Editorial

Leadership, Management, and Socio-Economic Adaptation: Contemporary Challenges and Strategic Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The study outlines the role of modern leadership and effective management in ensuring the socio-economic adaptation of both organizations and the public administration system to the challenges of our time arising from global instability and rapid changes in the socio-economic environment. A study of modern approaches to developing leadership competencies aimed at improving both individual and collective capabilities, particularly in the context of introducing innovative solutions and adaptation strategies, is carried out. The author analyzes the relationship between the personal characteristics of a leader, including their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics, and the effectiveness of management decisions that affect the organization's ability to respond quickly to external challenges. Particular attention is paid to the assessment of adaptive leadership as a relevant management model that allows managers to develop strategies for rapid response to dynamic changes and promote the stable development of organizations even under conditions of uncertainty. The importance of forming positive socio-psychological attitudes (attitudes) as a key tool for influencing staff to achieve strategic objectives is substantiated in detail. The importance of forming positive socio-psychological attitudes (attitudes) as a key tool for influencing staff to achieve strategic objectives is substantiated in detail. A conceptual model of leadership mentoring is developed, which focuses on motivation, training, and development of employees in the framework of strategic changes. An integrative approach to adaptive leadership is proposed, which includes a combination of strategic, tactical, and coaching components, which increases the efficiency of management processes in the modern world of constant changes and challenges.

Keywords: Leadership, Effective management, Socio-economic adaptation, Adaptive leadership, Leadership competencies

In today's world, characterized by global instability and rapid changes in socio-economic conditions, the importance of leadership and effective management is constantly growing, as these factors play a key role in the ability of organizations and society to adapt to new challenges. Today's environment, shaped by global crises such as the pandemic, economic turmoil, climate change, and military conflicts, creates uniquely challenging conditions that require managers to make strategic decisions aimed at ensuring sustainable development and long-term stability.

Adaptation to socio-economic changes is becoming a determining factor in achieving stability and increasing competitiveness not only for individual organizations but also for states as a whole. In this context, the study of leadership and managerial approaches, which are the main means to overcome adaptation challenges, is of particular relevance. The very need to develop modern management approaches that take into account both economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development is driving increased interest in this topic. In this regard, the current study aims to identify effective management approaches that will facilitate socio-economic adaptation in the face of current challenges and provide a solid foundation for sustainable development in the future.

In a globalized socio-economic environment characterized by a high level of instability and the need for rapid adaptation to change, the role of effective leadership is of strategic importance, as leaders are the key actors in defining goals, ways to achieve them, and ensuring interpersonal interaction within the organization. Undoubtedly, the presence of a competent leader significantly increases the likelihood of successful achievement of organizational objectives, which puts leadership at the forefront of effective management tools.

Traditional management methods, which have long dominated society, are gradually losing their relevance, as modern employees, including key professionals, often leave organizations because they are unwilling to work under an authoritarian leadership style. The situation is complicated by the fact that even ordinary employees require a special approach focused on their motivation, recognition, and development (Pawłowska & Zdziarski, 2015), which raises a number of pressing questions: how can a team be effectively managed? How can it ensure its motivation to work towards a common goal, avoiding conflicts and ineffective showdowns? In Ukrainian society, interest in leadership and management is extremely high since the actions of managers and leaders determine the success of social and organizational structures, ranging from small groups to public administration. In this context, leadership as a mechanism of strategic influence and management is becoming increasingly important, acting as one of the key elements in ensuring socio-economic adaptation.

The concept of leadership is interdisciplinary and is widely studied in such sciences as psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and political science, as it is an integral part of any civilized society. Despite some differences, scientific approaches to understanding leadership mostly agree on defining its basic characteristics, such as creativity, intellectual abilities, knowledge, and the ability to motivate employees. An important component of successful leadership is the relationship between the development of a leader's personal qualities and the development of the leadership phenomenon itself, as these processes are closely intertwined and cannot be considered separately (Berson & Avolio, 2004).

The relationship between the development of a leader's personal qualities and their leadership effectiveness forms the basis for understanding the role of a mentor in the modern

organizational environment. This aspect becomes especially important in the context of socio-economic adaptation, where the leader's ability to motivate and guide employees significantly affects the achievement of common goals. As shown by Lin Moe (2012), the importance of leadership qualities is also manifested in the process of socio-economic adaptation of personnel, where the role of a mentor plays a crucial function. Effective adaptation of new employees to the organizational environment has a significant impact on their motivation, loyalty, attitude to the organization and willingness to work to achieve a common mission. That is why the formation of strategic approaches to leadership and management is necessary to overcome modern challenges and ensure the sustainable development of organizations in the long term (Krøtel & Løkke Møller, 2022).

The socio-economic adaptation of personnel, as a key element of effective management, emphasizes the importance of the leadership qualities of a mentor. In this context, individual approaches to employee motivation play a special role, allowing not only to facilitate adaptation but also to maximize their potential within the framework of organizational development factors. To ensure high efficiency and overall staff engagement in the adaptation process, a mentor must demonstrate developed leadership skills that allow not only to influence employees but also to motivate them to achieve key goals, helping to unleash their inner potential (Khuwaja et al., 2020). Leadership in this context can be defined as the ability to inspire and engage people in the organization's tasks using individual approaches that reveal the strengths of each employee (Zhu et al., 2012).

Looking at leadership through the prism of individual employee motivation, we can form a modern view of the role of a leader-mentor. This concept emphasizes that it is through the development of professional and personal qualities that a leader is able to ensure a harmonious combination of the organization's strategic objectives and the needs of staff, strengthening trust and moral authority. A modern view of this concept can be formulated based on the analysis of scientific approaches to the formation of leadership competencies and research aimed at studying the role of a leader-mentor. A leader-mentor is a personality focused on achieving the strategic goals of the organization and is able to create favorable conditions for the training, motivation, and development of staff due to their professional and personal qualities (Lam et al., 2023). The characteristic features of a mentor leader are based on a system of values and beliefs that build trust and confidence in their ability to lead a team, creating moral authority in the group (Yousaf et al., 2019).

From Rønningstad (2019), we can see that a leader's ability to learn, improve, and actively apply new knowledge is the basis of their influence. A leader who openly shares experience and contributes to the development of subordinates builds a strong and adaptive team capable of responding effectively to external challenges and achieving high results. A mentor's ability to go beyond the "comfort zone" and create conditions for the growth of others is a manifestation of true leadership based on mutual development, trust, and respect (Esaki & Vito, 2024). The more resources and efforts a leader invests in the development of his or her employees, the more stable the team becomes, characterized by competitiveness, the ability to adapt quickly to changes, and the willingness to achieve ambitious goals (Bliss et al., 2014). The presence and development of leadership qualities in mentors is a critical element of corporate culture that contributes to the formation of a learning atmosphere, high rates of

professional growth, and the achievement of much more ambitious results than the simple performance of professional tasks during the adaptation period.

Creating a team capable of adaptation, based on strengthening the leadership qualities of the mentor, is only one component of the multifaceted leadership process. For a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, it is necessary to take into account that leadership development involves not only dynamic interaction in a group but also individual progress aimed at improving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills. According to Kjellström et al. (2020), leadership development can be viewed as a complex and dynamic group process aimed at improving interpersonal competencies and increasing the team's ability to lead in an organized and effective manner, which is an important aspect of ensuring socio-economic adaptation in the face of modern challenges. At the same time, according to (Reis & Blanchard, 2022), the development of a leader as an individual occurs through the formation and improvement of their cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills, as well as leadership competencies that allow them to influence others and effectively manage complex processes.

Leadership development, which includes both group and individual aspects, emphasizes the importance of such characteristics as technical skills, the ability to effectively organize work processes and motivate a team. These key elements form the basis for assessing the level of a leader's professional development and determine their ability to influence the adaptation of employees to change and promote their professional growth. The level of a leader's development can be assessed using individual characteristics such as knowledge, professional competencies, technical skills, and personal qualities. In particular, technical skills include the ability to organize production tasks and a deep understanding of the professional field, while behavioral aspects are manifested in the leader's ability to influence a group of people, motivating them to achieve common goals (Omeihe et al., 2021). The success of the adaptation of new employees and the effectiveness of their further training largely depends on the extent to which the mentor has leadership skills and skillfully applies them in their practice. Based on Chowdhury et al. (2024), we note that the key benefits of developing leadership competencies are the ability to inspire people, encourage them to take action and help them solve problems of different levels of complexity. The process of leader development includes not only the improvement of professional skills, but also the increase in self-awareness, which is influenced by factors such as organizational culture, mentor function, leadership, and resources for self-development. These factors become decisive when choosing tools and strategies to improve the effectiveness of leaders.

The individual and technical characteristics of a leader play a key role in shaping the basis for choosing the most effective approaches to developing their competencies. One of the most effective tools in this context is coaching, which, thanks to its personalized approach, not only helps to improve professional skills but also ensures successful adaptation to dynamic changes in a complex organizational environment. Among the modern tools for developing leadership competencies, coaching occupies a special place, which, according to research, is one of the most effective learning methods. Coaching involves a personalized approach, where the coach helps the learner achieve specific goals by analyzing the situation, building a strategy, and implementing plans. This method not only helps to improve professional skills but also helps to develop leadership skills necessary to manage adaptation processes in the organization (Bratianu & Paiu, 2023).

As is well known, in social psychology, the concept of "attitude" is defined as an individual's propensity to engage in certain social behavior, including perception, evaluation, and awareness of a social object with the subsequent formation of actions in relation to it. Attitudes, by modifying the cognitive perception of social situations, have a decisive influence on the formation of behavioral models of the individual. In the context of sustainable regional development, such attitudes play a key role, as they can stimulate the desired behavioral patterns of residents, contributing to the socio-economic stability of the territory (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). For the successful development of a region, it is necessary to form positive attitudes that contribute to the preservation of its intellectual potential, minimize the outflow of qualified professionals and young people, and attract human capital in the public administration system. Such attitudes may emphasize the high level of quality of education, favorable environmental conditions, or prestige of living conditions, creating a positive image of the region. However, if attitudes are formed spontaneously, they often reflect existing problems, such as the low competitiveness of the public administration system, which can negatively affect its development.

Therefore, the formation of positive social attitudes, which is a key element in the development of a region, cannot be successful without the strategic intervention of leaders. Leaders, through their influence, are able to purposefully create and consolidate social perceptions that not only reflect the current state but also determine the direction of the region's future development, taking into account its strategic priorities. In this context, leadership becomes an important tool for the purposeful formation of positive social perceptions within public administration. Leadership influence allows not only the current socio-economic state of the region to be reflected but also the formation of ideas that correspond to the strategic idea of development, creating the desired image of the region in the future. Leadership ideas serve as tools for shaping meanings encoded in words and facilitating their exchange, creating a basis for collective understanding and action (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Meanings, as subjective psychological constructs, often need to be adapted through a creative process of interpretation, which provides flexibility in how followers perceive ideas. Formulating a leadership idea, communicating it to followers, and managing the interpretation process are central aspects of a leader's activities that seek to proactively shape attitudes. The modern version of integral leadership emphasizes that the idea of leadership is not a product of the current situation but an initiator of social change focused on the future. This approach allows the leader to work with the future, formulating strategies and actions that foresee development and promoting socio-economic adaptation through proactive change management (Paulienė, 2012).

It should be noted that leadership ideas become the basis for building strategies aimed at long-term sustainable development, but the effectiveness of their implementation largely depends on the flexibility of management approaches. In a dynamic world where changes are occurring at an extraordinary rate, a leader's ability to adapt to new challenges and quickly adjust their actions is a critical factor in achieving success. Thus, various situational models that arise in the process of management require leaders to be ready to reassess their own approaches, change their leadership style, and make decisions that are appropriate to the new conditions. In this context, the concept of "adaptive leadership" is of particular importance, as it covers the ability of public management to effectively manage an organization, influencing subordinates in an environment of constant change, both external and internal. The modern

practice of public administration is characterized by high dynamics of changes, which often occur so quickly that they are difficult to record or predict. Often, one innovation becomes obsolete at the stage of its implementation, giving way to more advanced technologies or approaches. In such conditions, it is important for any organization not only to implement changes but also to do so purposefully and systematically because the change process itself is only a tool for achieving strategic goals, not the ultimate goal (Makedon et al., 2019).

It should be noted that adaptive leadership, which is focused on responding quickly and effectively to external and internal changes, can only bring results if there is an integrated and systematic approach to their implementation. Such changes, regardless of their nature, have a multifaceted impact on the organization, which requires the development of carefully thought-out strategies to align them with all aspects of the business. Changes in the organization of the public administration model can be caused by external factors, such as legislative restrictions or economic crises, as well as internal factors, such as reorganization of the management structure or replacement of key personnel. In addition, they can occur spontaneously or be the result of a well-thought-out strategy that may include both tactical and strategic decisions (Bratianu & Paiu, 2023). Regardless of the nature of the change, its impact extends to all aspects of the organization, as a company is a complex mechanism where all elements are interconnected. For example, the introduction of a new production technology requires staff training, which, in turn, changes work processes, increases efficiency, and requires adjustments to goals.

Implementing change often requires different leadership approaches depending on the situation. For example, traditional leadership models can be effective for implementing routine changes that avoid negative consequences. However, in cases where changes are aimed at large-scale transformation or strategy renewal, traditional leadership may not be sufficient to ensure the desired results. That is why adaptive leadership, which allows for a quick response to challenges, is considered the most relevant and promising approach in modern conditions (Maia et al., 2024). An adaptive leader is a manager who not only knows how to quickly adapt to new circumstances, but is also able to effectively prepare their team for change, motivate them, and ensure the successful implementation of new ideas. Regardless of the scale of the changes, whether radical transformations or minor adjustments, adaptive leadership implies flexibility and the ability to optimally manage the transformation process. It is this approach that allows organizations not only to remain competitive but also to ensure long-term development in today's ever-changing world.

The purpose of this special issue is to bring together the best scientific achievements aimed at optimizing management processes, developing human potential, and implementing innovative strategies in various fields. We sincerely invite researchers, analysts, practitioners, and business and public sector representatives to share their scientific findings and practical achievements. Your research has the potential to significantly contribute to the development of society, the economy, and the formation of innovative approaches to management and leadership.

Thus, we see that the modern world is facing numerous unprecedented challenges that require a thorough rethinking of the importance of leadership, management approaches, and organizational culture to ensure the sustainable development of society and the economic system. We invite you to contribute to the creation of a relevant scientific discourse dedicated

to addressing key issues of management, leadership development, and achieving sustainable progress in today's realities. The main thematic areas of the special issue include a wide range of research, in particular:

- Role of Managers in Sustainable Development.
- Leadership and Image in Public Authorities.
- Human Capital Management Amid Migration and Security.
- Digital Transformation and Leadership in Digital Environments.
- Team and Project Management Under Strategic Uncertainty.
- Organizational Culture During Post-Conflict Recovery Processes.
- Behavioral Management to Boost Staff Productivity.
- Adaptive Management in Public Sector Crises.

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