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ENHANCING LEADERSHIP COMPETENCES FOR MANAGERS IN UKRAINE'S RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS

Abstract: *The study is devoted to the definition of leadership from the point of view of developing the competences of specialists in the field of public administration. Leadership in government and local self-government bodies should be based on publicity, institutional support and vertical social mobility principles. The article aims to analyse the specifics of the development of managers' leadership competences in the context of the post-war reconstruction of Ukraine. The study identifies significant features in the conceptual load of the "competence" definition. The basic types of competences are allocated. The category of leadership competences is analysed. The essential bases of leadership competences of future managers in the context of Ukraine's post-war European integration are determined. The main competences of a modern managerial leader are allocated. International standards for the profile of leadership competences for managers are described. Variations of configurations of leadership competences in the field of management are analysed. It is determined that leadership is seen in the ability to motivate, manage and inspire others to achieve common goals. It is found that the dynamics of social processes require the formation of an innovative concept of leadership, which combines strict compliance with legal requirements and intensifies the efficiency of management processes. It is substantiated that management leadership is manifested by the synergy of competences, skills, and abilities aimed at strengthening the personal influence of the leader and ensuring effective strategic management decision-making. In the context of Ukraine's adaptation to European standards in the post-war recovery period, the positions of the basic profile of leadership competences for managers are defined.*

Keywords: *leadership, public administration, human resources, competence, managers, profile of leadership competences.*

1. Introduction

The European integration vector of Ukraine's development determines the need to modernise and align the national governance system with international standards. Innovative approaches to the phenomenon of leadership are based on the principles of

competence and responsibility, and leadership qualities should serve as a stimulating factor for achieving management goals, implementing reforms, optimising administrative culture and increasing the efficiency of human capital use.

The strategy for increasing the level of human resources potential of managers in post-war

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Ukraine is based on the norms of European practice, where the phenomenon of leadership is positioned as a key tool. These norms form several requirements for the criteria for the competition of public authorities, taking into account their leadership potential and integrating innovative approaches in the training of future managers. Given this, the development of leadership competences is a topical issue. It is positioned as a guarantor of effective implementation of the needs for the development of public administration in the post-war period of Ukraine's recovery.

Many works in the modern scientific field are devoted to the issue of leadership in the management system. In particular, certain concepts of leadership have been studied by scientists Kolisnichenko (2024), Lipentsev and Romaniuk (2021), Kolesnyk (2019), Storozhev (2022), whose publications examine theoretical and conceptual approaches to leadership competences, and explore the mechanisms of leadership development in management systems.

At the same time, the current public administration strategy is characterised by a mismatch between the practical expression of leadership potential in public authorities and the outdated regulatory and legislative framework and innovative requirements of the European integration concept of Ukraine's development. In this regard, several aspects of leadership now require in-depth research to upgrade the strategy further for developing the leadership competences of managers of the new time.

The article aims to analyse the specifics of the development of managers' leadership competences in the context of Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.

2. Literature review

The problem of conceptualising the phenomenon of leadership in the dynamic conditions of management system development determines the increased scientific interest of researchers in the range

of issues. At the same time, leadership is considered from socio-psychological, theoretical, methodological, institutional, and several other approaches.

Goncharuk (2007), Vyshnevskiy (2004), and Surai (2015) have studied various aspects of leadership. Kovbasyuk (2014) identifies the main components of leadership development in management, while Chechel (2016) positions leadership as a vector of HR policy. Pidlisna (2021) analyses the specifics of forming leadership competences. The author identifies the personal qualities of effective managers and explores successful leadership development programmes.

Among the in-depth foreign systematic reviews on the subject in recent years, it is worth noting the publications of Backhaus and Vogel (2022), Andrikopoulos and Ifanti (2020), Ushaka Adie et al. (2024). In particular, Backhaus and Vogel (2022) focus on studying the conditions under which leadership is characterised by influence on change in the public sector or lack thereof. The results of Backhaus and Vogel's (2022) research show that correlations are more substantial for achieving positive outcomes than for preventing adverse outcomes in the area under study and that the governance system and methodological factors contribute to the heterogeneity of the effect sizes.

Andrikopoulos and Ifanti (2020) explore the principles of innovative approaches to public management and leadership, conducting a systematic analysis of the relevant discourse. According to the research results, theoretical attitudes prioritise management over public service. Therefore, the authors propose upgrading approaches to modern public service, focusing on rethinking and reorienting the public service delivery system.

In continuation, Ushaka Adie et al. (2024) note that public administration needs to initiate a digital government transformation. The researchers conduct an extensive review of the current state of the art in the study of the concept of digital leadership and, based on

this, determine the conceptual directions and theoretical basis for the success factors and competences of a digital leader. Ushaka Adie et al. (2024) argue that the current state of digital transformation initiative management is highly complex, as leaders need to balance many conflicting demands with equal priority against the background of a general decline in transformation potential.

Bolden's et al. (2020) publications focus on developing "systemic leadership." The researchers highlight modern leadership's methodological and conceptual aspects and approach to developing managers' leadership competence elements. Instead, Gürlek and Cemberci (2020), Knies et al. (2024) study the relationships between leadership, innovation, and organisational efficiency in management processes.

Torfining et al. (2021), Head (2022), Van der Voet and Steijn (2021) explore the specifics of digital leadership and emphasise the importance of a leader's ability to drive innovation in management and social transformation through team cohesion.

Researcher Mardiana (2020) is convinced that promoting social transformation in public administration requires sustainable leadership that is visionary and adaptive, able to unite the efforts of various civil society institutions to implement complex reforms and overcome crises in public administration.

At the same time, Bryson et al. (2021) emphasise that developing leadership competences should occur while ensuring the necessary institutional environment and the effective functioning of vertical social mobility mechanisms.

Shashyn et al. (2024) reveal the essential basis of the components of the model of formation and development of leadership competences. Furthermore, Melnyk et al. (2022) analyse variations in leadership competences in management from the perspective of corruption prevention strategies. At the same time, Ashok et al. (2021) highlight the need to upgrade the model of educational and research activities

to develop leadership competences by public administration professionals.

Despite the significant attention these issues have received in the scientific field, the problem of actualising leadership strategies in public administration requires extended research.

3. Materials and methods

Design and scope of the study. The study examines the development of leadership competences in ensuring the rule of law, motivating managers to study and improve their skills, improving the sectoral legislative framework, implementing effective international anti-corruption policy, and developing economic instruments of leadership in management. The aspects under study are examined from the perspective of the development of the public administration system in the period of post-war reconstruction of Ukraine.

Data collection and sources. A comprehensive analysis of scientific articles and professional publications published in various scientific sources was conducted. We selected primary sources from influential journals indexed in well-known databases (Scopus, Web of Science). Priority was given to papers published between 2019 and 2024. The keywords used for the search were "leadership, public administration, human resources, competence, managers, profile of leadership competences". The criteria for including and excluding publications were the spatio-temporal indicator and the level of information reliability. Methods used to assess the risk of bias in the included studies included brainstorming and causal analysis. Initially, more than fifty industry publications were collected, and about thirty-five were used for the study according to the criteria. The literature selection criteria included the quality of the journal, relevance to industry topics, and the availability of peer-reviewed content.

Analytical framework and methods. Analytical approaches such as analysis,

synthesis, generalisation, comparison, and abstraction were used to establish cause-and-effect relationships. Induction, a scientific research method aimed at identifying cause-and-effect relationships between phenomena and generalising empirical data based on logical assumptions, was also used, moving from the specific to the general, from the known to the unknown.

Evaluation criteria. The study's limitations include the lack of access to complete and up-to-date official data and the difficulty of experimentally testing theoretical conclusions.

4. Results

Today, the current public administration strategy is characterised by a mismatch between the practical expression of the potential of management and leadership in public authorities. The outdated regulatory and legislative framework and the innovative requirements of Ukraine's European integration concept further complicate the situation. In particular, the Strategy for Reforming Public Administration of Ukraine for 2022-2025 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2021) focuses on the priority need to address the problems of state strategic planning. Against this background, the existing managerial and leadership potential is characterised by a lack of compliance with institutions' sustainable development requirements. In addition, the situation is complicated by several challenges, including security challenges, economic disparities between regions, political decentralisation and local self-government, which are undergoing reform, corruption and lack of transparency, the impact of information technology and too rapid digitalisation.

Ukraine's European integration strategy requires implementing several strategic measures to optimise social processes. The dynamics of the governance sphere are positioned as a key component of these measures. The level of competence of human

resources in the field of governance often determines the success of state-building processes, which requires an effective practice of selecting management personnel based on generally recognised leadership competences.

According to the analysis of modern publications and research results on the selected topic, "competence" is often used alongside the concept of "competence". These definitions have not yet found a clear distinction in the scientific field, often used as synonyms and without a deterministic substantive differentiation. Having entered scientific circulation back in the 70s of the last century through the mediation of scholars D. Raven, R. Bader, and A. Schelten, the concepts of competence currently have more than ten variations.

It is worth focusing on both generally accepted concepts. *Competence* is a set of powers of a particular official or body that regulates the ability to make management decisions and organise and control their implementation (National Academy of Public Administration under the President of Ukraine, 2011). At the same time, *competence* is the ability to perform or manage a particular set of works with the appropriate quality due to the acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities.

To date, several leadership theories have been formed, in particular: the theory of social exchange (J. Homans), the theory of human roles (R. Bales), the theory of the charismatic leader (J. Conger, R. House, B. Shamir), interactive and synthetic theories, situational theory (F. Fiedler) and trait theory (R. Mann, R. Stogdill), as well as behavioural approach (R. Blake, K. Levine), adaptive approach (T. Mitchell, P. Hersey) and system theory (M. Houston). Hofstede's cultural dimensions of power distance also play an important role in the study of leadership (Storozhev, 2022).

Power distance, in the concept of Hofstede, is one of the leading indicators of the value of society, which demonstrates an assessment of the degree of inequality between members of

society and is measured by the power distance index (Stępień & Dudek, 2021). The latter demonstrates the degree of hierarchical distancing or differentiation of people. In societies characterised by a high degree of power distance, there is tolerance for authoritarian leadership, inequality of status in both formal and informal relationships, respect for people of higher rank, and belief in the justice of the “strong hand”. At the same time, in cultures with a low degree of power distance, values such as individual freedom and equality in relationships play a significant role (Stępień & Dudek, 2021).

The modern interpretation of the development of leadership competences includes effective models of behaviour in the field of public administration in order to effectively achieve predefined goals. At the same time, the variations of leadership competences in management are not exhaustive. First of all, several main types of competences can be distinguished:

- basic motivations that serve as the basis for personal purposefulness;
- psychophysiological characteristics (such as the type and speed of reaction);
- knowledge gained in the course of professional training, practical work, self-improvement and self-study);
- regulatory mechanisms (attitudes and values, psychological phenomena, self-concept);
- skills and practical knowledge.

Leadership competences are derived from the phenomenon of leadership. Within the framework of public administration theory, leadership is a modern concept of change management, where the leading role is given not to the level of the position but to the degree of influence. Thus, leadership is positioned as an innovative qualitative characteristic of the management process. Based on the ideals of strategic thinking, creativity, trust and respect for people, leadership is currently one of the most scarce managerial resources. This is mainly in the

context of dynamic social changes in Ukraine at all levels of government.

Among the modern concepts of leadership in the public administration sector, it is necessary to distinguish the New Public Management (NPM) and the Theory of Governance. The former is specific to civil service orientation towards customer needs, innovation and efficiency, and integrating private sector practices into the public sector. The governance theory's peculiarity is the public's broader involvement in the management process through partnerships between the state, business, and civil society.

The key principles of NPM are efficiency, division of responsibilities, autonomy and accountability, customer focus, and introduction of competition. Among the disadvantages of this theory are an overemphasis on efficiency, existing problems with the quality of services, and social responsibility, which, if delegated to the private sector, will reduce the government's ability to respond effectively to social needs.

Governance is mainly attributed to the open systems theory, which positions the public administration organisation as an open system capable of effective self-regulation and rapid adaptation in response to external and internal dynamics.

In the context of Ukraine's active European integration development, comparing the Anglo-American and European models of public administration efficiency requires special attention. The former is based on transparency and accountability, while the latter is based on social responsibility and active support for vulnerable social groups, including through socially oriented businesses. The European model combines different cultural characteristics and management practices, which serves as a model for implementation in Ukraine. At the same time, this process will require changes in the legal framework and a complete transformation of the management culture towards transparency, openness, prevention of corruption risks, responsibility

and civic participation.

Leadership competences are related to leadership and human resources management and are positioned as a psychological phenomenon with a vector for regulating informal relations. The process of leadership formation as a certain averaging of individual images of leaders in the public consciousness is determined by the opinion of authoritative and competent individuals, the opinion of opposition forces, experience of interaction with leaders, consonance of influences with the created image of a social servant and characteristics (needs) of the image bearer, as well as using spreading influence and manipulating information. Leadership in the public sector is closely linked to the synergy of the potential of skills and competences that stimulate support for the leader's influence, detailing directions and goals, promoting strategic thinking, and maximising the team's impact.

Utilising the potential of leadership in management involves several interrelated elements, in particular:

- developing the image of a public body to create a trustworthy reputation and active interaction in society;
- search for vectors for implementing the transformation of management activities;
- ensuring the prerequisites for the individual development of managers;

- development of personal internal and external communication and information strategies by the manager-leader, provided that the potential of existing formal communication formations is used;
- generating confidence in the public body's ability to implement the expected changes with the help of the relevant management representatives;
- developing a common concept of activity and raising the level of professionalism of key specialists, which in synergy determine the success of change implementation.

In 2023, the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service (NAUCS) and experts from the Ukrainian Institute for Social Studies named after Oleksandr Yaremenko, with the assistance of the Norwegian Centre for Integrity in the Defence Sector (CIDS), conducted an analytical study of organisational culture in Ukraine entitled "Public Service in Ukraine" (National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service, 2023). According to the results of the analytical study, with the growing European orientation of national progress, ethical leadership is becoming more and more active among public managers (Figure 1). It is a leadership behaviour that maximises a leader's ethical and moral qualities.

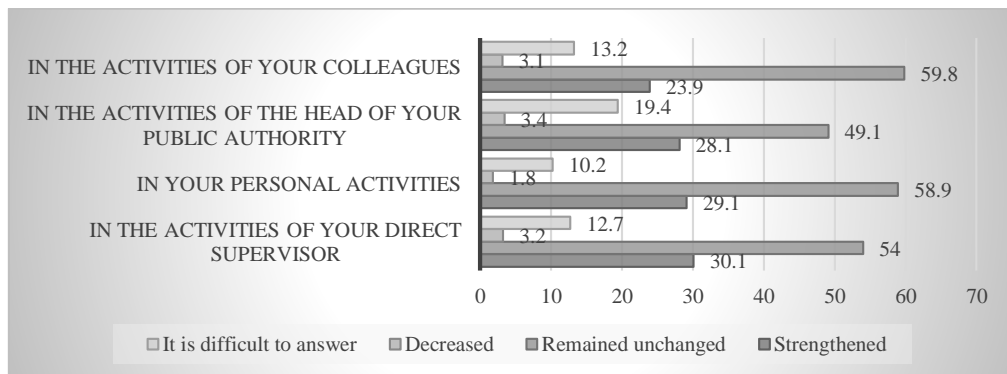


Figure 1. Evaluation of ethical leadership development in governance since the beginning of the war in Russia and Ukraine, %.

Source: NADS (2023)

As shown in Figure 1, 23.9% of respondents observe an increase in ethical leadership among colleagues, 30.1% in the activities of their direct supervisor, and 28.1% in the activities of the head of the governing body. Notably, 29.1% of respondents note manifestations of ethical leadership in their personal activities, which is considered a positive trend.

In general, ethical leadership, a priority in the developed global community, is based not on power but on the leader’s authority. Integrating this concept into Ukrainian realities requires a particular social and psychological foundation. Progressive management leaders often ignore traditional limitations, transforming the traditional concept into “network” leadership. Network leadership becomes critical in the case of assimilation of responsibility between the public and private sectors. This trend is called shared leadership in the public administration system with distributed responsibility of the parties.

Ukraine’s development in the context of post-war recovery will require readiness for innovation based on good governance. The Global Innovation Index (GII) is one of the leading indicators of a country’s innovative development (Wipo, 2024). It is used to identify the country’s innovation potential.

In this study, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria were chosen to determine the strength of the impact of quality governance on the innovative development of the state. Both countries are post-socialist and quite close to Ukraine. Comparison of their innovation capabilities (Global Innovation Index; GII) with the Government Effectiveness (GE) indicator will prove the need to upgrade the leadership system in the Ukrainian public administration as a catalyst for intensive innovation development in the post-war recovery period. The GE indicator represents perceptions of the quality of public services, the degree of independence of governance from political pressure, and public trust. The results are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

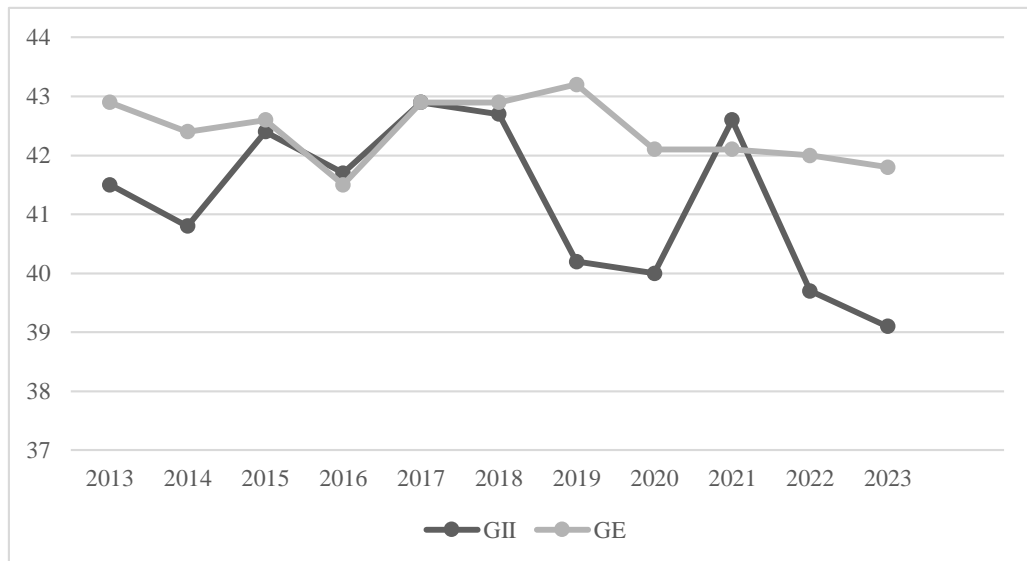


Figure 2. Correlation of the Global Innovation Index and Public Administration Performance in Bulgaria

Source: Dutta et al., (2023)

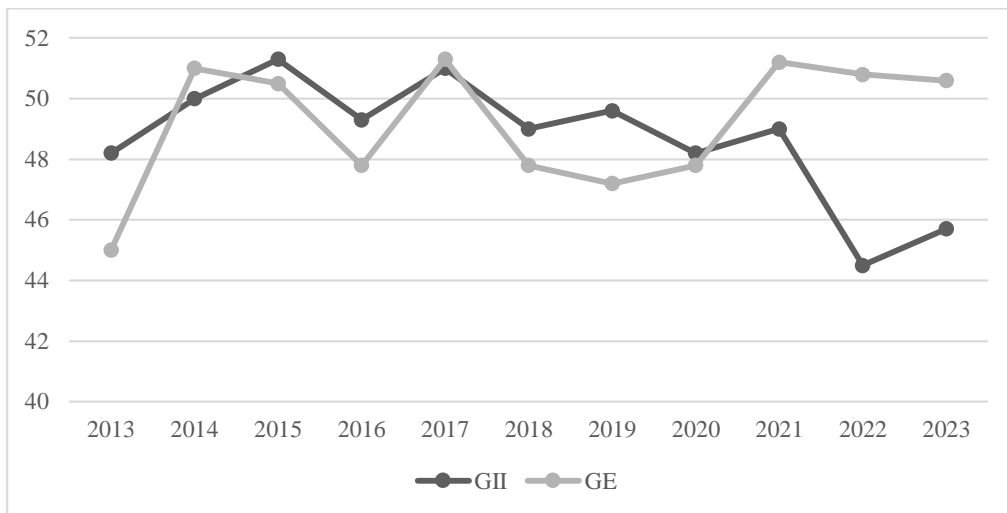


Figure 3. Correlation between the Global Innovation Index and the Czech Republic's Public Administration Performance

Source: Dutta et al. (2023)

As the correlation between the GII and GE Public Administration Performance (Figure 2, Figure 3) shows, the effectiveness of the country's innovation development depends on the efficiency of management processes. This requires a holistic approach to the governance strategy in Ukraine in the post-war period, including strategic planning, effective regulatory policy, financial support, and public-private partnerships. Moreover, none of these aspects can be effectively implemented without strong leadership potential. The expected qualities of a leader should include not only a high intellectual level, the ability to make risky decisions and take responsibility for their outcome but also communication and intercultural competence, creativity, perseverance and motivation, an inner desire for self-development, patriotism and social responsibility, knowledge and skills in special areas, such as business communications, fundraising, team building. These competences are not exhaustive but essential for a modern leader.

Based on the analysis of international experience and the study of national specifics, taking into account the challenges of the future, in the context of adaptation of the

national public administration to European standards, the following leadership competences should be identified in the context of Ukraine's recovery:

- high level of professional skills and thorough knowledge of the law and strategic vision;
- personal qualities – analytical and critical skills, listening skills, morality, honesty and ethics, willingness to take reasonable risks, creativity, adaptability, stress resistance;
- motivation, including self-motivation;
- knowledge of organisation and crisis management;
- ability to work with and in a team;
- communication and cross-cultural competence.

These competences can be presented in the form of an algorithm with interrelated components: analytical thinking – effective communication – human resource management – result orientation/ For the sake of continuous self-development, conscious managers who position themselves as leaders will need appropriate education, mentoring and coaching, training, mentoring programmes, which will allow for a

qualitative transformation of the human resources potential of public administration in Ukraine in the context of post-war recovery.

5. Discussion

A common concept of modern scientific research on leadership in management is the complexity of developing leadership competences in crisis social conditions. Numerous scholars have paid attention to the issue of identifying the most effective configuration of managers' leadership competences.

According to Schwarz et al. (2020), the methodological basis of the concept of leadership in management should be formed by democratic principles of competence, which include openness to innovation, adaptability, and skills in solving complex problems. At the same time, Chen and Lee (2021), Neill and Meng (2023) identify the function of leadership in management that requires the development of appropriate competences: the function of clear accountability and strict adherence to the rules, which requires political loyalty, as well as the function of network management, which requires adaptability and readiness for innovation. At the same time, as Chen and Lee (2021), Neill and Meng (2023) argue, a leader has the right to move from one role to another, depending on the situation.

Demircioglu and Chowdhury (2021) note that effective governance leadership can only be developed if an established institutional framework ensures a high level of anti-corruption activities and public-private partnerships. Franken et al. (2020) further argue that leadership should emphasise the importance of managers serving the public interest.

Ingrams et al. (2020) and Khuwaja et al. (2020) emphasise the dualistic nature of the role of leadership in governance, in which excessive leadership is positioned as dangerous for the democratic process, and the

possibility of moral hazards haunts leaders themselves. The scholars argue that the leadership strategy should now focus on protecting rights and be based on fundamental democratic values.

Some researchers offer their vision of leadership competences. In particular, Demircioglu and Chowdhury (2021) include leadership motivation, influence, desire and ability to lead a team, creativity and professionalism, and continuous self-improvement. At the same time, Buhagiar and Anand (2021) focus on result orientation, forecasting and strategic action, analytical thinking, effective communication and management skills, and the ability to provide continuous feedback.

To logically group and systematise variations in leadership competences, da Silva et al. (2019) consider it appropriate to form competence profiles – a description of a set of competences and related behaviours introduced for managerial leaders to ensure the effective implementation of their functions and facilitate the implementation of reforms. According to the researchers, competence profiles will help bring Ukraine's public administration system in line with European standards as quickly as possible.

In continuation, Kwiotkowska et al. (2022) detail the project of forming a leader's competence profile. It should include the skills, abilities and abilities that allow a leader to be realised as an effective manager, solve strategic tasks, and contribute to increasing public trust in the public administration system. As the authors note, several leadership competences defined in different countries are similar despite the types of organisations where they are used. At the same time, they differ significantly in the context within which these competences are defined, which is determined by socioeconomic conditions and the specifics of socio-political development.

6. Conclusion

Leadership is a compelling modern tool for achieving management goals. Disclosure of the content of leadership competences for the management system is a way to improve its personnel policy.

To summarise the above, the general variations of managers' leadership competences should be supplemented by those potentially necessary in the context of Ukraine's recovery, in particular: analytical thinking and strategic planning; knowledge of the mechanisms and procedures of public administration; awareness of responsibility for human resource management; adherence to the principles of public administration; result-oriented management; and effective communication.

The formation of profiles of leadership competences allows public officials to carry out a critical self-assessment and identify areas for self-improvement. The leadership factor should be considered when creating a system of moral, social, psychological and creative incentives for the career growth of managerial personnel in public administration. This requires ensuring the conditions for the continuous development of managerial leaders, which the Centres for Advanced Training of Public Authorities should actively promote. Given the topic's relevance, further research should include the development of a concept of leadership for integration into the system of public authority development in the context of modern social transformations in Ukraine. The concept should be based on European norms and be complementary to the requirements of the post-war recovery period.

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