Leadership, values and authority: what shapes a manager's work ethos and plays a key role in authority creation?

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Abstract

Purpose – The article aims to identify and classify competencies and values considered essential or even necessary in the daily work of active managers and leaders.

Design/methodology/approach – This article is based on the results of comprehensive ethnographic research. I acquired the research material through open interviews (26 items), which facilitated immersion into the social reality of individual groups of respondents.

Findings – A manager who consistently adheres to their values builds lasting authority. A manager who is guided by values also has a greater influence on decision-making and team relationships. A manager who adheres to values can contribute to improving organizational culture and thus increase employee engagement and achieve better organizational results.

Research limitations/implications – Findings from qualitative studies are context-specific and may not be easily generalizable to other settings or populations.

Practical implications – Organizations need to recognize the centrality of values in building managerial authority. By strategically aligning values, promoting consistency and fostering a culture of trust, organizations can enhance managerial effectiveness, team relationships and overall organizational performance.

Social implications – Managers' values play a crucial role in shaping workplace dynamics and can extend their influence to broader societal contexts. A values-driven approach has the potential to create positive social impacts and thus contribute to ethical business practices, trustful relationships and overall societal well-being.

Originality/value – The findings are original and valuable because they holistically explore the connection between managerial values and authority and identify key factors that contribute to lasting and impactful leadership in organizations and society.

Keywords Inclusive leadership, Servant leadership, Authentic leadership, Managerial values, Managerial authority, Qualitative research

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

In the work ethos of a manager and in organizations, leadership, values, and authority are the three key and interrelated elements. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in shaping organizational culture and influences management effectiveness. Leadership plays a fundamental role in shaping the work ethos of a manager and the organization (Sveningsson, Alvehus, & Alvesson, 2012). Leadership involves directing and motivating a team to achieve organizational goals. Managers act as leaders and set an example for other employees. Their ability to lead effectively influences the work climate, employee engagement, and goal achievement. On the other hand, values constitute an organization's

moral and ethical foundation (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015). These are beliefs and principles that shape managers' and employees' behavior. Organizational values should align with the company's mission and purpose. Organizational values influence managerial decisions, work approaches, business ethics, and employee treatment. Meanwhile, a manager's authority stems from their ability to manage, lead, and align with values (Galeazzo, Furlan, & Vinelli, 2021). Authority is based on trust and respect that a manager earns within the team. Managers with authority are more effective in influencing others and achieving organizational goals.

Balance among these three elements plays a crucial role in organizations. A manager who demonstrates strong leadership, adheres to values aligned with the organization's mission, and builds authority based on trust can effectively shape the work ethos of the organization. Leadership and authority reinforce each other: they are rooted in values, and these values are enacted through leadership and authority. As a result, the organization becomes more effective and guided by consistent values, and managers act as authentic leaders. This entire process impacts organizational culture and shapes the work ethos that reflects the organization's values, goals, and operating principles.

The article aims to identify and classify competencies and values considered essential or even necessary in the daily work of active managers. Research questions serving this purpose include: How can values be important for managers? What constitutes the foundation of their profession? Which values or other competencies influence the building of a manager's authority among employees (within the organization)?

The novelty of this research lies in the interdisciplinary approach. Integrate insights from psychology and sociology to understand how personal values and societal norms influence leadership and authority. Ethic-based leadership is becoming more important today, so this article explores how sustainability and ethics are increasingly shaping a manager's work ethos and authority (Jeanes, 2017). This study gives wide perspective on the topic. It presents the results of qualitative research material of contemporary leaders across different industries to illustrate how their personal values have impacted their authority. The practical aim of this research is to provide insights into how leadership development programs can be designed to instill the right values and strengthen authority.

The article will present various perspectives on the leadership issue. In the theoretical part, we will discuss different approaches to leadership. In the empirical part based on statements from managers and leaders and their daily experiences, I will highlight values and other competencies that are significant to them and have an impact on the ethos of their profession. I will summarize the entire discussion with reflections and answers to the research questions.

Modern leadership concepts

Inclusive leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership are all leadership approaches that emphasize collaboration, empowerment, and a focus on the well-being of individuals and the organization. All three leadership concepts prioritize *collaboration and empowerment* (Richardson & Storr, 2010). They encourage leaders to involve their team members in decision-making, problem-solving, and goal-setting. Inclusive leadership emphasizes valuing diverse perspectives, while servant leadership focuses on serving the needs of others. Authentic leadership focuses on the well-being of team members. These leadership approaches place a strong emphasis on the well-being and development of *individuals* within the organization (Johnson, 2014). They all promote *ethical leadership* (Mihelic, Lipicnik, & Tekavcic, 2010; Den Hartog, 2015; Tenuto & Gardiner, 2018). In all three approaches, leadership is not a top-down process but rather a *team-centered approach* (Sutton, Montgomery, & Byrd-Blake, 2010). In these models, leaders act more as facilitators and enablers, fostering a culture of trust, respect, and open communication. These leadership approaches have been associated with *positive organizational outcomes*, such as increased employee satisfaction, engagement, and performance, as well as a healthier organizational culture (Appelbaum, Degbe, MacDonald, & Nguyen-Quang, 2015). Scholars often consider

inclusive, servant, and authentic leadership approaches *adaptive forms of leadership*, suitable for dynamic and changing organizational environments. They emphasize flexibility, learning, and growth (Heifetz & Linsky, 2011; Doyle, 2017).

Although these leadership concepts share similarities, they each have unique characteristics and practices that distinguish them. Inclusive leadership focuses on diversity and inclusion, servant leadership – on serving others selflessly, and authentic leadership – on collaborative problem-solving and decision-making. Ultimately, the choice of leadership style depends on the organization's culture (not a leader individually; social constructivism), goals, and its values and mission. Next, I will shortly present three modern value-based approaches to leadership.

Inclusive leadership

Inclusive leadership aims to create and support a work environment where all employees enjoy respect and feel valued and engaged in organizational processes. Inclusive leadership refers to an approach in which leaders actively seek to incorporate diversity within the team, addressing not only cultural or ethnic differences but also variations in experiences, work styles, and perspectives (Ryan, 2007). Inclusive leaders value diversity and strive to create an environment where everyone feels acknowledged and understood (Randel *et al.*, 2018). They seek to engage employees in decision-making processes and listen to and consider their opinions. Inclusive leaders aim to develop the potential of all employees, irrespective of their backgrounds or differences. They create opportunities for the development and advancement of each team member (Rayner, 2009; Meeuwissen, Gijselaers, van Oorschot, Wolfhagen, & Oude Egbrink, 2021). Inclusive leadership leads to benefits like more innovation, better performance, higher employee engagement, and improved talent attraction and retention. Diversity and inclusion can also improve the company's public image (Caron, Asselin, Beaudoin, & Muresanu, 2019). Inclusive leaders take concrete actions. For example, they organize diversity awareness training, promote open communication, eliminate discrimination, and establish structures that support diversity. Practicing inclusive leadership can be challenging and requires commitment. Leaders must be prepared to address resistance within the organization and continually improve their skills. Leaders have an important role in ensuring the implementation of inclusion (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006; Brannen & Thomas, 2010; Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, & Nishii, 2014; Mor Barak, Luria, & Brimhall, 2022). Shore *et al.* (2011) present inclusive leadership as one of the contextual factors contributing to inclusion, alongside inclusive climate and inclusive practices.

Servant leadership

Servant leadership focuses on the idea of a leader as an individual who serves others, attends to their needs, and fosters their development and potential (Liden, Panaccio, Meuser, Hu, & Wayne, 2014). Servant leadership focuses on prioritizing others' needs and helping them grow and achieve their goals. Servant leadership represents a multidimensional leadership theory encompassing ethical, relational, and outcome-based dimensions (Christensen, Mackey, & Whetten, 2014; Dannhauser & Boshoff, 2007). The first person to formulate the concept of servant leadership was Greenleaf (1970, 1998). Since then, the concept become a subject of research and development in the leadership field. Servant leaders exhibits traits such as empathy, focus on others, humility, openness to suggestions, and a collaborative mindset. They strive to create conditions conducive to employee development. This form of leadership can yield benefits for both employees and organizations. Employees feel valued and more engaged, potentially leading to improved organizational productivity and efficiency. A servant leader can influence organizational culture by promoting values such as trust, collaboration, and potential development. This can contribute to a more positive and supportive work environment. Despite its merits, servant leadership may face criticism for being perceived as too unassertive or "soft" in making tough decisions (Pawar, Sudan, Satini, & Sunarsi, 2020).

Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership emphasizes genuine and self-aware leadership behaviors. It focuses on leaders being true to themselves, transparent, and guided by their values (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). Authentic leadership involves leaders who are genuine, self-aware, and true to their core values. They lead with transparency and strive to build authentic relationships with their followers Thorpe, Holt, Macpherson, and Pittaway (2006). Authentic leaders have a deep understanding of their own values, strengths, weaknesses, and emotions. They are introspective and strive for self-improvement. Authentic leaders are open and transparent in their communication. They share information openly and are honest about their thoughts, feelings, and decisions. Authentic leaders build authentic relationships with their followers. They foster an environment of trust and openness, allowing for meaningful connections within the team. Authentic leaders make decisions based on their values and principles. They consider the impact of their decisions on all stakeholders and aim for fairness and equity (Randel *et al.*, 2018). Authentic leadership is closely tied to ethical behavior. Leaders guided by authenticity prioritize moral and ethical considerations in their decision-making (Christensen *et al.*, 2014). Authentic leaders contribute to the positive psychological well-being of their followers. Their genuine and positive approach can enhance the team's psychological capital, including elements like hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy (Shore *et al.*, 2009). While authentic leaders stay true to their core values, they also recognize the need for flexibility and adaptability. They focus on sustainable growth and development, both for themselves and their team members (Roberson, 2006).

Managerial values

Within all three presented approaches to leadership, values play a significant role. In this perspective, values seem to be a core competence. Early contributors Max Weber and Chester Barnard emphasize authority, effectiveness, and work ethics in management (Vasillopulos, 2011; Isomura, 2021). Research indicates global consistency in value categories for managers with variations in order and importance (Schwartz, 1992; Hofstede, 2000). Values influence organizational dynamics, providing moral grounding amidst developmental opportunities. On the other hand, shared responsibility for wrongdoing can lead to corruption when people violate a collective norm (Sahu, 2017). Critical thinking is crucial for managers in developing countries as it enables them to challenge Western-centric models incongruent with local values (Elicor, 2017). Incorporating critical thinking into training programs could stabilize organizations.

Norms and social values are vital in management, especially amid economic and political shifts. Gare (2019) advocates returning to established values to counter corruption. Fundamental values are essential for community survival as they foster unity among professional communities. However, management lacks shared foundations, hindering consolidation (Grey, 2004). I perceive values as a wide concept embracing competencies as an instrumental and technical manifestations of values.

Managerial authority

If values guided how managers' community is formed, creating new leaders could strengthen the management profession and its culture. Authority can be a person or a group with a positive social reception (Martin, 2002). Generally, authority elicits admiration, recognition, and respect within a specific circle. Acquiring authority in power, office, institution, function, or position requires time. In contemporary sociology, the concept of authority is not limited to describing a person or institution with public acclaim but extends to ideas, perspectives, laws, and even conscience or characteristics defining recognition and widespread respect. Managers or leaders aspiring to have authority must prioritize the ethical aspects of their activities,

adhering to group norms and principles. Authority is one of the sources of power and the ability to lead others.

Authority involves the ability to make decisions accepted without questioning or resistance from subordinates. As emphasized by Herbert Simon (1947), it is essential to follow authority and share its moral principles regardless of direct communication of commands. Subordinates choose to follow the principles of their leaders. Therefore, an authoritative manager can influence the organization, potentially using persuasion, manipulation, or negative influence. Traditionally, Weber (2004) divided authorities into two types: charismatic authority, characterized by the unique qualities of an individual; and traditional authority, referring to power based on respect for prevailing organizational order and rules. Authority is the capacity to make decisions that are accepted for execution without questioning, contingent on subordinates' positive evaluations of the character and intellect of the leader. According to Kołakowska (2016), an authority is truthful, impartial, sincere, open, knowledgeable, experienced, engaged, confident, self-aware, authentic, consistent, demanding, and ready for compromises.

Research method

I based this article on the results of comprehensive ethnographic research derived from the interpretative paradigm and social constructivism (Czarniawska, 2008; Burrell & Morgan, 2016). Qualitative methods provide the opportunity to immerse oneself in the field and allow for a close understanding of the studied communities (Willis, 2000). I acquired the research material through various methods, specifically open interviews in this case, which facilitated immersion into the social reality of individual respondent groups. Interactions with interlocutors also served as brief participant observations, providing an opportunity for even more detailed exploration and explanation of interlocutors' behaviors (Fontana & Frey, 2010).

To understand a manager's job, the best approach is to listen to professionals in the field. It is such an internally diverse profession that statistical research would not provide a complete overview of the phenomenon and would not capture the complexity of the investigated relationships. Using these methods I followed the bricolage approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and adhered to triangulation principles (Konecki, 2000), which improved the research's rigor and credibility.

I conducted interviews with middle and top managers with various experiences: both beginners and managers with 20 years of experience in managerial positions in Polish companies. Overall, I conducted 26 interviews. The organizations where interviewees worked were also diverse. They represented both private and public sectors: consulting services, family companies, ministry, banking companies, media companies, telecommunication companies, and also HEIs. Moreover, interviewees represented several generations: Gen Z, millennials, and generation X and Y. In the majority, they had higher education and, interestingly, represented a wide variety of fields: language studies, criminology, medical studies, law, engineering studies, economy and finance, political sciences, journalism, social communication, and also management in both public and private universities.

The length of interviews depended on the respondents' willingness and the time they were able to dedicate to the meeting (the average duration of the interview was between one and two hours). When searching for interlocutors, I used non-random methods, i.e. snowball and contact person (Babbie, 2003). The second part of the research involved a literature review. Following the researcher's fundamental principle (ensuring the confidentiality of interlocutors), I appropriately coded respondents' statements to protect their identities (anonymity is a key principle of qualitative research).

Regarding the analytical approach, I analyzed to identify emerging themes and subthemes. I structured the empirical material using Atlas.ti software. To authenticate and validate the material, I applied data triangulation (Konecki, 2000). I adopted an interpretative perspective,

primarily aiming to explain and understand the studied populations (Burrell & Morgan, 2016). I used an open coding method, which I supplemented with the construction of categories, presented below (Saldaña, 2015).

Manager as an authority (field findings)

Managerial values emerged as a separate thread in the study and, according to respondents, they affect how a manager's authority is built. Interviewees mentioned several dimensions that determine a manager's authority creation. These were building relationships, competencies, ethical and moral standards, a transparent evaluation system, and clear setting of boundaries, which builds the manager's power (Leary, 2003).

> When talking about the characteristics of an effective manager, you need to have an appropriate level of analytical and emotional intellect. However, I have the impression that the emotional one is probably more important. The second thing is, as I have already said, in the context of authority, you have to be this way, you need this integral coherence, and consistency in your behavior. [47RL]

The interlocutors emphasized the importance of principles in managers' and leaders' behavior. These principles establish respect within both immediate and broader environments.

> From my perspective, to gain respect, you need to know how to listen. Speaking of manager flaws, I remember people talking excessively, just pouring words without substance. It disengages subordinates because they feel the manager talks a lot without providing concrete instructions or following up with clear expectations. Personally, I would not want to be like that. Although I am getting passionate now, I pay attention not to overwhelm everyone. [29IU]

Specific values that the environment focuses on determine the manager's authority. Among the valued competencies and values are knowledge-sharing, understanding, and ensuring the subordinates' sense of security (inclusive leadership). All these factors contribute to the specific attitudes of both managers and leaders.

> I am wondering, as I observe here, even among my acquaintances, or my previous boss, a person who is patient and does not have complexes, will not feel threatened by training someone. Instead, they want to help others grow, share their knowledge without the fear of it being used against them. This person needs to be self-assured and knowledgeable. It is someone who wants to train, can explain, and can provide a sense of security, acknowledging that not knowing how to save in Excel, for example, is not stupidity but a learning opportunity. Later, perhaps two months afterward, that person becomes an Excel expert. It is great when someone can diagnose and approach each person individually, utilizing their competencies. [. . .] A good manager needs to figure out whether someone does not want to develop due to a lack of interest or competence, or if they are afraid and need encouragement to act differently. This is a person who always stands behind their team. In my opinion, it is someone who can say no or defend the team even if it failed, and can handle internal matters within the team. It is someone who unifies the team, giving everyone a sense that we are all in this together and can always reach out to each other and count on each other, without backstabbing, which would be nice, for example. But this person also needs to be understanding. [34PC]

Managers' attitudes can set an example worth following. Since being a good manager requires experience, subordinates need opportunities to gain that experience to become managers themselves in the future. This way, the cycle continues. Every manager shapes their successors, determining the kind of workforce and managers the representatives of subsequent generations will become. The interviewees emphasize the role of charismatic authority in this process.

> I also reflect on what I still need to change, improve, or enhance to become a good, charismatic manager whom the entire team would follow. I genuinely ponder over this and often ask my friends who are directors or hold managerial roles about it. I also discuss it with my colleagues who have become managers and lead teams, asking them how they cope, solve problems, work, and what is required. I believe that social skills, and interpersonal abilities to recognize a person, to be able to understand them, not to assign tasks they cannot handle or feel uncomfortable with, and to effectively

delegate responsibilities are crucial. The goal is to ensure that the person doing the work is reconciled with their tasks, not feeling coerced. Otherwise, if someone does something haphazardly, it comes back to me, and I have to fix it. [33NA]

Continuing this statement, the same speaker attributes the mentioned competencies to a charismatic manager/leader. This theme recurs in many interviews. Speakers highly valued cooperation skills, effective communication, and knowledge-sharing.

I think it is also necessary to motivate people to do things, sometimes things they completely dislike or tasks that require extra time because of tight deadlines or potential issues. Motivating and convincing people to want to do it. Looking at my area of responsibility, for example, in a project where I collaborate with a colleague from our organization who is involved in the project from the sidelines. I cannot enforce deadlines on him or prevent him from interfering in certain matters in which he believes he should be involved. [. . .] I also believe that the ability to convey difficult information in a painless manner is essential. [33NA]

In the era of declining authorities, it is very challenging for managers to skilfully build their image. People value individuals who show positive, creative, and ethical qualities because their behavior inspires others in the team to follow their example (ethical leadership, servant leadership). One of the interviewees referred to this dimension as an elusive competence.

To be a good manager, simply a good manager, well, that's well said, I mean, what do we do to represent oneself more so that people want to work with us, maybe something like that. An elusive competence. [34PC]

I wanted to draw attention to the recurring expression in the interviews, i.e. "moral backbone." In an era dominated by the cult of money and the market, coupled with the decline of traditional values, norms, and ethical principles, they seem to be among the few stabilizers in managerial culture. Maintaining proven attitudes that constitute the foundation of security for every culture and society has become crucial. Managers and their collaborators need stable rules in the incredibly dynamic modern economies (servant leadership, inclusive leadership).

Certainly, a manager should have some kind of... moral backbone, and behave ethically because that is indeed important. [. . .] A good manager should be an honest person. [. . .] Certainly, one must also be careful about what one says, in the sense that sometimes you may need to say less. Not to lie but to say less rather than more. I have also experienced that too much information can sometimes have a negative effect. [49SN]

Being an authority, an example is also important from a practical point of view. The interviewees claim that the best manager is an experienced person whose attitude sets an example. They do not need to issue official orders but through their ethical behavior, they encourage others to follow suit. This is one of the distinctions between charismatic and formal authority. Research indicates that the former seems to be more appreciated than the latter.

The most convenient thing, which is great in gaining experience or in negotiations or in being a manager, is that at some point, you build something like authority or generally some influence in the environment you operate in. So it is not like you have to show your CV, what you have done, or convince someone of something; everyone already associates: "[Kowalski], ah, he is good at that," and then negotiations like this disappear because negotiations come down to when [Kowalski] has spoken in an area everyone knows he is familiar with, why negotiate when it is known that what he said is the final result of those negotiations? So in a manager's career, building authority is an indispensable element of making any progress in the career at all. Not training in new managerial techniques. [47RL]

In the further part of the statement, the same respondent talked about the symbiosis of career directions: acquiring and training additional competencies simultaneously with building authority based on the values they represent. One cannot exist without the other. You cannot be a good manager without the right competencies, but also, you cannot spread your wings in your career without adhering to certain principles. Importantly, a manager's authority builds the authority and image of the entire organization they represent.

There are people who also join my team, usually younger ones who have PRINCE certifications, B2B, and various training completed; their CVs are full of these courses, but they lack practical project experience because they have not built that authority. These certifications and authority building should go in some kind of symbiosis parallel to each other. First, train yourself in all managerial techniques because having authority without the right competencies will be ineffective, just as building authority based on being battle-hardened, being a 50-year-old battle-hardened individual because you have done a billion different projects but, for example, never took a project management training, and you do not know that initially, you need to analyze, plan, implement, test, accept. If you do not know the basics or if you do not know certain terms that you can only learn in some courses, and you are a self-taught person who does various things. Okay, maybe you have authority, but you do not have those theoretical fundamentals, and nobody will take you entirely seriously. [...] So this authority is very important. [47RL]

Managers serve as role models for subordinates and play a significant role in shaping managerial culture. Lacking certain skills creates a negative atmosphere, leading to poor collaboration and less sympathy among team members. When relationships with the boss are positive, employees are more inclined to perceive their work situation positively. People naturally prefer to work in an environment where they are respected, well-treated, and appreciated.

Some of these models, which are somewhat clichéd, include figures like Welch – about whom clients express uncertainty regarding his contributions. However, listening to him reveals well-organized thoughts. Yet, his actual actions in life remain uncertain. To what extent was he rigorous? To what extent was he a hard taskmaster, possibly harming people? However, when assessing the skills of a good manager, it is undoubtedly someone who cares about people, thinking about having a team rather than tools or automatons. This person also engages substantively in their field, as a lack of expertise could prove detrimental in the future. [49SN].

Respondents emphasized the significant need for building authority, which poses a considerable challenge. In an era of diminishing authority figures, the topic of authority-building has become a crucial subject in discussions with those surveyed. Formal authority associated with holding a managerial position is no longer sufficient to lead people. Having power, defined as the ability to control resources, does not automatically make a superior authority figure (authentic leadership). As interviewees mentioned, the role of a charismatic leader is crucial. According to authorities, the essential elements in building authority are consistency in action, the ability to set ambitious yet achievable goals for oneself and the team, respect for others and their work, the ability to fairly assess and motivate subordinates, and the aforementioned coherence in building one's own image.

A natural leader or authority figure is the simplest path but should not be the sole objective. Becoming a leader or authority for others evolves over time during one's career-building journey, naturally flowing from other social roles played in life. Let us note how young respondents perceive the phenomenon of authority:

I worked for my dad for a month; at my parents' home, I acted as an accountant sometimes. When there were new ventures, I assisted in business plans. However, we adhere to the golden rule that family members should not work together. Dad is my authority, even though we have difficult relations. He is quite decisive and raised us in a military manner. Now we have good relations. When I tell him I want to start my own company, I know he will help me. We have more of a partnership now; he does not address me as his kid and it is beneficial. I would not want to work in my dad's firm; I prefer to have his company as a business partner. [2LM]

On the other hand, older, experienced respondents discuss something that is both elusive and currently trendy in the corporate management environment. It is directly related to the previously discussed professional ethics.

One word comes to mind and I wonder how to say it – integrity? Generally, I wanted to say consistency but I say integrity because it is not something you build it one moment; it is a whole process, something you build throughout your life, your entire career. [47RL]

The loss of this consistency has serious consequences, according to the interlocutor, which may manifest even after many years in any circumstances. Therefore, according to the speaker, the lack of attention to ethical principles might be dangerous.

> If you lose that integrity or consistency or whatever you call it, meaning you do something against yourself or something unethical, something you consider unfair, if anyone finds out, and I am not talking about decisions made poorly due to lack of knowledge, but if you do something consciously against yourself, against ethical principles, deceive or cheat someone, it is bad. First, such bad behaviors become habitual, and you cannot eradicate them. Once you do something like that, it sticks. Second, and this is also an experience from the last 15 years of work, most often when you harm someone specific, [. . .] it comes back. [47RL]

Acting fair has two direct consequences:

> Now, if you lack that consistency, you encounter more and more people in your career who do not want to collaborate with you because you have rolled over them, more people who have heard that you are the last scoundrel. Conversely, if you acted fairly, ethically, and were decent to people you worked with, behaving professionally – not in terms of flowery speech and a nice suit, but being fair and consistent – it reflects back positively. [47RL]

To summarize, I will present the key leadership competencies relevant to the respondents. This seamlessly complements elements of authority building. Giles' (2018) quantitative study of 195 leaders from 30 global companies in 15 countries aligns with the key factors for managers identified in this monograph's qualitative research. The researcher noted that the results of her conducted studies and identified competencies may not come as a spectacular surprise to managers. However, they are exceptionally challenging to master. Therefore, they pose a significant challenge because their improvement requires going against human nature. The three most important competency areas are:

(1) High ethical and moral standards;

(2) Clear communication of expectations;

(3) Instilling a sense of security.

These attributes pertain to creating a work environment where a sense of security and mutual trust prevails. A leader who adheres to high ethical standards demonstrates a commitment to integrity and instills confidence that all team members, including themselves, will abide by the rules. Similarly, when leaders clearly communicate their expectations, they avoid surprising employees and ensure that everyone has the same information. In a safe work environment, people can relax and, as a result, utilize their intellectual potential to a greater extent for building connections, fostering innovation, creativity, and satisfying ambitions.

This table organizes various values and competencies crucial for effective management and leadership that I derived from the field material. It categorizes these competencies into four main areas: personality traits, knowledge, and skills, and further breaks them down by specific values. The table integrates values with specific personality traits, knowledge areas, and skills, showing a holistic view of what shapes a manager's work ethos. We can notice a strong emphasis on both personal traits (like patience, diplomacy, and consistency) and technical knowledge/skills, highlighting the dual importance of interpersonal and technical capabilities in leadership. The table suggests that a well-rounded leader must cultivate a balance of personal traits, technical knowledge, and practical skills aligned with their core values.

Discussion

Field material presents core values important to managers in their daily work life. Citations illustrate how managers understand these values and apply them in their practice. The interplay between values, personality traits, knowledge, and skills in shaping a manager's work ethos and authority creation is complex and dynamic (Table 1).

Table 1. Values and competencies of managers

Values	Personality traits	Competencies Knowledge		Skills
Responsibility	Organization, Systematization	Versatile knowledge, open-mindedness	Personal	Communication (including negotiating skills)
Honesty	Analytical dose	Analytical knowledge		Unlocking positive potential in people
Consistency	Patience, self-control	HR management		Openness, Creativity
Adherence to ethical and moral norms	Peacefulness, Detachment	Project management knowledge	Administrative	Coordination
Knowledge sharing	Consistency in action	Technical knowledge (necessary in the field)		Team leadership
Understanding	Diplomacy	Industry and organizational knowledge	Organizational	Flexibility
Building a sense of security	Eloquence			Leadership skills
Respect			Technical	Specialized branch skills Experience

Source(s): Own elaboration

Values such as responsibility, honesty, consistency, and respect serve as the guiding principles that influence a manager's decisions and behavior (Schwartz, 1992; Hofstede, 2000). Following ethical and moral norms ensures that personality traits, knowledge, and skills work within a framework that aligns actions with core ethical standards (Vassilopoulos, 2011; Isomura, 2021).

Personality traits like patience, diplomacy, and peace contribute to living out the values consistently (Greenleaf, 1970, 1998; Pawar *et al.*, 2020). For instance, patience and self-control support consistency, while diplomacy enhances understanding and respect. Traits such as organization and systematization (linked to responsibility) influence how a manager structures their work and interact with their team, reinforcing their value system. This can contribute to a more positive and supportive work environment and they fit into the tenets of servant leadership.

Knowledge areas like HR management, project management, and technical expertise inform a manager's decisions, ensuring they are well-grounded in facts and best practices. Knowledge in specific domains helps managers adhere to their ethical and moral norms by providing the necessary background to make informed and ethical choices.

Skills such as communication, negotiation, and team leadership are the tools through which managers can express values and personality traits in day-to-day management. Skills like analytical thinking (linked to honesty) and creativity (linked to consistency) enable managers to solve problems effectively while staying true to their values and utilizing their knowledge base.

The interaction between these elements creates feedback loops. For instance, the successful application of skills can reinforce values and personality traits. Effective communication can build respect, while leadership skills can enhance a sense of security. As managers gain experience and knowledge, their skills and traits can grow, leading to a deeper and more refined understanding of their values. Each aspect strengthens the others. Values inform the

development of personality traits; personality traits enhance the acquisition and application of knowledge; and knowledge and skills bring values and traits to life in practical settings. For a manager to be truly effective, there must be a balanced development of all these elements (Zaar, Van den Bossche, & Gijselaers, 2020). Neglecting any one aspect can weaken the overall leadership capacity.

The interplay between values, personality traits, knowledge, and skills forms a cohesive framework that shapes a manager's work ethos and authority. Understanding and fostering this interplay can lead to more effective, ethical, and respected leadership.

Conclusion

The article aimed to identify and classify competencies and values considered essential or even necessary in the daily work of active managers (interlocutors). Research questions were as follows: How can values be important for managers? What constitutes the foundation of their profession? Which values or other competencies influence the building of a manager's authority among employees (within the organization)?

The relationship between values and the authority of a manager is significant in the context of management and leadership. The values a manager shows in their behavior and work form the basis of their authority and the management profession. Employees often evaluate managers based on their morality, honesty, and work ethics. A manager who adheres to clear values can become a *role model* for their team. If there is consistency between what the manager preaches and what they do, they build authority based on trust. The manager's values should align with the organization's ethics and work culture. A manager's authority strengthens when they follow values that align with the company's mission and values. Consistency in professed values and consistency in actions are crucial for building authority. A manager who consistently adheres to their values builds lasting *authority*. A manager who is guided by values also has a greater influence on decision-making and team relationships. Their authority enables more effective management and the building of employee engagement. Values are crucial for *building trust*, and in turn, trust is an essential element of authority. A manager who is trusted by the team has stronger authority. Finally, a manager who adheres to values can contribute to improving *organizational culture*, increasing employee engagement, and achieving better organizational results.

Regarding social and practical implications for managers' daily work, they should regularly assess their values and how well their actions match those values to understand the social and practical impacts on their daily work. They could also work on enhancing positive personality traits (e.g. patience, diplomacy) through mindfulness practices, coaching, or training programs. Organizations can provide training programs for managers focused on key skills such as communication, negotiation, and leadership. They can enhance a manager's self-awareness. Moreover, establishing mentorship programs where experienced leaders coach managers can help develop crucial skills and offer practical insights into applying values in leadership (Zaar *et al.*, 2020). Thus prepared, managers should focus on creating an ethical and value-driven culture or a community (Folta, Seguin, Ackerman, & Nelson, 2012). They should lead by example, consistently demonstrating the values they espouse. This can help build a culture of responsibility, honesty, and respect within the team. Furthermore, regular training sessions on ethical behavior and decision-making can reinforce the importance of adhering to ethical norms. Creating a value-driven organizational culture involves building strong team dynamics. Encouraging open communication fosters trust and respect. Activities that promote team cohesion and mutual respect can improve security and collaboration among team members. Such culture enhances adaptation to change and organizational resilience. This also applies to strengthening individuals. Promoting a healthy work-life balance can help managers maintain their personality traits like patience and self-control, which are essential for consistent and effective leadership. Offering resources for stress management, such as wellness programs, can support managers in maintaining their overall well-being. By

understanding the described interplay between values, personality traits, knowledge, and skills, managers can take proactive steps to enhance their leadership capabilities. This approach not only improves individual performance but also fosters a positive and ethical organizational culture, ultimately leading to better team dynamics and organizational success.

From the point of view of interlocutors, a manager's values are closely related to their authority. Adhering to clear values and consistency in their implementation can strengthen the manager's authority and contribute to better management and help build lasting relationships within the team. The choice of leadership style and focus on different skills are not crucial for building authority. A manager can effectively lead in various areas as long as their competencies (knowledge and skills) stay consistent. However, values serve as a moral compass guiding the manager in decision-making and influencing organizational culture.

Limitations and further research

Findings from qualitative studies are context-specific and may not be easily generalizable to other settings or populations. Ethnographers' own cultural backgrounds and personal biases can influence their interpretations (subjective paradigm), potentially affecting the objectivity of the findings. However, this research embraced a relatively wide group of respondents who represented diverse institutional contexts to avoid misinterpretation of the field material.

For future research, it would be interesting to explore managers' values in more depth. Ethical principles gain new significance from the perspective of younger generations and can offer fresh insights into leadership concepts like transformational, adaptive, agile, or ethical leadership. These approaches reflect a shift towards more holistic, inclusive, and adaptive styles of leadership, suitable for the diverse and dynamic nature of modern organizations.

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