different ways and this approach suggests that they are aware of their style and are able to change their concerns and adapt their behaviour if it is necessary.

An important insight of this approach is given by the first style from the grid presented above: *Authority-Compliance*. According to Blake and Mouton, the dimension *concern for people* has only very little relevance in this style (represented by number 1). The leaders who use this style are being perceived as controlling, demanding and overpowering. Looking at the description, one could say that those leaders are quite authoritarian and autocratic. One can conclude, that yet another approach suggests that an authoritarian way of leading consists of little attention for human being and leader-follower relations. Leaders using this approach try

to create as much structure as possible, organizing working conditions in a way that human interference is rather minimal (Northouse, 2015).

3.2.4. Situational Approach

The situational approach describes how leaders match their style to the competence and commitment of subordinates (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). The Situational Approach focuses on how situations influence the way of leadership. It suggests that leadership style should be adapted to various situations, dependent on the levels of commitment and competence of an employee/follower. This approach can be used in training and the knowledge about how to adapt can be acquired by potential and future leaders, who need to learn flexibility.

The approach is comprised of a *directive* and a *supportive* dimension. The situations show to which extent each dimension should be applied. Leaders pay attention to the behaviour and knowledge of their subordinates to get more insight in their competences and commitment in performing the tasks. The *directive* behaviours consider the tasks. Directive behaviours are supposed to help the group members in achieving their goals through one-way communication. The leaders give clear directions, establish goals and explain how they can be achieved and define clear roles. The *supportive* behaviours deal with relationships and are conducted through a two-way communication. The leader is considered with the feelings of the co-workers and takes into account their emotions and evaluations. The followers are being asked for input and listened to when they come up with an idea (Northouse, 2015). The leaders match their style and adapt how much of a supportive and how much of a directive behaviour is necessary, depending on how developed the levels of commitment and competence of an employee are. Based on the levels of these two dimensions, the leaders can adopt one of the four following styles; Directing, Coaching, Supporting or Delegating (Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi, 2013).

In the previous parts of this paper, subchapters 2.1 and 2.2, the various Leadership Styles and Approaches were introduced and described. Starting from the subchapter 2.3, the narrative of the research dives deeper into the emotional dimension of leadership and relations between a leader and his/her subordinate(s).

3.3 The Importance of the Leader-Subordinate Relationship

This subchapter attempts to show how the relationship between a leader/manager and his/her followers/employees affects the concept of leadership. The previous subchapters touched the distinctive personal and emotional areas by explaining how e.g. character traits, employees' attitudes and emotional involvement of independently employed employee and the leader, can impact the choice for the leadership style. Building forward on all of these theories and approaches, the following subchapter 2.3 will bring into the equation the factors 'relationship with the employee' and 'situation', showing that there is no such thing as 'the best leadership style' since different situations require different kinds of leaders to lead to the best group performance.

3.3.1 Situational Favourableness and Leadership Effectiveness

In the chapters before, the reader could find a quite extensive summary of leadership styles and approaches. However, to explain how situations influence the kind of leadership, it is worth mentioning the research done by the American scientist Fred Fiedler in 1971. Fiedler (1971) describes and categorizes leadership style by measuring the least preferred co-worker (LPC) score from the participants. The LPC score is being determined through a survey questionnaire usually consisting of 16 to 24 items with an 8-point bipolar adjective scales. The participant is being asked beforehand to think about the least favourite co-worker he or she ever had. Then, by filling in the questionnaire, the participant is going to express how this person was according to him/her. A high score means that even though the individual was thinking about a co-worker which he/she preferred the least, he/she still expressed him/herself relatively positively about this person. On the other hand, a low score indicated that the participant referred to his/hers least preferred co-worker in a very negative, stereotyped manner, which suggests that he/she really thinks about the least preferred co-worker, very simplistically, as completely bad or awful. Immediately, the scientists made a link between high LPC score and **relationship-oriented leadership** and low LPC score and **task-oriented leadership**. However, Fiedler himself (1967a) argued that these statements are only true if leaders find themselves in difficult, unfavourable, anxiety arousing situations, where their control and power are being challenged. According to Mitchell (1970) you can expect more complex way of thinking about groups from leaders with a high LPC score in contrast to ones with a low score, which tend to run off to simple and stereotyped behaviour.

This brings us to the situational factor. Fielder (1971) argues that the ‘situational favourableness’ as a variable is a moderator of the relationship between leadership style (measured by the LPC score) and the group performance. A favourable situation is when the environment where the leader needs to operate, is providing him with power and a high degree of inferentiality from the side of the subordinates. This kind of environment or situation is positive for a leader and gives him/her an advantage, before they even start making effort. The factors that can indicate a ‘favourable situation’ are leader-member relations, task structure and position power. In his work, Fielder (1971) suggests that the leader-member relationship is the most relevant one of the three. He mentions the work of other scientists who also back up this claim.

The following outcome from Fiedler’s research from 1971 is particularly important in the creation of a logic path throughout this paper:

„The results from task groups are highly consistent in showing that groups or organizations with structured tasks and high leader position power perform more effectively under low LPC leaders when the group climate is rated as favourable, and more effectively under high LPC leaders when the group climate is unfavourable” (Fielder, 1971, pp. 146).

The findings of Fielder and others show us that there is no wrong or right leadership style, only the rightly or wrongly chosen one in regard to a certain sort of situation. The outcomes described above show us that when it comes to clear hierarchies, high power distance and structured tasks, the leaders with low LPC score can be the preferred type of a leader. Bearing in mind the information provided on various styles in the subchapter 2.1, one could argue that the leadership style “autocratic leadership” could be a preferred style in certain situations. The question would be; in which ones?

The following (sub)chapters guide the reader further through the logic path, that is describing step by step the reasoning behind the model. These next steps focus on the relationship between a leader and a subordinate, the emotional intelligence and self-awareness. The importance of the leader-member relationships invited us to underline the importance of analysis of the relation of emotional availability and capabilities of both parties, and a preferred leadership style.

3.3.2 Leader-member exchange theory (LMX)

This theory focuses on the interactions between leaders and followers; it makes a dyadic relationship between the two and suggests that this is the essence of the leadership process. Before, research suggested that the leaders treat their followers collectively, not really paying attention to their personal attributes. LMX theory states that a leader has a different relationship, or can have a different relationship, with every single one of his/hers followers (Northouse, 2015).

The first studies on this dyadic relationship resulted in proposition of two types of linkages; “once based on expanded and negotiated role responsibilities (extra-roles), which were called the in-group, and those that were based on the formal employment contract (defined roles), which were called the out-group.” (Northouse, 2015, p. 138). Depending on how familiar and close leader and a follower can get together, the followers are either in the in-group or the out-group. It depends on their personality and character (Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975), but also on how involved the followers want to be with the leadership and the organisation in general. The ones who want to do more (for the leader) than what is written in their job description engage in an exchange with the leader. The follower does something for him/her and the leader returns the favour. They make the chance to become a part of the in-group. Why would it be so important to be a part of an in-group?

People from the in-group have an advantage compared to the other employees. They get more confidence, become more influential and receive information and attention from the leader. They get more chances and special attention which increases the possibility to perform better on the work floor and thus be more satisfied with your job.

One cannot forget that this theory emphasizes a very particular view on the relationship between a leader and a subordinate; one that underlines the value of an ‘exchange’ between them. The way leaders treat and behave towards their employees can also be explained through an analysis of how people regard the nature and working attitudes of employees in general. The following theory, X and Y, focuses on this perspective of the relationship between the leaders and their subordinates.

3.3.3 Theory X and Y

In 1960, the scientist McGregor, wrote a book called “The Human Side of Enterprise”. This became a very important work in the field of leadership and psychology in business, since he presented there his two theories on management’s task: Theory X and Theory Y.

Theory X bases on a few propositions. First of all, according to this theory, organisation of the elements of productive enterprise, such as money, materials, equipment and people, is a responsibility of the management. Secondly, when it comes to people, managers should direct their efforts, motivate them, control them and try to modify and guide their behaviours in the direction of fulfilling organisational needs. The last, but not least assumption - and the crucial difference with the Theory Y - states that people are in general passive and even resistant on the work floor. Managers must be active in persuading, rewarding, punishing and controlling them to make sure the employees do their work and the goals of the organisation are going to be met. He sums it up by suggesting that “management consists of getting things done through other people” (McGregor, 1960, p. 166). This theory bases on some other beliefs; people are lazy and dislike work, they lack ambition and responsibility, they are self-centred and do not really care about the organisations they work for, they dislike change and in general just a bit incapable and not so bright.

This is rather a “hard” approach in the management world; close supervision, control, threat in disguise. It is plausible to argue that characteristics like these could fit within the description of *autocratic leadership*. Research has shown that the approach of Theory X is actually based on a wrong notion, which confused the cause with the effect of behaviour. People behave in a way which is in accordance to Theory X not because these behaviours are in person’s inherent nature. It is rather a consequence of organisational culture and management’s negative perceptions of the subordinates.

Theory Y, on the other side, relies on more accurate perceptions of human nature and motivation. The first dimension of this theory is the same as the one from Theory X. The second one is different; it says that the people are not by nature passive and despise their workplace. They might become so if their experiences at their organisations are pushing them in this direction. The third dimension states that motivation, development willingness and potential, will to fulfil organisational needs - they are all inside of a human being. The responsibility of a manager is to make sure the employees develop those characteristics by themselves. The last dimension underlines the importance of a management that is structuring

the organisational conditions in a way that the employees are able to achieve their goals by converging them with the organisational objectives. This theory is based on a motivational and guiding rather than a directive approach.

Theory X fails to really motivate the employees because it focuses on just *satisfying* people's needs, which are organized in hierarchy of importance. However, a satisfied need is not a motivator since it is the normal way of things or a status quo for an employee. Once a need is satisfied, a person tries to reach higher in the hierarchy and satisfy more personal, existential needs.

One of the basic needs of human beings are safety needs; protection against danger, threat or deprivation. What is meant here, is the need “for the fairest possible break” (McGregor, 1960, p. 167). So, once a person feels confident, he/she dares to take a risk. A very important point here is the fact that when a person does **not feel safe**, he/she perceives his/her work floor as **uncertain environment**. The employee can start to feel **anxious** and/or threatened - he/she is needs guarantees, protection and security (McGregor, 1960).

This kind of guarantees, structure and security, an employee can get through the autocratic leadership, where the leader is a decision maker and hierarchy and rules are clear and organised.

3.4 Emotional Intelligence

Not even a decade ago, more and more studies on leadership and psychology turned their focus to a new trait: Emotional Intelligence (EQ). EQ is the ability to perceive and apply emotions to life's tasks, reason/understand emotions, express emotions, use emotions to facilitate thinking and manage emotions within oneself and relationships (Pinos, Twigg & Parayitam, 2013).

The research proved that it is very important for companies to acknowledge the advantage they might get from hiring people who score high on EQ tests. The concept of EQ caught not only the attention of sociologists and psychologists, but became an interesting topic to investigate also for business leaders and executive development consultants (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Connor & Mackenzie-Smith, 2003). Their interest in the topic started to grow, because, although technical skills and capabilities are crucial in gaining sustainable competitive advantage, true success is going to depend on how the

employees manage their relationships with others (Pinos, Twigg & Parayitam, 2013). There are a lot of positive effects of EQ on the work place environment and the performance of the organisation; it helps an organization to focus on their core strategy, it facilitates relationship development inside and outside the company that can result in competitive advantage, it is a stimulator of innovation and allows risk taking, it promotes the concept of shared learning, it takes into account and supports the balance of both the human as well as the financial side of the company's agenda, and the last but not least - it opens the doors to honest communication and trust-building among employees and between leaders and their subordinates (Pinos, Twigg & Parayitam, 2013). A very important consideration of EQ is the fact that it can be passed on others; according to Yammarino and Atwater (1997), leaders with high levels of EQ are able to develop a work environment where the EQ develops further among the employees.

All the scientific evidence in relation to positive outcomes on the work floor coming from high levels of Emotional Intelligence should not make us forget other important variables that are related to the success of the group. The effectiveness of a leader can not only be measured or predicted based on his levels of EI, but the situational factors within the teams should also be taken into account since not every situation requires the same kind of leader.

3.4.1 Emotional Intelligence, Self-Awareness and Leadership Style

Looking at the description of the characteristics and the influences of EQ, it is not surprising that it has been linked to Transformational Leadership. This relationship was confirmed by Gardner and Stough (2002), who tested 110 senior level managers using the Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test. The relationship becomes even clearer when you look at emotional competencies, associated with emotional intelligence (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002). They are grouped in two main domains: *personal competence* and *social competence*.

Personal Competence is divided in two groups: *self-awareness* and *self-management*. *Self-awareness* is the ability to read emotions and recognize their impact. It is connected to self-assessment, which is the ability to estimate one's own strengths and weaknesses. It is also related to self-confidence. *Self-management* is the ability to emotional self-control. It includes

the competencies, such as: transparency, adaptation, achievement orientation, initiative taking and optimism.

Social Competence has also two subgroups: *social awareness* and *relationship management*. *Social awareness* includes the traits such as empathy and organisational awareness, which is necessary in relationships and politics, inside and outside the company, taking into account its stakeholders. *Relationship management* is a competence, which requires high developed skills in inspirational leadership, motivational leadership, ability to guide through feedback, conflict management, maintenance of relationships. It also includes ability to motivate teamwork and collaboration with the desired result of cooperation and team building.

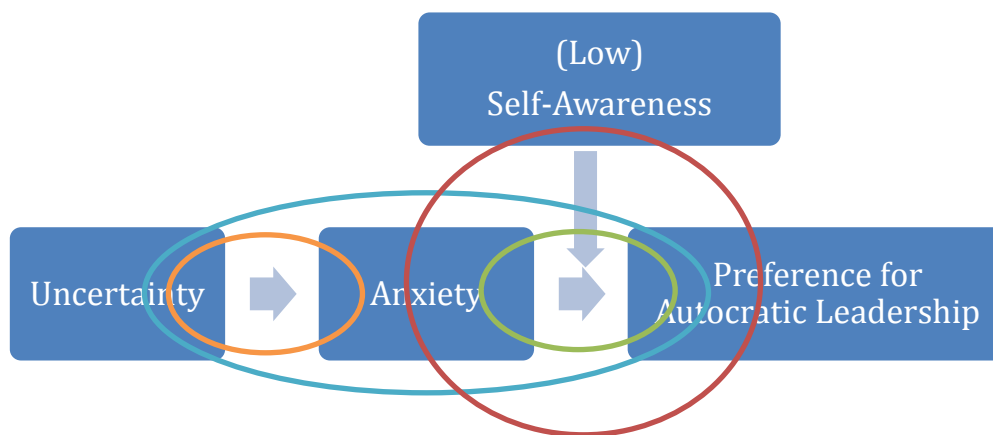
These four groups of competencies with the area of Emotional Intelligence can be put next to the four dimensions related to transformational leadership: charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), which were mentioned in the first chapter of this paper. Both Emotional Intelligence as much as Transformational Leadership are focused on emotional dimension of relationships and existence of a follower/employee within the structure of an organisation. Both concepts take into account the individuality of a person and their emotional and social needs.

Self-awareness as a part of Emotional Intelligence is an important factor when it comes to the leadership style. Self-aware people have often more self-confidence, which suggests they are aware of their self-worth and their capabilities. Leaders which are self-aware look for ideal situations, no matter if they come from their part or they were born in the minds of their followers. Their ego's allow them to admit when they are wrong and when the others are right and they do not feel intimidated by the successes of others. They encourage their followers to be proud and take credit for their good ideas (Pinos et al., 2013). These behaviours can be related to democratic and transformational leadership style. On the side of the followers, **self-awareness** is an important factor when it comes to the self-confidence of the followers in front of their leader. Followers facing uncertainty and anxiety would need a high levels of self-awareness and thus self-confidence to manage their negative feelings, understand and accept the situation and believe they are capable on resolving it on their own, without extensive help of others. The literature review resulted in the hypothesis that in case the levels of self-awareness are low, the relation between anxiety and the preference for autocratic leader is going to become stronger, since the follower is not in state to be a decision

maker and needs a strong individual to guide him/her, one with a rather autocratic leadership style.

All the theory above corresponds with the framework presented at the beginning of this study, which is repeated in the Figure 2 below, showing the connection of the presented hypothesis to the parts of the conceptual framework. The next part of the thesis presents the procedure and results of the quantitative study of the hypotheses with the goal to show a significant and empirical evidence.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses: Visual Representation



Hypothesis 1: High levels of perceived Uncertainty lead to higher levels of Anxiety within a human being.

Hypothesis 2: High levels of Anxiety lead to a Preference for Autocratic Leadership.

Hypothesis 3: Anxiety has a positive mediating effect in the relationship between Uncertainty of a person and Preference for Autocratic Leadership.

Hypothesis 4: Low levels of Self-Awareness have a moderating effect on the relationship between Anxiety and the Preference of an Autocratic Leader.

4. Method

The section *Methodology* includes information in regard to the content of the survey and the rationale behind the choice of its components, the methods of measurement of the data and the procedure of conduction of the research. Furthermore, it contains all the relevant metrics related to the (demographics of the) respondents and the necessary explanation of choices made in context of nationality of the participants and the language of the questionnaire.

4.1 Procedure

The data collection in this research was obtained through an online cross-sectional survey, composed out of four existing surveys, which are being explained and presented in detail in the section number 3.3 - *Measurement*. In total, 105 respondents filled in the questionnaire. The language used in the survey was English. The online questionnaire was distributed through e-mail and social media channels. The survey was anonymous and participants were informed about it. The anonymity of the survey was used as an instrument to stimulate people to provide honest answers, which was also requested in the beginning of the survey, together with an explanation on how the truthfulness of the participants is crucial in obtaining relevant and reliable findings. No compensation was offered to the respondents as reward for participating in the research.

4.2 Sample

The sample consists out of 105 respondents from various cultural and academic backgrounds. The genders of the participants were identified as Female, Male and Other. The age varies between 18 and 65 years old. In the Figures 3,4 and 5 the construction of the sample is visualized according to the demographics mentioned above.

Gender

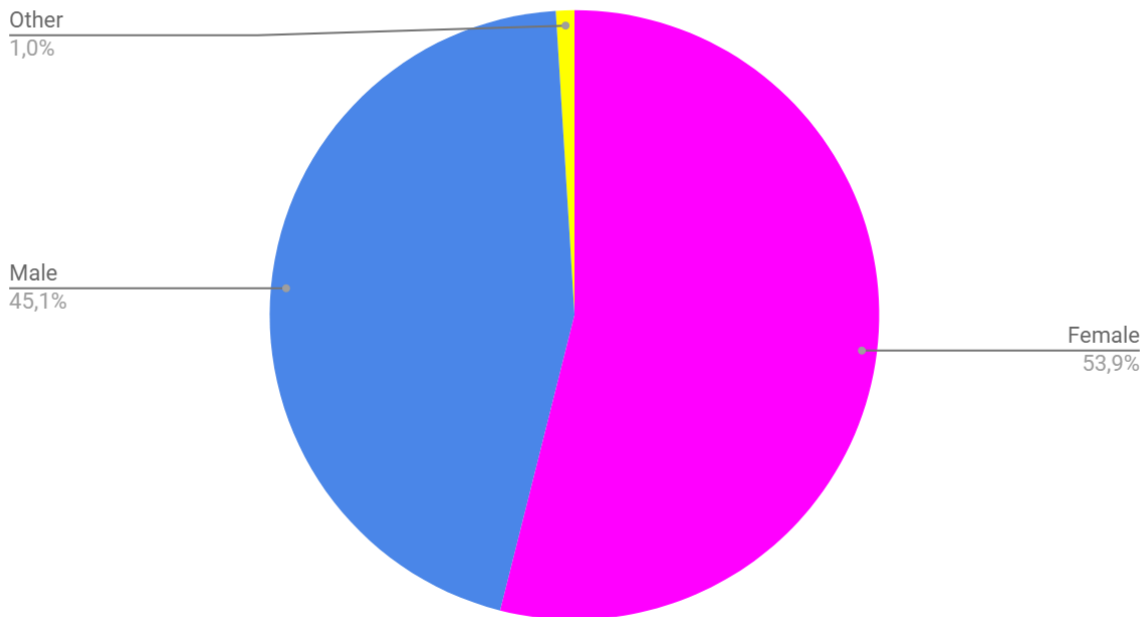


Figure 3. Gender

Age

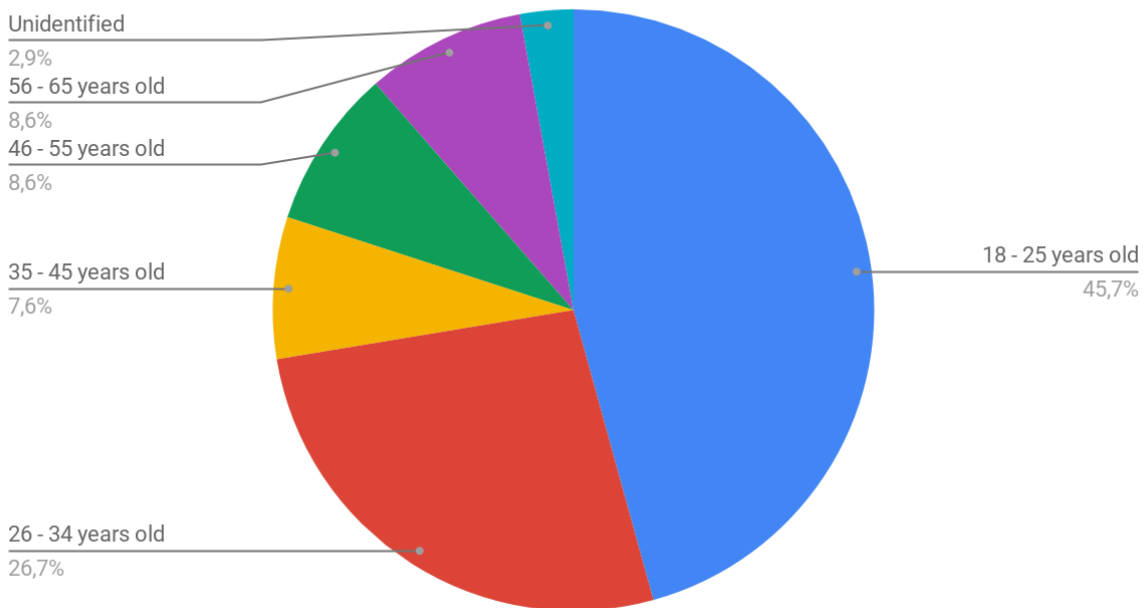


Figure 4. Age

Highest level of school completed/Highest degree received

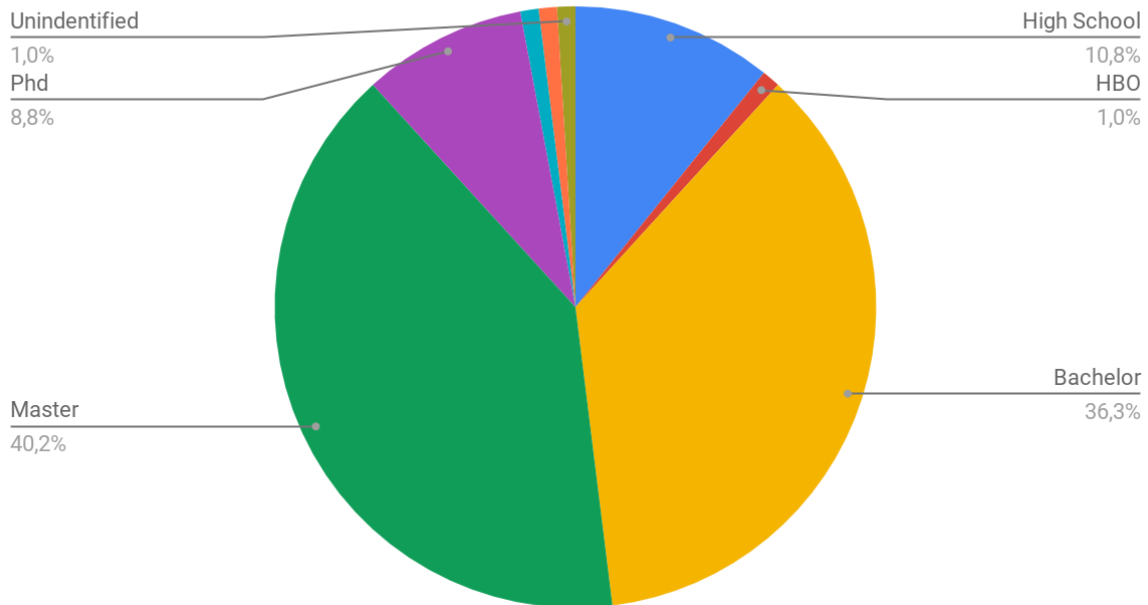


Figure 5. Education

4.2.1 Cultural Scope

The decision to conduct the survey in English was made based on the access to an international environment and the wish to make the outcomes of this study somewhat generalizable in our globalized, cross-cultural world. However, the focus in this research was on individuals from the so-called “Western World”, mainly Europe (Kurth, 2003). This decision was made to narrow the scope and generalizability of this study, which was necessary from a conceptual point of view. According to the well-known theory of five cultural dimensions, there are tendencies towards certain behavior connected to a person’s background. Geert Hofstede is arguing since the 70’s that the dimensions called *Power Distance*, *Uncertainty Avoidance*, *Individualism vs Collectivism*, *Masculinity vs Femininity* and *Long Term vs Short Term orientation* (and later added *Indulgence vs Restraint*) are all influenced by one’s culture and thus generally speaking - the country of origin. Even though his findings and conclusions faced some grounded criticism related to his approach and generalizations, it was decided to take his findings into account to raise the validity and clarity

of the model. Every country, even within Europe, scores differently on each of dimensions. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the European, Western cultures are related closely enough to be put together in this research.

The earlier presented variables in this paper are related to power, anxiety and hierarchy. The five culturally dependent dimensions *Power Distance* (to which extent do members of a group expect and accept inequality in power distribution), *Uncertainty Avoidance* (societies acceptance, tolerance and response to ambiguity) , *Individualism vs Collectivism* (degree in which people organize themselves in groups in contrast to high focus on one's own existence), *Masculinity vs Femininity* (distribution of values according and related to gender consistent and according to their distribution in a specific country/culture) and *Long Term vs Short Term orientation* (to which extent the focus of the group is pointed towards future, change and innovation vs past, traditions and conservatism) will affect the answers of the respondents from all over the world. This is unavoidable, but the close relation of the variables to the cultural dimensions could have a big impact on our outcomes and relations between the variables, while exploring or studying these correlations is not the aim of this study and the background of the participants is not going to be taken into account in the model and the regressions. Basing on the lack of integration of the cultural impact and distinction in the research and due to a limited amount of respondents from all over the globe (which would hurt its generalizability), the decision was made to concentrate mostly on Western, European respondents. The objective of this preference was to shift the cultural considerations, distinctions and thus discussions to the background and focus solely on the relations between the variables.

In Figure 6, the chart presents the mostly represented nationalities from the sample. In the Appendix, one can find a table with all the nationalities and the percentages. The focus on finding the respondents from mainly Western cultures resulted in 94,1% of the respondents in the sample coming from countries in the European continent and 2% from North-America (Canada and United States of America).

Nationality

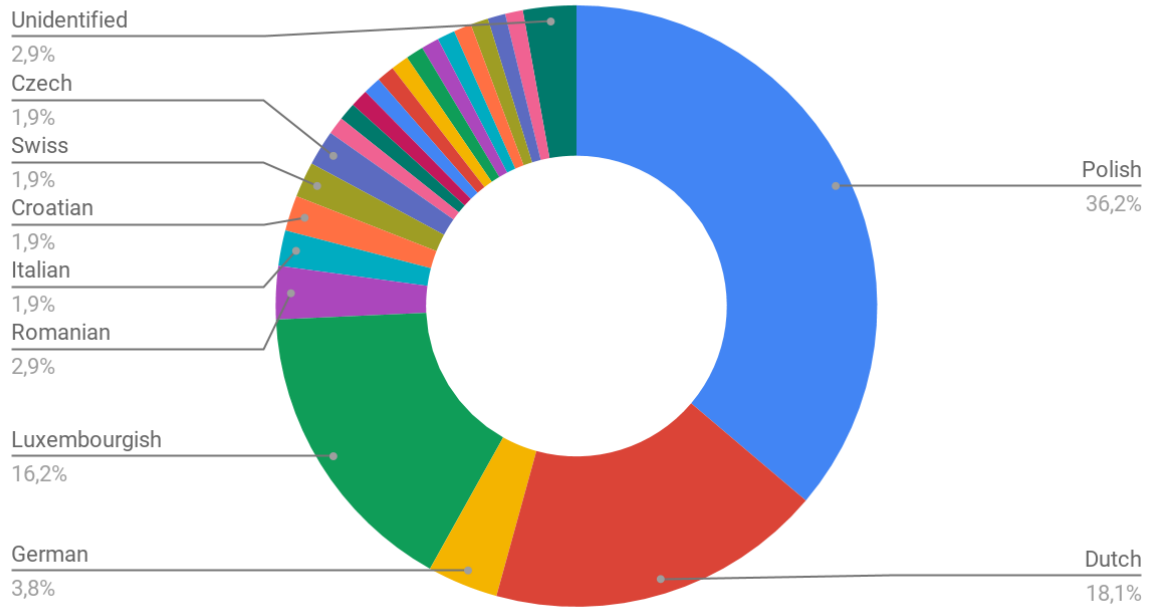


Figure 6: Nationality

4.3 Measurement

Four variables were identified and explained in the previous chapters of this paper: *Uncertainty, Anxiety, Low Self-Awareness* and *Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style*. Four distinctive, existing surveys were used to create one questionnaire for this study and presented to the participants as one survey. Each of the separate surveys was constructed of questions or statements, which included items able to measure the levels of distinctive variables. The full questionnaire used in this research is included in the Appendix 2. Cronbach's Alpha was verified for each of the created variables to test the internal consistency of the items used to construct each one of them. The interpretation of the Cronbach's Alpha was done according to the rules described by George and Mallery (2003).

4.3.1 Uncertainty

For the creation of the variable “Uncertainty”, the items from the survey “Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale - Short Form” were used (Carleton, Norton, & Asmundson, 2007). In this part of the questionnaire, the participants were presented with 12 items, which included statements connected to the behaviours, feelings and actions related to the feeling of uncertainty, planning and unforeseen events. A five point Likert scale was used to capture the answers of the respondents. The participants were asked to express how much they relate to each of the statements by choosing a number from 1 to 5, where 1 corresponds with “Not at all characteristic of me” and 5 corresponds with “Entirely characteristic of me”. This survey was originally in English. The Cronbach’s Alpha for this variable is 0,874, which is an indicator of good internal consistency.

4.3.2 Anxiety

The variable “Anxiety” has been constructed using the items from a questionnaire called “Lek” (Polish, translation to English: Anxiety/Fear). The participants were asked to assess how often they experience the feelings described in 7 items. They could choose from the following options: Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never. These items are going to be treated as a 5 point Likert scale, where number 1 represents “Never” and number 5 represents “Always”. The survey was originally in Polish and was created for the purposes of a research conducted by Świątnicki and Przybyszewski (2014). The translation to English, necessary for this international study, was done by me. The internal consistency of the items was tested using the SPSS software. The Cronbach’s alpha is 0,882 which means that there is a good level of internal consistency.

4.3.3 (Low) Self-Awareness

The variable “Self-Awareness” is connected to the concept of Emotional Intelligence, as explained in the section 2.4.1. To construct the variable Self-Awareness applicable in this research, an existing scale called Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS) was used (Endler & Parker, 1990a, 1990b, 1994, 1999). The scale consists out of 48 items. Within the scale, three distinctive groups can be identified; Task Oriented Coping Scale, Emotion Oriented Coping Scale and Avoidance Oriented Coping Scale. Each of the scales includes 16

items. We included all the 48 items in the survey, however, the focus and measurement in the research are considering the items from the Emotion Oriented Coping Scale since their nature relies on emotional Self-Awareness and were identified as usable in construction of the (Low) Self-Awareness variable.

In this part of the survey, 42 statements were presented to the participants, expressing the ways in which people behave when confronted with difficult, stressful or upsetting situations. The respondents needed to indicate how much they engage in each of the mentioned actions. The whole scale followed the five point Likert scale, where the number 1 represents “Not at All” and number 5 “Very much”. The participants were constructed to express their engagement into a given action by choosing a number from 1 to 5.

The Cronbach’s Alpha analysis provided a 0,915, which corresponds with an excellent level of internal consistency.

4.3.4 Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style

To construct the variable “Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style” a part of the questionnaire “Kwestionariusz Stylów Przywództwa K. Świątnickiego“ was used, which was written in Polish. The translation to English for the purposes of this study was done by me. The participants were presented with a list of statements regarding possible behaviours and opinions of a manager/leader. At the beginning of this chapter of the survey, the respondents were requested to imagine their perfect manager/leader. Thereafter, they needed to assess how strongly they agree or disagree with the 17 presented statements describing certain behaviours and opinions of a leader, in correspondence to the ideal manager/leader that they had in mind. A five point Likert scale was used to indicate their answers, where number 1 represents “Strongly Disagree” and number 5 “Strongly Agree”. Since this paper is describing Autocratic Leadership Style using comparisons to the Democratic Leadership Style, the different behaviours and opinions characteristic for these two styles were used in this survey. 8 of the items represented the Democratic Leadership Style and 9 corresponded with the Autocratic Leadership Style. The order of the statements was mixed with the purpose of lowering the chance that the participants recognize a pattern and respond in a biased and controlled way, rather than truthfully and intuitively. In the analysis itself, only the items related to Autocratic Leadership Style were used in order to create the variable Preference for

Autocratic Leadership Style. The internal consistency analysis in SPSS showed that the Cronbach's Alpha is 0,792, which indicates an acceptable/good level of internal consistency.

5. Results

The conceptual framework and at the same time the model described earlier in this paper was tested in the IBM program SPSS. Since this model included both a mediator and a moderator, I decided to use for the regression analysis the Process Macro program for SPSS, created by Andrew F. Hayes.

Using SPSS, firstly the Pearson Correlation between the variables was analysed in order to establish the correlation between them. The results of the one-tailed analysis are displayed in the Table 1 below. The variables have been given the following abbreviations:

Uncertainty – UNC

Anxiety – ANX

(Low) Self-Awareness – LSA

Preference for Autocratic Leadership – PFAL

Table 1: Correlations

	<i>ANX</i>	<i>PFAL</i>	<i>LSA</i>	<i>UNC</i>
<i>ANX</i>	1	-,006	,623**	,548**
<i>PFAL</i>	-,006	1	,189*	,191*
<i>LSA</i>	,623**	,189*	1	,691**
<i>UNC</i>	,548**	,191*	,691**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (1-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (1-tailed)

In Table 1, one can read that there are multiple significant correlations between the variables in this model. The variables Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style and (Low) Self-Awareness are significantly correlated at the 0,05 level (Pearson Correlation = 0,189). The

variables (Low) Self-Awareness and Anxiety are significantly correlated at the 0,01 level (Pearson Correlation = 0,623). The variables Uncertainty and Anxiety are significantly correlated at the 0,01 level (Pearson Correlation = 0,548). The variables Uncertainty and Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style are significantly correlated at the 0,05 level (Pearson Correlation = 0,191). The variables (Low) Self Awareness and Uncertainty are significantly correlated at the 0,01 level (Person Correlation = 0,691).

These results are very promising in context of the regression analysis of the model. The only variables that did not show any significant correlation are Anxiety and Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style. This was worrying, especially due to the negative Pearson correlation number. However, since this relation was not significant and the correlations between the other variables were, one can proceed with the regression analysis of the model.

The regression procedure was chosen due to the construction of the model. The best tool for this kind of moderated mediation analysis is the PROCESS Macro program. The model, chosen from the template guide (Hayes, 2013), was the model number 14, displayed in the Image 1 on the next page.

The variables were positioned in the model as followed:

Y = Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style

X = Uncertainty

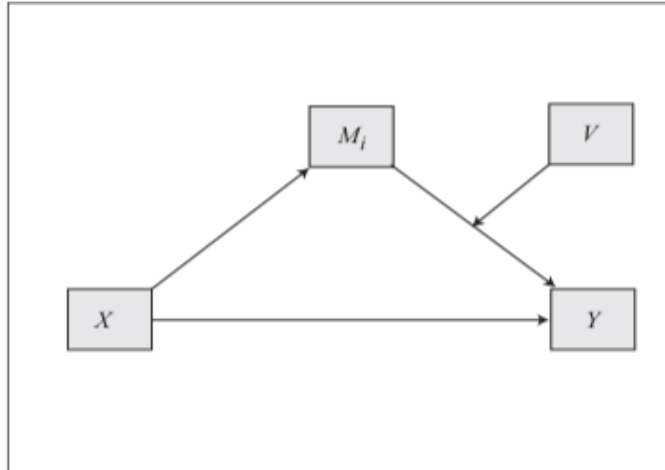
M = Anxiety

W = (Low) Self-Awareness

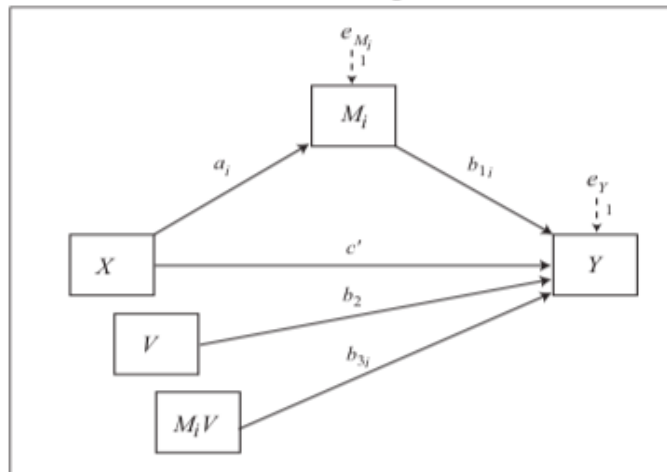
Image 1: Conceptual Diagram, Model 14

Model 14

Conceptual Diagram



Statistical Diagram



Conditional indirect effect of X on Y through $M_i = a_i (b_{1i} + b_{3i}V)$

Direct effect of X on Y = c'

The level of confidence for all the confidence intervals in this output was 95%. The number of bootstrap samples for bootstrap confidence intervals was 5000. In the following tables, the SPSS outcomes for distinctive variables as well as combined interactions within the whole model are displayed. The tables are being described and analysed in between and separately, in order to clearly picture the path from the numbers to the meaning of the findings, which in the end will be either support or lack of support for the four hypotheses of this study.

Anxiety and Uncertainty

Table 2: Model Summary Outcome Variable Anxiety

	<i>R</i>	<i>R-sq</i>	<i>MSE</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Df1</i>	<i>Df2</i>	<i>p</i>
	,5481	,3005	18,5224	44,2381	1,0000	103,0000	,0000

Overall model: $F(44,2381;103) = 44,24, p < ,001, R-sq = ,30$.

Table 3: Model Outcome Variable Anxiety

	<i>coeff</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
<i>constant</i>	6,8471	1,6413	4,1718	,0001	3,5920	10,1022
<i>UNC</i>	,3310	,0498	6,6512	,0000	,2323	,4296



The outcomes from the Tables 2 and 3 suggest the following:

Uncertainty – $b = 0,331$, $t(103) = 6,65$, $p = ,0000$ - Significant

Since the p-value is 0,0000 which is smaller than 0,05, it can be stated that there is enough significant evidence to support Hypothesis 1: **High levels of perceived Uncertainty lead to higher levels of Anxiety within a human being.**

**Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style, Uncertainty, Anxiety
and (Low) Self-Awareness**

Table 4: Model Summary Outcome Variable Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style

	<i>R</i>	<i>R-sq</i>	<i>MSE</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Df1</i>	<i>Df2</i>	<i>p</i>
	,3227	,1042	30,4547	2,9067	4,0000	100,0000	0,0254

Overall model: $F(4,100) = 2,91$, $p < ,05$, $R-sq = ,10$.

Table 5: Model Outcome Variable Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style

	<i>coeff</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
<i>constant</i>	35,3340	6,6247	5,3337	,0000	22,1908	48,4771
<i>UNC</i>	,1163	,0903	1,2873	,2010	-,0629	,2954
<i>ANX</i>	-,8714	,3639	-2,3942	,0185	-1,5934	-,1493
<i>LSA</i>	-,2001	,1764	-1,1343	,2594	-,5501	,1499
<i>Int_1</i>	,0152	,0084	1,8113	,0731	-,0015	,0319

Where Int_1 is Anxiety x Low Self-Awareness.

Based on the outcomes from the Tables 4 and 5, one can state the following:

Uncertainty – $b = 0,12$, $t(100) = 1,29$, $p = ,2010$

Anxiety – $b = - 0,87$, $t(100) = -2,39$, $p = 0,0185$

(Low) Self-Awareness – $b = -0,2$, $t(100) = -1,13$, $p = 0,26$

Interaction – $b = 0,0152$, $t(100) = 1,81$, $p = 0,07$

These p-value of the interaction between Anxiety and Low Self-Awareness on the Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style is 0,07. This value is higher than 0,05, which indicates that officially there is no significant evidence that low levels of Self-Awareness have a moderating effect on the relationship between Anxiety and the Preference for an Autocratic Leadership Style. Hereby is Hypothesis 4 rejected. However, it is worth mentioning that the value of 0,07 is only slightly higher than the significance barrier 0,05 so there might be multiple reasons for this outcome, which will be mentioned in the chapter *Discussion*. Also the p-value of the overall model for the Y-variable was 0,0254, which is smaller than 0,05 and thus this model appears to be significantly relevant. Moreover, the Table 6 is showing below another interesting information regarding this interaction.

Table 6: Conditional effect of the focal predictor at values of the moderator

<i>LSA</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
29,0000	-.4298	,1664	-2,5823	,0113	-,7600	-,0996
39,0000	-,2775	,1383	-2,0061	,0475	-,5520	-,0031
55,0400	-,0333	,1869	-,1782	,8590	-,4040	,3374

The information from the Table 6 suggests that for certain levels of (Low) Self-Awareness (29,0000 and 39,0000), there is enough significant evidence (0,0113 and 0,0475) to state that there is a relation between Low Levels of Self-Awareness and Anxiety. However, this relation is negative. The data suggests that the Lower the Levels of Self-Awareness, the less likely it is that the Level of Self-Awareness is going to be influenced negatively by the feeling of

Anxiety. When one looks at this outcome from a theoretical point of view, this outcome seems sensible. The less self-aware a person is, the harder it is for this person to identify their emotions and what they are going through. This means that the more self-aware an individual is, the more he/she is influenced by the feelings of anxiety in the way that he/she becomes more self-aware. However, this cannot be said any more for someone who has very low levels of self-awareness – there is no significant evidence that this ‘educative’ effect of anxiety is touching this person in the same way.

Another relevant point that needs to be addressed is the following outcome:

$$\text{Anxiety} - b = -0,87, t(100) = -2,39, p = 0,0185$$

This outcome from the Table 5 shows us that there is enough significant evidence to state that Anxiety has a negative effect on the Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style. The Hypothesis 2 is hereby rejected, since it argued that Anxiety is going to have a positive influence on the Preference for the Autocratic Leadership.

Uncertainty, Anxiety and Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style

Table 7: Direct effect of X on Y

<i>Effect</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
,1163	,0903	1,2873	,2010	-,0629	,2954

Now, it is also important to consider the indirect effect, so the mediating effect of Anxiety.



The following table (Table 8) shows again how the relation above behaves depending on the levels of Self-Awareness.

Table 8: Conditional indirect effects of X on Y

LSA	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
29,0000	-.1422	,0668	-,2892	-,0231
39,0000	-,0918	,0545	-,2073	,0078
55,0400	-,0110	,0724	-,1470	,1374

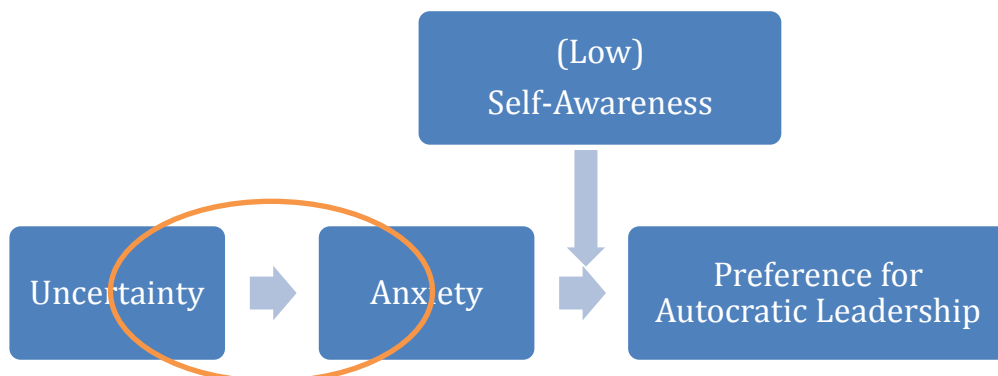
The Tables 7 shows us that there is no significant evidence (p-value of 0,2) to support Hypothesis 3, that states that Anxiety has a positive mediating effect in the relationship between Uncertainty of a person and Preference for Autocratic Leadership Style. Hypothesis 3 is being rejected.

From the Table 8, we can read that again the (negative) effect is bigger for lower levels of Low Self-Awareness, which means more self-aware people. This suggests that the more self-aware a person is, the less this person is being influenced by the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty to prefer an autocratic leader. These outcome is consistent with the theory on Self-Awareness.

5.1 Summary of the Results

In the Figure 2, the conceptual framework is presented one more time. The orange circle represents the only relationship that was empirically confirmed, because the analysis proved that there was enough significant statistical evidence. Hereunder, one more time all the hypothesis are being repeated, together with the outcomes of this research.

Figure 7: Conceptual Framework updated



Hypothesis 1: High levels of perceived Uncertainty lead to higher levels of Anxiety within a human being. - **Confirmed**

Hypothesis 2: High levels of Anxiety lead to a Preference for Autocratic Leadership. – **Rejected**

Hypothesis 3: Anxiety has a positive mediating effect in the relationship between Uncertainty of a person and Preference for Autocratic Leadership. - **Rejected**

Hypothesis 4: Low levels of Self-Awareness have a moderating effect on the relationship between Anxiety and the Preference of an Autocratic Leader. - **Rejected**

Even though, the three hypotheses were rejected, there were some other interesting findings, listed below:

- The more self-aware a person is, the less this person is being influenced by the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty to prefer an autocratic leader.
- The more self-aware an individual is, the more he/she is influenced by the feelings of anxiety in the way that he/she becomes more self-aware.

In the next chapters of this thesis, a discussion is going to be presented regarding the output and the outcomes. Possible limitations of this study and research are being considered as well. The thesis will be concluded with suggestions for future research, based on the learnings from this study and managerial implications, take-away's that can be suggested based on the outcomes.

6. Discussion

For every researcher, it is disappointing when the most of the hypotheses, and thus the most of hypothesised conceptual framework is not being confirmed and supported by the outcomes of the (quantitative) study. Nevertheless, we can learn also from the rejected hypotheses and take the findings into account while considering topics for the future research in a related area. The relation between the variables Uncertainty and Anxiety was supported by the data and was at the same time the only hypothesis that was supported by the empirical evidence. However, the food for thought was given by the correlations.

Table 9. Correlations 2

	<i>ANX</i>	<i>PFAL</i>	<i>LSA</i>	<i>UNC</i>
<i>ANX</i>	1	-,006	,623**	,548**
<i>PFAL</i>	-,006	1	,189*	,191*
<i>LSA</i>	,623**	,189*	1	,691**
<i>UNC</i>	,548**	,191*	,691**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (1-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (1-tailed)

In the Table 9, the correlations between the variables are projected again. The numbers marked in red, -,006 indicate that the correlation between the variable Anxiety and Preference for Autocratic Leadership was the only one who was proven not to be significant. The other numbers were very promising and even though this was only one relation, it was a very important one: the variable Anxiety was as well a mediator, as played an important part in the mediation. Thus, the lack of significant evidence for this correlation, as well as the fact that the correlation showed a negative number, while the hypothesis predicted a positive, resulted in rejection of as much as 3 out of 4 hypotheses. Nevertheless, one must look further than approval and rejection of the hypotheses and have a close look at the numbers - what can all of them mean and suggest for the future of this topic. Based on the outcomes and literature, my suggestion is that in this case the power of the variable Anxiety was underestimated by me. Anxiety means more than just “being nervous”. Furthermore, it has a very complex relationship with the concept of autocratic and narcissistic leadership. These kind of leaders do not really appreciate negative feedback or disagreement especially coming from the side of their subordinates. As described in the sections 2.3 and 3.1.2, in theory employees with high feelings of Anxiety, should be happy with a leader that is autocratic and thus makes the rules and follows/sets up clear structures. However, do people with high anxiety and possibly low self-awareness really know what is best for them? What we want and what we need is not always the same thing. Possibly, the employees with high levels of anxiety would work and function better in autocratic conditions but exact this anxiety pushes them to desire a non-

stressful work environment with an emotionally available and empathic leader which in the end might be better for their emotional state and job satisfaction.

There are possibly more factors that need to be considered for this framework to work and which were not in this study – demographics, cultural influences, the level of income and more. In the next subchapter, a few limitations of this study are being described.

6.1 Limitations

One of the limitations of the research is the sample size. The considerations in regard to the sample size are a common topic in the research-world and it usually comes down to an ambiguous statement: it depends. Mainly, it depends on the objectives of the study and its true-effect size. One thing cannot be denied: the larger the study's sample size, the narrower the confidence intervals and thus also the more precise the results (Hackshaw, 2008). The studies with small sample sizes do not have to be disregarded, but one must be very careful with the interpretation of the results and when making conclusions. However, there are also a couple of strengths in the decision to conduct a study using a smaller sample. First of all, these studies need less time and second of all – lower initial investment. Small studies are a very useful tool in testing a potential new hypothesis in order to verify whether a bigger, more capital intensive study is necessary (Hackshaw, 2008). In context of this study, I think that a relatively small sample was definitely a limitation, since we were researching very fragile, emotional and, to a certain degree, ambiguous feelings and a bigger sample would have definitely made the results more conclusive. Also within the sample itself, in regard to the representation of different nationalities, the small numbers of participants representing distinctive cultures could be seen as worrying. The sample was meant to be representative for the Western culture, which it mostly is, however, it would for sure not be big enough to talk about potentially culturally related differences between the participants with different passports.

Cultural and socio-economical background of the sample could potentially also be seen as a limitation. When one examines the full list of nationalities of the participants in this study, there is a majority of Western and Central European influences. As explained in the section 4.2.1, the choice to have a sample with mainly participants from Europe and North-America was made in order to generalize the research for the group with similar, cultural-

specific influences. The cultural aspect, that might have played a role as well in this research, was not taken into account. However, we have to consider that the cultural and socio-economical background of the participants had an influence on the outcomes. When you look at the demographics and the academic background of the respondents, most of them come from cultures that are democratic. They are highly educated (with more than 85% having a Bachelor diploma or more) and relatively young; more than 70% of the respondents is between 18 and 34 years old. These characteristics suggest that the majority of this group are modern, educated, open-minded and rather individualistic students and/or young professionals, which are not familiar or just do not value authoritarian behaviours towards them. This could mean that even if they experience some levels of anxiety, they would still probably prefer a democratic way.

These limitations should be taken into account in the future while conducting research in the area of anxiety and autocratic leadership. Since leadership is related to character traits and situational factors, it is being influenced by our cultural backgrounds. The globalizing world is bring are all closer together, but maybe we are still being influenced by our traditional cultures more than we, especially younger generations, like millennials, would like to admit.

7. Future Research

As previously mentioned in the discussion, the outcomes of this study can be seen as indicators that the future research on the topic of anxiety and (preferred or desired) leadership style would definitely be useful. The relations that could be seen in the output after the analysis awakened a few new questions that could be researched in the future.

First of all, the topic of self-awareness and its relation to the concept of anxiety raised some interesting questions. As described before, the outcomes suggest that the more self-aware a person is, the less this person is being influenced by the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty to prefer an autocratic leader. In my opinion, the topic of Self-Awareness could thus be researched further in relation to both Anxiety and Leadership. Emotional Intelligence and its implications on behavioural capabilities and thus also often the performance of leaders is a very “trending” topic right now in the world of science. Self-Awareness seems to lower the influence that high levels of Anxiety could have on a person. Further and more in-depth

research on these two could be important for the field of management and business, because anxious employees tend to not be very beneficial for the companies. The question would arise then to what degree Self-Awareness can be trained and if it can have a positive influence on destructive feelings, like Anxiety, which would result in higher employee performance (job satisfaction, less or higher risk of suffering from a burn-out e.g.).

Secondly, the cultural dimension is also a very relevant topic in the scientific area of leadership right now. The fields of Emotional Intelligence and the even younger concept of Cultural Intelligence are relatively new and quite challenging, especially due to convergence of needs worldwide and constantly changing perception of culture and its influence on our values in the contemporary world. I think that future research on Anxiety (and other feelings) in Leadership should take into consideration the cultural (and socio-economical background) from the participant since it might shape not only their real *preference* for a certain leadership style, but also their *perception of what their preference should be*. It means that in psychologically oriented fields of study we often rely on how much participants are willing to tell us about themselves truthfully, rather than on what the truth really is. Different techniques can be used to try to solve this issue to a certain extent, such as disclosing the objectives of a study or mixing the questions, so the participants have a harder time in creating patterns and manipulate the outcomes. However, there could also be patterns in how the participants try to position themselves in a study and by doing that, in fact deceive the researcher and cause inconclusive outcomes. What is socially expectable, normal or expected from you is often driven by how you were raised, your culture, status and more. More focus on demographics and cultural aspects in future research on leadership, management, self-awareness, self-perception, anxiety and other psychology-related fields is one of the suggestions that should be, according to me, considered in the future. By doing so, even if the study itself does not focus on cultural or socio-demographical aspects, one could still potentially discover patterns or be able to better explain the outcomes.

There are a lot of topics and relationships that are interesting to study in the field connected to leadership and psychology in business. It is needed and useful to do so, not only, because it is interesting, but also necessary and can help the companies, their managers and employees in both personal, as well as in organisational performance growth. The next chapter will present and discuss some of the managerial implications connected to the study described in this thesis.

8. Managerial Implications

The research on leadership (styles) is very important in the 21st century to get us more aware of what we are doing, why and how this affects the people around us. This is because we travel and move abroad more and more and as much as interesting and horizon-broadening this is, it stays a challenge to understand the point of view of another person. In the international organisations, tons of people with different cultural and socio-demographical backgrounds, languages and nationalities are working together closely every day. They unite their unique characters, skills and capabilities to together create value for their employer and themselves. Sadly, in a lot of cases, this scenario is still often just something what one sees in an advertisement, trying to recruit new, diverse students or employees. The key to grow and really create this scenario on the work floor is to understand each other better. Instead of building walls, we should focus more on building bridges.

To be able to do so, we should be more aware and better educated on the roots of our differences. People's characters differ by far not only because of their cultural background, but also due to the fact that every single one of us is just different. Our very personal character traits divide us into extraverts or introverts, adrenaline junkies or cautious and careful individuals, individualistic or collectivistic people etc. The very awareness of the fact that others might do things and experience their environment differently, is the first step to achieve better communication skills and mutual understanding.

As mentioned before, leadership styles like, for example, the democratic or the transformational one are focussing more on the interpersonal relations with the followers and the mental health of the employees. It is proven that better understood and valued employees experience higher levels of job satisfaction, which will result in better work performance. From this, one can conclude that Emotional Intelligence is very important for a person who wants to become a better leader for his/her followers.

This research showed that even though, in theory, anxious people would be more likely to prefer autocratic leadership, due to its clear hierarchy, rules and somewhat "stable" nature, the results of the research did not support this outcome. From the outcomes, we could, however, read that high self-awareness can be seen as a kind of 'defence-tool' against preference for an autocratic leadership style. This is relevant because we do not only need managers who are good in communication, interpersonal skills and score high on emotional and cultural intelligence. The in-group dynamics and group performance could be bettered if also employees are being trained in effective communication skills, self-awareness and

healthy/respectful work floor dynamics. The autocratic leadership style has a lot of negative effects on both employee, as well as group performance, as described in the subchapter 3.1.2 (and others). Actually, in the 21st century in the Western countries, we do not appreciate autocratic or authoritarian managers at all. Inclusivity in the decision making process, freedom of speech on the work floor and space for creativity are just few of the conditions that young professionals, millennials, value in their job. It does not mean that people themselves are not autocratic or authoritarian at all any more. This kind of characters still exist and can still become managers. However, instead of putting an uncertain, anxious person in a team with an authoritarian leader, assuming that they are both being delegated to a place where they belong (since, as appears, they might not even want that), we should maybe invest more in teaching self-awareness and communication skills to both of them. By doing this, in the end, everybody benefits – the (previously autocratic) manager becomes more likeable/respected and is able to delegate more of his work and decision making to his/hers subordinates, the somewhat insecure and inconspicuous employee learns how to raise his/hers voice and handle his/hers emotions, the whole team benefits from more open and balanced interpersonal relations and the company itself gains more open and satisfied employees, which results in more ideas, higher job satisfaction of all the employees and in the end – higher overall performance of the company.

This is why research on personal and emotional characteristics of both the supervisor and the subordinate, their connection to the leadership effectiveness and the overall influence on the functioning of teams and companies, is a relevant topic in context of strategic business decision making.

9. Conclusion

The concept of leadership is being seen as one of the most complex topics when it comes to organisational psychology. In this thesis multiple dimensions, approaches and theories related to this area of study were presented and discussed. Most of them are connected to each other and complement each other, making the topic of leadership an interconnected spider web of various ideas and theories. The most popular leadership style in business right now is a rather democratic one. In the 21st century we realized how important open communication, emotional consideration and job satisfaction are not only for the employees, but also for the manager and the company.

Nevertheless, according to the previous research and theories, there are certain people who could potentially perform and feel better under the lead of another kind of leader: an autocratic leader. We are talking here about employees who feel uncertain and anxious. An authoritarian leader, who would give them structure, stability and clear rules, could be possibly a better 'fit' for them.

The purpose of the research in this thesis was to find out whether people who experience high levels of uncertainty, anxiety and low levels of self-awareness have a preference for an autocratic leadership style. The model created for this study used the variable Anxiety as a mediator between the variables Uncertainty and Preference for an Autocratic Leadership Style and the variable Self-Awareness as moderator of the relationship between Anxiety and Preference for an Autocratic Leadership Style. Four hypotheses were created before the analysis. In order to find out whether there is enough significant evidence to support all the hypothesis and thus the conceptual framework in general, a regression analysis using Macro Process was done. The hypothesis number 1 "Uncertainty leads to higher levels of Anxiety within a human being" was supported. The hypothesis number 2 "High levels of Anxiety lead to a Preference for Autocratic Leadership" was not supported. Also the hypotheses number 3 "Anxiety has a positive mediating effect in the relationship between Uncertainty of a person and Preference for Autocratic Leadership" and number 4 "Low levels of Self-Awareness have a moderating effect on the relationship between Anxiety and the Preference of an Autocratic Leader" were not supported.

The outcomes of the research suggest that the model is not completely supported. Nevertheless, the output of the research uncovered some other interesting relations;

- The more self-aware a person is, the less this person is being influenced by the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty to prefer an autocratic leader.
- The more self-aware an individual is, the more he/she is influenced by the feelings of anxiety in the way that he/she becomes more self-aware.

These findings lead us to believe that self-awareness is very important in recognizing what you might really need. It seems like anxious people do not necessarily desire autocratic leaders, especially if they are somewhat self-aware. The significant positive correlation between uncertainty and preference of autocratic leadership shows that the reasoning behind the model and the theory were right, however, the strength of the feeling of anxiety was here

underestimated – anxiety, even though correlated to uncertainty, leads us into other directions than just the feeling of uncertainty.

One of the limitations of this study was the fact that socio-demographical and cultural differences of the participants were not analysed and not taken into account. It is suggested to be done in the future studies on the preferences for leadership, especially when connected to the character traits.

The conclusion of this study is that anxious people nor desire, nor seem to need autocratic leaders. The theory section of the study analysed also the negative effects of autocratic leadership on the performance of the employees and organisations. For the employees who have to deal with an autocratic leader, high self-awareness is very important. It raises the question if we should not try to make autocratic leaders more democratic and take care of uncertain, anxious and less self-aware employees through middle of trainings and workshops to learn them both how to function and communicate with each other. If the future research would confirm this to be true and possible, these kind of workshops and emotional/communication trainings would benefit the whole organisation.

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Appendix 1: Nationalities

Nationality	% of the Sample
Polish	36,2
Dutch	18,1
German	3,8
Luxembourgish	16,2
Romanian	2,9
Italian	1,9
Croatian	1,9
Swiss	1,9
Czech	1,9
Turkish	1
Danish	1
Belgian	1
American	1
Canadian	1

Dutch and Polish	1
Maltese	1
Swedish	1
French	1
Austrian	1
Hungarian	1
Brazilian	1
Slovenian	1
Unidentified	2,9

Appendix 2: The Survey

Anxiety and Leadership

(Introduction for the Participants) Thank you for your time and for helping me with my Master Thesis! You will be presented with multiple questions and statements and you will be asked to answer by choosing which option applies to you. Please, be truthful within your answers and do not worry - this survey is fully anonymous. There are four sections, most of the questions are short and intuitive so it should not take more than 10 minutes. I hope you will enjoy this survey!

- What is your gender?
 - **Male**
 - **Female**
 - **Other**
- How old are you?
 - **Younger than 18**
 - **18 – 25**
 - **26 – 34**
 - **35 – 45**
 - **46 – 55**
 - **56 – 65**
 - **Older than 65**
- What is your nationality?
 - **Polish**
 - **Dutch**
 - **German**
 - **Luxembourgish**
 - **Different:**
- What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
 - **High School**
 - **HBO (for Dutch people)**
 - **Bachelor**
 - **Master**

- **Phd**
- **Different:**

(Questionnaire Anxiety)

Possible answers: **Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never**

1. How often do you feel down/low-hearted?
2. How often do you feel anxious, although you don't know why?
3. How often do you feel so shattered, that you are unable to collect your thoughts?
4. How often do you feel so restless, that you are unable to sit down?
5. How often do you experience unhappiness without any specific reason?
6. Does your humour change often, with or without a specific reason?
7. Do you often feel tired and unmotivated without any specific reason?

(Instructions for the participants) At this point, I would like you to think about how you would imagine your ideal leader/manager. You will be now presented with a few statements about this person. Please assess how strongly you agree or disagree with them. An ideal leader/manager...

(Questionnaire Autocratic and Democratic Leadership Style Mixed)

Possible answers: **Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree**

1. ... allows the employees to set tasks for themselves.
2. ... allows the employees to apply their own methods of problem solving.
3. ... follows the rule, that the manager gives the orders and the subordinates execute them. **A**
4. ... demands from his/hers employees absolute allegiance. **A**
5. ... raises the work discipline in order to raise the quality of service. **A**

6. ... tries to leave for his/hers employees space for independence.
7. ... tries to include the employees in important decision making.
8. ... demands strict compliance with the rules, norms and regulations. **A**
9. ... gladly ask his/hers employees for advice.
10. ... is of opinion, that the manager is always right **A**
11. ... consults his decisions with his/hers employees.
12. ... is of opinion, that his/hers decisions are not up for discussion. **A**
13. ... is of opinion, that his/hers opinion is the most important one. **A**
14. ... follows the rule, that a manager is a supervisor and not a friend to his/hers subordinates. **A**
15. ... takes the opinions of the employees into account.
16. ... assigns the employees to certain tasks him/herself. **A**
17. ... lets the employees divide between themselves their tasks and responsibilities.
18. ... strongly emphasizes efficiency. **A**

(Instructions for the participants) After reading the following statements, please assess how much the described characteristic applies to you.

(Questionnaire Uncertainty)

Possible answers: **Not at all characteristic of me 1 2 3 4 5 Entirely characteristic of me**

1. Unforeseen events upset me greatly.
2. It frustrates me not having all the information I need.
3. Uncertainty keeps me from living a full life.
4. One should always look ahead so as to avoid surprises.
5. A small unforeseen event can spoil everything, even with the best of planning.
6. When it's time to act, uncertainty paralyses me.

7. When I am uncertain I can't function very well.
8. I always want to know what the future has in store for me.
9. I can't stand being taken by surprise.
10. The smallest doubt can stop me from acting.
11. I should be able to organize everything in advance.
12. I must get away from all uncertain situations.

(Instructions for the participants) The following are ways people react to various difficult, stressful, or upsetting situations. Please, indicate how much you engage in these types of activities when you encounter a difficult, stressful, or upsetting situation.

(Questionnaire Self-Awareness: Only Emotion Oriented Coping Scale)

Possible answers: **Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 Very much**

1. Blame myself for procrastinating.
2. Preoccupied with aches and pains.
3. Blame myself for having gotten into this situation.
4. Feel anxious about not being able to cope.
5. Become very tense.
6. Tell myself that it is really not happening to me.
7. Blame myself for being too emotional about the situation.
8. Become very upset.
9. Blame myself for not knowing what to do.
10. Freeze and don't know what to do.
11. Wish that I could change what had happened or how I felt.
12. Worry about what I am going to do.
13. Tell myself that it will never happen again.

14. Focus on my general inadequacies.

15. Get angry.

16. Take it out on other people.