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The Role Of Leadership in Adopting Quality Management System in Social Service Sector

ABSTRACT

Objective: The research is to analyse the theoretical leadership assessment assumptions, to determine the compatibility of managers' assessment by choosing to implement the quality management system EQUASS (The European Quality in Social Services) in a social service organization.

Methodology: Research Methods are based on researchers' insights, applying scientific literature analysis and synthesis methods, discussing leadership styles and leadership factors, questioning survey leaders' opinions on participation in implementing quality management system in EQUASS, taking into account leadership style and leadership factors.

Findings: The empirical study identified a correlation analysis between leaders' aspirations to participate in the project *Improving the Quality of Social Services through EQUASS* and the

leadership style of these leaders in relation to leadership expression factors. The results of the pilot study have shown that the strongest inspirational motivation factor is judged by the senior manager, senior managers with a high managerial experience, and the result-oriented award-winning factor.

Value Added: The attitude of leaders in implementing a quality management system in an organization providing social services, taking into account the style and factors of leadership. Appropriate and effective leadership of the manager can lead to successful employee performance by implementing quality services and helping employees overcome difficulties in an organizational environment by implementing a quality management system.

Recommendations: In social service organizations, leadership has its own specificity, because the management's work is based on the principles of social work focused on satisfying the needs of the service user and aspects of integration into society and modern management principles. Successful leadership is achieved by adapting leadership style to the needs of employees and users, taking into account the circumstances. Leadership style is particularly important in influencing the activities of the members of the organization, the efficiency of their work, creating the right conditions for education and cooperation.

Key words: Quality management system, leadership, manager, leadership styles, social service organization

JEL codes: M12 – Personnel Management

Introduction

Poverty rate in 2017 was about 22.9 percent. Poverty in Lithuania is experienced by every fifth resident (Lietuvos statistikos…). People in need are often stigmatized, blamed and excluded from public life. The listed changes mean that the state is looking for effective ways and means to provide more effective assistance to people who have lost the ability to function independently and effectively in society, while also seeking to ensure that every member of society has access to certain assistance and support that meets his or her needs and interests. One of the most widely used tools for providing assistance and social inclusion is the proper organization and accessibility of social services. Analysing the current situation, it can be stated that the

demand for social services in Lithuania is constantly increasing. Social services are often organized and provided by social service organizations – they can be both national and community-based and non-governmental institutions, organizing and providing services to one or more social groups.

Problem. In Lithuania, deinstitutionalisation of social services is taking place during the period of 2014–2020. If social service organizations, local governments and NGOs are able to discuss and implement the planned deinstitutionalisation activities, the quality of services will be improved. The network of social services will be developed and the proper relationship between stationary and community services will be maintained. This can only be achieved by improving the human resources capacity of organizations providing social services by providing adequate knowledge of personalized services based on the principles of result-oriented work. In a modern social service organization, it is necessary to understand the importance of quality management in the system of social services by raising the skills of employees, providing the necessary knowledge, improving working methods, finding motivation measures, taking into account that the social environment and the organizations providing social services must constantly strive to help the individual to become independent and capable. Therefore, the interaction between leadership and decision-making and new developments within the organization is directly related and reveals the responsibility of managers in making new decisions, improving the performance of the organization.

It is believed that the leader must be experienced and able to combine leadership styles in the organization. Scientific literature examines a wide range of leadership styles and leadership in organizations (Gilley, Dixon, Gilley, 2008; Butkevičienė, Vaidelytė, Žvaliauskas, 2009, Šilingienė, 2011; Masiulis, Sudnickas, 2008; Northause 2009; Atkinson, Mackenzie, 2015; Van der Voet, 2015). However, there is no consensus on what leadership theory is most effective and what leadership factors should lead to a successful organization. A certain leadership style, chosen by the leader, determines the success or failure of the organization. Leaders often ignore the partic-

ular situation, choose the wrong leadership style, and this is not only the result of labour productivity, employee satisfaction, but also the employees themselves are less motivated to achieve the goals of the organization. As a result, the leadership role and leadership development in each organization is a major challenge and their lack of or insufficient focus on improvement can become one of the biggest obstacles to a successful organization. The aim of the article is to determine the compatibility of managers' assessment by analysing the theoretical assumptions of leadership evaluation by choosing to implement the quality management system EQUASS in the organization providing social services. The object of the research is the attitude of the heads of organizations providing social services in implementing the quality management system.

Leadership aspects

Achieving and implementing an organization's goals depends on the manager's ability to organize activities and collaborate with his staff. Proper leadership should encourage the members of the organization to achieve their goals by improving the quality of the service provided and distinguishing the organization in the service sector. How well can leadership be, as Northouse (2009) says, that there are as many different definitions of leadership terms as the number of people trying to describe it. Leadership is most often associated with the influence of a person on a group and goals, and proper leadership has a direct impact on work efficiency, productivity, knowledge, skills. According to Northouse (2009), leadership is the search for order, stability and consistency in the organization. Thus, leadership is understood as influencing individuals and groups that seek common organizational goals. All these are the actions of the manager to achieve the goal with the help of employees (Gražulis et al., 2012; Lipinskienė, 2012). Yahaya & Ebrahim (2016), argues that leadership style has a significant impact on the work of an organization's employees to anticipate their productivity

and effectiveness. There is a constant debate in the scientific space about exceptional leadership qualities or the most effective leadership style (Berg & Karlsen, 2016). According to Tuuli and others (2012), the following factors determine leadership styles: the manager's values system; employee trust; tendency to lead and a sense of self-protection in unclear circumstances. Heller (2000) argues that all managers should have strong personalities to influence people and perform all the intended functions and distinguish the following qualities that are necessary for a good manager: communication, self-confidence, insight, principality, collegiality, courage, diligence, ambition, devotion, imagination. The leader should be the leader of the organization, the team. Lipinskiene (2012) argues that leadership is one of the most important managers' functions. Therefore, leadership should be one of the most important abilities of the manager. The concept of leadership is often referred to as the concept of managing, so it is important to emphasize the differences and similarities between these phenomena, which make the terms as one concept. Bass & Bass (2008) refers to the preference of managerial status and formal force, while leaders without power status give in to their goal and follow the process of social influence.

Peculiarities of leadership in organizations providing social services

In Lithuania, the organization of social services is defined as a company providing social services (public limited company, private limited company, and individual company), institution (public institution, budget institution, organization, association, charity and support fund, religious community or community centres). Its representation of the following groups of social service institutions are assigned to a branch or family: stationary social services institutions (social care institutions); non-stationary social services institutions (Directory of Social Services of the Republic of Lithuania). In analysing the activities of social service organizations, the role of manag-

ers, which determines success and efficiency, is emphasized because in order to effectively manage the organizations providing social services, not only management, but also understanding of the specificity of social work is needed. Žalimienė, Skučienė, Junevičienė and Gataulinas (2013) emphasize the special sensitivity of the social worker profession to the needs and changes of society. In business organizations, the main goal and result is profit, and the goal of the social work organization is to satisfy the customer's needs. Social work belongs to a group of professions whose representatives are most often confronted with people who are in a difficult life situation (Prakapas, 2007a, b). Providing the right help to overcome the difficulties of life has a number of requirements. According to Regehr, Glancy, (2011), social work requires the corresponding personality traits and abilities of the people performing it. Leadership in such organizations is based on the values of social work, and the organization of activities is based on the principles of effective management (Coulshed, Mullender, Jones et al., 2006). Leadership in social service management is defined as a process whereby an individual or group of individuals, while pursuing the goals of a social mission in the organization and applying social work and management knowledge, directs the employees of the organization and assumes responsibility for their effective work (Johnson, 1995). Leaders of all organizations providing social services, as well as leaders of profit-making organizations, have the following management functions: planning, organizing, managing, controlling and evaluating human resources. The following abilities are required for the successful implementation of these functions: managing of the organization; identifying organizational needs, organizational goals and objectives; planning, search and selection of staff needs; organization of work activities and teamwork, motivation and performance evaluation; delegation of tasks and allocation of responsibilities; conducting meetings; providing feedback and communication; leadership; promoting the participation of volunteers; consideration of alternatives; evaluation of results; monitoring of processes and activities in the organization; financing, planning, distri-

bution, etc. Pileckienė & Žadeikatė (2009) claim, that the manager not only controls the employees, but also gives them the power to delegate some of their powers, to make their needs better. In summary, it can be said that in these organizations, leadership involves a wide range of responsibilities, and that the activities of the managers of social work organizations can be called exclusive simply because the service provided by such organizations is special compared to profit-oriented organizations. The implementation of functions takes place within the social sphere, work objectives and customer needs. This requires additional knowledge and skills from management in leadership. The peculiarities of managerial functions in organizations providing social services were revealed by Pileckienė & Žadeikatė (2009). The authors argued that the head of a modern organization should perform general management and leadership functions in order to achieve effective organizational performance. Pileckienė and Žadeikatė (2009) attribute leadership, co-ordination, planning and organization to general management functions, and to leadership functions such as self-development and employee development, promotion of innovation and creative activity, individual motivation, strategy development and communication. Johnson (2001) argues that the most appropriate social work organization is a democratic governance style that encourages mutual assistance and collaboration, employee involvement in decision-making and organizational strategy development. Žalimienė et al. (2013) argues that leadership style is a particularly important factor in the well-being of employees and that most Lithuanian social service institutions are dominated by a democratic leadership style.

It can be said that the management of social work organization managers is based on management principles, taking into account the nature of the provided social services and the peculiarities of the recipients of services, and the manager has sufficient flexibility to develop and maintain a collaborative relationship and a culture of cooperation and, as Žalimienė (2006) argues, must balance between social justice and organizational performance. The goal of social work organizations that provide social services is to meet the

needs of socially excluded persons for their social integration (LR Social Services Act, 2006a, b). Adomaitytė-Subačienė (2015) argues that quality in providing social services is particularly important because: users of social services are usually members of a vulnerable group; social services are funded by the state or municipal budgets, so it is particularly important that funds are used efficiently; human resources and the attractiveness of the social services sector need to be properly managed. Therefore, an appropriate managerial approach and effective leadership can ensure that social service organizations provide quality services that are user-centred.

European public sector organizations use these quality management methods to improve their performance: the European Quality Management Foundation (EQMF) model; Common Assessment Model (CAM); Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model and European Quality Services in Social Services (EQUASS). EQUASS, a European Rehabilitation Platform initiative, has developed a certification, training and consultancy system to help meet the requirements of the Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services (EQUASS, 2010; EQUASS, 2017a, b). From March of 2017, Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre in Lithuania has started project No. 08.4.1.-ES-FA-V-421-01-0001 *Improving the Quality of Social Services through the EQUASS Quality System*. The main objective of this project is to increase the quality of Lithuanian social services by applying the requirements of the Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services. This project will actively contribute to the implementation of sustainable development principles in the social field. The social service institutions participating in the project will directly contribute to the improvement of social exclusion and poverty reduction and employment (www.reabilitacija.lt).

Research methodology and organization

In order to determine the leadership style that determines leadership factors and to determine their influence in implementing the EQASS quality

system in the organization providing social services, a quantitative survey method - a questionnaire was chosen. The questionnaire consists of closed questions (Kothari, 2004), evaluated according to the Scale of Tartert (1 = total disagreement, 5 = total consent). The study was conducted in February, 2019. Selected target sample, nineteen respondents who participated in the survey are heads of organizations providing social services, participating in the project of the European Union Structural Funds co-financed by the Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre in Lithuania No. 08.4.1.-ESFA-V-421-01-0001 *Improving the Quality of Social Services through the EQUASS Quality System*.

The questionnaire consists of several question groups: 1) Q1- Managers' decision to participate in the EQASS Quality System within the organization. Questions are formulated taking into account the external and internal environment of the organization; 2) Q2- What is expected to be improved by implementing the EQUASS quality system, based on EQUASS 10 Quality Principles (Leadership, Personnel, Rights, Ethics, Partnership, Participation, Personal Orientation, Complexity, Outcome Orientation, Continuous Improvement) and European Quality Management Foundation Perfection 8 principles (focus on results, focus on the client, leadership and goal pursuit, management, process oriented, human development and inclusion, continuous training and performance improvement, collaboration development, public responsibility); 3) Q3 - Identify leadership styles that show leaders' aspirations to participate in the project *Improving the Quality of Social Services through EQUASS* (questions based on the following leadership styles: transactional, transformative, lead-member, passive, team-serving); 4) Q4 - Find out leadership factors (selected: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual promotion, individual circumstances, result-based awards, exclusive leadership, uncontrolled leadership) and demographic issues: Q5 – age; Q6 – education; Q7 – seniority in the current organization; Q8 – seniority; Q9 – seniority in the social services sector.

Ethical principles were followed when distributing the questionnaire. Each respondent was free to choose whether to participate in the

study. The data is only used to summarize, maintaining the anonymity of the respondents.

The internal compatibility of the questionnaires presented to managers is verified by Cronbach's alpha factor. Since the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.955, higher than 0.7, it can be said that all questions are consistent.

Correlation analysis between leaders' aspirations to participate in the project *Improving the Quality of Social Services through EQUASS* (Q1) and the leadership style of these leaders (Q3). The extensive correlation analysis (Kirk, 2007) revealed that managers who have a more important criterion for applying the EQUASS quality system:

• "Improve the leadership skills of the organisation's managers", the transformational leadership feature is more acceptable, "the guide helps employees understand and seek the vision of the organization";

• "Introducing an organization's mission in society", the passive leadership attribute is more acceptable "the leader begins to solve problems when they become a threat to organization";

• "Introducing the organization's vision in society", the passive leadership feature is more acceptable "the leader takes time before taking action";

• "Acquire the EQUASS assurance and excellence quality label", a more acceptable are leadership traits "The manager endeavours to encourage employee respect", "the manager of his behaviour demonstrates that employees can trust him", "manager-to-employee interpersonal relationships", team leadership feature "the leader creates a secure organization climate";

• "Implementing the principles of sustainable development in the social sphere" is a more commendable feature of team leadership "the leader creates a safe organization climate".

Correlation analysis between improvement factor in organization, participating in project *Improving the quality of social services through EQUASS (Q2), and leadership style (Q3)*. Also, with the help of correlation analysis, distinguishing only significant and strong correlation relationships, it was found that in the project participation, the managers more appreciated the following statements:

• "Improve the results of the organization" is more distinguished by a leader attributes "The manager strives to promote employee respect", "Manager-to-employee interpersonal relationships", "It is important for the manager to maintain an equally good relationship with each employee", pursuing common interests", "Leader creates a secure organization climate" as a feature of team leadership;

• "Attention to the recipient" is characterized by the characteristics of a leader, "The manager strives to encourage his employees to respect", "The manager of his behaviour shows that employees can trust him", "The manager-to-employee relationship"; as a leader in team leadership, "The leader creates a safe organization climate", "The leader encourages open communication with the members of the organization";

• "Rights of the recipients" are more marked by the attribute of a leader "It is important for the manager to maintain an equally good relationship with each employee";

• " The quality of life of the recipients" is more marked by the sign of transformational leadership "The leader shows his example to the employees by his behaviour";

• "Co-operation with the recipient" and "quality of life for the recipients" is more marked by the sign of transformational leadership "The leader shows his example to employees", "The leader tries his behaviour to promote employee respect", "The manager of his behaviour demonstrates employees can rely on it", "A leader in team leadership", "A leader in creating a secure organization climate";

• "The documentation management system" is more marked by the sign of transformational leadership "The leader constructively criticizes employees";

• "The quality of employee work" is more marked by the sign of transformational leadership, "The leader in his behaviour shows a target for employees", "The leader tries to make his behaviour promote employee respect".

Also, there was checked which leadership factors (Table 1) have been significantly correlated with respondents' different demographic characteristics. Significant correlation (with significance level α = 0.05) is between:

Table 1. Influence of leadership factors

Leadership factors		Demographic characteristics	Value of correlation coefficient
Inspirational motivation	Q4_4 The leader clearly explains what employees can and must do	Q5 age	0.498
Result-based awards	Q4_13 The leader encourages employees who achieve their goals	Q8 seniority in management	0.465
	Q4_14 The leader knows what the results will be if the job is done properly	Q8 seniority in management	0.532
		Q9 seniority in social work sector	0.462
Exceptional leadership	Q4_16 The leader is happy when others reach the set standards	Q6 education	0.503

Source: created by the author, based on a summary of the questionnaires.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the older the leader is, the more appreciative the inspirational motivation leadership factor is "the leader clearly tells what employees can and must do". The higher the manager's seniority, the more the manager appreciates the result-based award leadership factor: "The leader encourages employees who achieve their goals" and "The leader knows what the results will be if the job is done". Also, the higher the length of service in the social services sector, the more this last factor is assessed by the leader. Leaders with higher university education appreciate a "superior leader in leadership factors, when others reach out to expected standards" more than managers with higher non-university education.

Table 2. Statistical characteristics of expression of leadership factors

Factors	The smallest value	Maximum value	Average	Standard deviation
Idealized influence	9	15	12,79	1.54
Inspirational motivation	8	15	12,95	1.76
Intellectual promotion	7	15	12,58	2.16
Individual circumstances	11	15	12,95	1.15
Result-based awards	10	14	12,26	1.33
Exceptional leadership	9	13	10,89	0.97
Uncontrolled leadership	4	10	7,53	1.67
Overall leadership rating	69	90	81,95	5.42

Source: created by the author, based on a summary of the questionnaires.

After analysing the statistical characteristics of the expression of leadership factors, presented in Table 2, it can be stated that the strongest are inspirational motivation and individual circumstances, the average is 12.95, and the weakest is uncontrolled leadership, the average being 7.53. The highest standard deviation value is the expression of intellectual stimulation, which indicates that the opinion of the interviewed managers is the most different from this statement.

Management Assessment compatibility

With the help of Kendal's concordance coefficient and Chi square test, the consistency of the respondents' opinions with all the statements

(questions) and each question block was thoroughly verified. The evaluation of the coefficient of concordance was performed on the basis of the interpretation of coefficients of Corder & Foreman (2009). This method has helped to establish that managers' estimates for all claims are of medium consistency, i.e. the value of the concordance coefficient falls within the range of 0.3 to 0.5, which indicates that managers' opinions are similar (see Table 3). Also, when examining the blocks of each question individually, it appeared that the evaluations of the mid-compatibility guides were in the following aspects:

• participation in the project *Improving the Quality of Social Services through the EQUASS Quality System, improving the organization's results';*

• *passive* and *team leadership;*

• *idealized influences* and *uncontrolled leadership* factors;

• High compatibility, i.e. concordance coefficient values greater than 0.5 are in relation to these issues:

• participation in the project *Improving the Quality of Social Services through the EQUASS Quality System, improving people's education and inclusion in organization management*;

• the third issue of the style of leadership and separately of the *transactional* leadership;

• *Exceptional leadership* factor.

However, this approach has also helped to highlight the statements that have led to controversial opinions: leadership policies, collaborative development, performance-based awards, and, as previously stated, standard deviation meanings, intellectual promotion.

Also, the check of the compatibility of all managers' evaluations with the help of the Chi criterion, by putting forward the following hypotheses:

: Managers' evaluations are contradictory (i.e., the concordance coefficient is zero);

: Managers' evaluations are similar (i.e., concordance coefficient is not equal to zero).

In this case, the critical test value, 138.134, with the number of degrees of freedom at 102 is lower than the test value, 905.696 (see Table 3). Therefore, the zero hypotheses that managerial evaluations are contradictory is rejected, and it can be said that managers' assessments of all statements are similar or harmonized. In more detail, you can examine each question or question block with the same conclusions in assessing the compatibility of managerial evaluations only with the help of Kendall's concordance coefficient.

Table 3. Compatibility of management opinions

Compatibility of opinions on these aspects	Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance	Chi-Square	Degree of freedom
Q1-Q4 All questions	0.467	905,696	102
Q1 The results of the organization will improve	0.223	67,831	16
Q1 The external environment of the organization	0.206	27,351	7
Q1 The internal environment of the organization	0.267	40,524	8
Q2 Attention to the recipient	0.274	114,463	22
Q2.1 The results of the organization will improve	0.346	13,167	2
Q2.2 Attention to the recipient	0.109	8,265	4
Q2.3 Leadership policy	0.013	0,500	2
Q2.4 Process-oriented management	0.251	9,556	2
Q2.5 Educating and incorporating people into organizational management	0.655	24,875	2

Q2.6 The activities of the organization will be based on continuous knowledge sharing and improvement	0.189	3,600	1
Q2.7 Development of cooperation	0.070	2,667	2
Q3 Leadership styles	0.566	440,719	41
Q3 Transformational	0.196	22,339	6
Q3 Transactional	0.621	70,747	6
Q3 Passive	0.489	55,743	6
Q3 Leading member	0.242	27,607	6
Q3 Team leadership	0.400	45,563	6
Q3 Serving leadership	0.230	26,191	6
Q4 Idealized influence	0.442	16,791	
Q4 Inspirational motivation	0.240	9,116	2
Q4 Intellectual promotion	0.137	5,200	2
Q4 Individual circumstances	0.286	10,850	2
Q4 Result-based awards	0.044	1,676	2
Q4 Exceptional leadership	0.764	29,045	2
Q4 Uncontrolled leadership	0.330	12,542	2

Source: created by the author, based on the summary of the questionnaires.

To sum up, we can say that the evaluations of managers of social service organizations are similar to all statements, and participation in the project *Improving the Quality of Social Services through the EQUASS Quality System* will improve outcomes and human development within the organization as well as involve individuals in improving organizational governance. We can say that managers emphasize the style of transformational, team leadership, leadership member, and highly appreciate the superior leadership factor.

Conclusions

In social service organizations, leadership has its own specificity, because the management's work is based on the principles of social work focused on satisfying the needs of the service user and aspects of integration into society and modern management principles. Successful leadership is achieved by adapting leadership style to the needs of employees and users, taking into account the circumstances. Leadership style is particularly important in influencing the activities of the members of the organization, the efficiency of their work, creating the right conditions for education and cooperation.

EQUASS quality system is for social services organizations that respect the most important values and quality principles in the social services sector. The implementation of EQUASS quality management system in Lithuania is aimed at strengthening the social services sector. The role of managers is particularly important in the implementation of a quality management system, as its proper management obliges employees of social service organizations to seek quality and continuously improve it, and to ensure the quality of service to service users, taking into account individual needs.

The study found that managers of social service organizations implementing the quality management system EQUASS distinguish the characteristics of transformation, team leadership, and leadership. These leadership styles correlate with the internal and external factors of the organization's environment: improve the performance of the organization, employee-to-manager interpersonal relationships. It is identified that the older the managers - the more appreciative of the inspiring motivational leadership factor, the higher the managerial experience and the higher the length of service in the social service sector - the more the manager appreciates the result-dependent award-winning factor. Leaders with higher university education value a more exclusive leadership factor than managers with higher non-university education.

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