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## **Barbara Kożuch**

University of Social Sciences, Poland

[bkozuch@san.edu.pl](mailto:bkozuch@san.edu.pl)

# The Concept of Public Trust-Based Leadership – An Outline



## **ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The issue of trust in leading public organisations continues to inspire growing confidence among management researchers and practitioners. The characteristics and organisational behaviour of leaders are analysed from various angles. The subject of the research is one of the newer approaches, namely trust-based leadership (TBL). The aim of this paper is to identify characteristics and the roles of public trust-based leadership (PTBL). This is the type of leadership that most fully incorporates trust as the basis of organisational behaviour in vertical and horizontal relationships and consequently as organisational cooperation.

**Methodology:** The primary methods used in this article are a critical review of research on organisational trust, leadership and public trust contained in the academic literature and in surveys of trust in leadership conducted in recent years by consultancies and made available on line.

**Findings:** The study confirmed that an inalienable role of leaders is to shape their own organisational credibility in both internal and external relations. Achieving a high level of this credibility allows to earn trust.

**Value Added:** Demonstrating that a key differentiator of the trust-based leadership concept is that TBL is centring trust-based relationships throughout the entire organisation.

**Recommendations:** Further research on trust-based public leadership should support its presence in contemporary organisations.

**Key words:** leadership, organisational trust, trust-based relations, public trust

## Introduction

A particular feature of today's times is that there is a growing interest in the humanistic aspects of management, of which trust-based management is one. An important field of its application is public management, although the issue has previously been highlighted on the example of people's everyday activities, including business activities.

Trust is rightly called the foundation of all organised human activity. There is no organisation if there is no cooperation. This in turn requires trust, however small.

The formation of trust should be considered the most important role of leading contemporary organisations.

Understanding the concept of trust depends on which social science discipline it is considered within. Psychologists focus on relationships between individuals and groups of people, while sociologists further point to relationships between institutions. From the perspective of trust in and within organisations, it is important to understand the concept from the disciplines of management and organisation.

In recent years, there has been a growing importance of organisational cooperation and this has led to an increased interest in trust. However, while numerous studies have demonstrated that trust matters, less attention has been paid to the reasons for the great and growing importance of trust in modern organisations. The literature on the subject and observations of management practice suggest that it is mainly related to the empowerment of people in the organisation, the changing expectations of stakeholders in public organisations and the consequent change in the relationship between superiors and subordinates, between employees from the same organisational unit, as well as between the whole organisation and its members.

In today's public management, there is a perceived particular need to transcend the boundaries of the organisation and establish relationships with its environment. Moreover, there may be a legal obligation to undertake cooperation with other organisations. In Poland, for example, this applies to cooperation with other public sector organisations and the so-called third sector. It therefore

becomes necessary to form relationships of trust with the stakeholders of public organisations.

Recognising, on the one hand, trust as an immanent feature of internal cooperation in public organisations and their inter-organisational cooperation and, on the other hand, recognising the necessity of saturating leadership with trust requires the systematisation of the following concepts: leadership social trust, organisational trust, public trust, organisational perspective of public trust. All it allows is to identify characteristics and the main roles of trust-based leadership as the type of leadership that most fully takes into account trust as the basis of organisational behaviour in vertical and horizontal relationships, and, consequently, effective organisational cooperation.

## Leadership

The traditional approach to leadership treats it as the implementation of one of the general functions of management, called motivating or leading.

Presently, types of leadership such as democratic or participative, transactional, and transformational leadership are most commonly identified. However, there is very little research on new concepts of leadership like servant leadership by way of actual comparison (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017).

According to S. Stone (2015), when servant leadership is applied correctly with the proper intentions, an authentic and natural form of reciprocity takes place between the leader and the follower, thus increasing work engagement and improving organisational performance occurred (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017). These authors claim that servant leadership fits within the context of what is identified as the highest level of leadership.

Before analysing types of leadership it is important to understand leadership itself. At the same time, it is necessary to understand what servant leadership and other kinds of leadership are and are not (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017). In addition a convincing case for one application together with other recognised leaders style must be completed. (Gandolfi et al., 2017). The same goes for trust-based leadership.

Table 1 contains a set of fifteen detailed characteristics of the of organisational leadership. Attention is drawn to the wide range of abilities and responsibilities of organisational leaders.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of the leadership construct

No	Elements	Leaders' abilities
1.	Leading Change	Change is required, inevitable and continuous in any organisations. Organisational change requires sound leadership.
2.	Leading innovation	Innovation moves an organisation forward. It is the ability of a leader to lead innovation within an organisation.
3.	Motivation	Motivating employees brings about productivity. A leader's task is to motivate and bring out the best in employees.
4.	Values / Principles	A leader must be grounded in values and principles. He or she makes decisions and solve problems based on his/her values and principles.
5.	Leading Conflict	A leader's attitude towards conflict must be positive. A leader does not avoid conflict and considers conflict as an opportunity to improve a situation.
6.	Listening	A leader has the ability to be a good listener and will put employees at ease, and make them comfortable.
7.	Empowerment	A leader has the ability to empower others to do their jobs. Empowering creates autonomy and responsibility, therefore, employees can participate in decision-making within organisations.
8.	Leading Communication	A leader has the ability to communicate effectively. He or she is interpersonal savvy.
9.	Influence/Flexibility	A leader has the ability to influence & be flexible.
10.	Self-awareness	A leader has the ability to be self-aware. A leader must be conscious and mindful of everyone within an organisation.
11.	Feedback	A leader is comfortable to seek feedback from employees. A leader uses the feedback for self-improvement.
12.	Managing Time	A leader has the ability to effectively manage time.
13.	Learning	A leader continually seeks opportunities to learn. A leader seeks new knowledge, modifies existing knowledge, and applies what he/she learns to situations for the purpose of improvement.
14.	Individual Differences	A leader has the ability to value individual differences. A leader respects and appreciates diversity and inclusion.
15.	Relationship	A leader has the ability to build and sustain relationships among employees.

Source: (Paliszkievicz et al., 2015).

The analysis of these characteristics leads to the conclusion that half of them include properties relating to the impact on emotions. This confirms indirectly, the evolution in management and organisation leading to the increasing importance of people in organisations and consequently leadership in contemporary management.

This criterion is fulfilled by benevolence, congruency, dependability, Integrity and partly communication. Furthermore, the characteristics of the trust management construct, proposed by Paliszkievicz et al. (2015) – Table 2, can be supplemented by “propensity of trust” and also by the characteristic “collaborativeness” understood as “being collaborative”.

## Social trust vs. organisational trust

The concept of social trust is complex and occurs in a variety of contexts. As a result, it is defined differently and sometimes referred to differently. Trust and confidence without the additional term refer to the same type of trust.

**Table 2.** Example definitions of social trust

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Definitions: trust is...</b>	<b>Key words</b>
Luhman (1979, p. 24)	The expectation of the trusting person associated with the decision they make	expectation, decision
Dunn (1988, p. 73)	A strategy for dealing with the freedom of other individuals or organizations	strategy, freedom
Dasgupta (1988, p. 51)	Accurately predicting the actions of other people that influence the actions of a particular person in situations where a choice must be made without the possibility of knowing the future actions of these people	prediction, action choice, future, action
Putnam (1995, p. 285)	Facilitating the coordination of actions	coordination
Coleman (1990, p. 99)	A rational decision to accept a wager	decision, wager
Fukuyama (1995, p. 26)	The expectation of community members for fair and cooperative behaviour of its members, based on jointly recognized norms	expectation, fairness, cooperation, shared norms
Seligman (1997, p. 43)	Belief in the goodwill of the other party made under conditions of uncertainty about their intentions and calculations	goodwill, uncertainty of intentions
Sztompka (1999, p. 25)	A wager made about uncertain, future actions of other people	wager, uncertainty, future
Lin (2001, p. 147)	Predicting or expecting that within an exchange, the partner will consider the interests of their partner	prediction, expectation, partner's interests
Kożuch (2014, pp. 42–43)	The expectation of the trusting person that they will be treated fairly by the other party and will not be harmed by them	expectation, fair treatment
Lewicka & Krot (2016, p. 22)	A set of specific expectations towards a partner, consent to remain in a relationship of interdependence or dependence	expectation, interdependence or dependence
Kotov (2018, p. 13)	The assumption that a specific sequence of events will occur, allowing for the desired outcome	assumption, desired outcome

Source: compiled on the basis of: (Kożuch 2021, p. 37).

Terms such as expectation, anticipation, assumption, bet are repeated in the keywords (Table 3). Their content alludes on the one hand to the future and, on the other hand, to the uncertainty associated with future actions that cannot be accurately predicted. Some authors explicitly emphasise this circumstance. Others additionally point to the lack of control over the future. When talking about trust as a strategy, authors refer to yet another characteristic of trust, namely that it serves well to adapt to an environment – here characterised by uncertainty and future-oriented. The strategy itself is also about the future. For even when it partly covers the present, it is intrinsically future-oriented.

Thus, trust is referred to the situation when a generalized expectancy is held by an individual that the word, intentions, promise, action, oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon, and that the other party will cooperate in the future (Rotter 1980, pp. 1–7; Cook & Wall, 1980, pp. 39–52; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993).

The essence of the understanding of organisational trust is well captured by an exemplary definition, which emphasises that trust is “an organisation’s willingness, based upon its culture and communication behaviours in relationships and transactions, to be appropriately vulnerable based on the belief that another individual, group, or organisation is competent, open and honest, concerned, reliable, and identified with common goals, norms, and values” (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2003, after: Watson).

Trusting persons count on a favourable or neutral future action of the trusted person, considered from their own perspective. This favourability may flow from the trusted person’s cooperative attitude, honesty, shared norms, as well as goodwill, fair treatment and consideration or care for the trusting person’s interests.

An important element in understanding social trust is that by relying on the future actions of other people, we become dependent on them to some extent. Entrusting one’s affairs to another person, who may be called a trustee, makes that person dependent on the actions of that trustee. By doing so, that person exposes himself or herself to the possible failure to fulfil the expectations placed on him or her. This means that by placing trust in other people, we are at the same time taking the risk of possible unfavourable circumstances. This



leads to the conclusion that there is a clear connection between trust and risk, which cannot be ignored in defining trust.

If we define risk as the threat or probability of unfavourable events from the point of view of a given person, which are triggered by certain actions of that person, then making a decision to trust someone gives rise to trust risk. As emphasised by P. Sztompka (2007), it means the probability that the expectations contained in the act of trust will not be fulfilled, and trust risk gives rise to disappointment, frustration, distaste and embarrassment that arise when the trustee fails to live up to the trust placed in him or her.

In the light of the considerations made, social trust can be defined as entrusting one's affairs to another person under conditions of uncertainty about their future actions, creating trust risk.

The concept of organisational trust has emerged as a deepening of research on social trust and with a broadening of the catalogue of situations in which this type of trust arises. Organisational relationships play a significant role in concepts of organisational trust. They can be defined as all established relationships and dependencies, such as relations and interactions, existing within or between organisations. This is because organisations, in pursuing their stated goals, influence each other, thereby establishing certain types of relationships.

The focus on organisational relationships is linked to the dynamics of change in the external environment of organisations, leading to the spread of customer and citizen and beneficiary orientation. Consequently, there is a shift away from transaction-based exchange to relationship-based exchange (Światowiec, 2006).

Trust has a direct positive impact on people within an organisation. It also extends to people who are connected *to the organisation* in various ways – as actual or potential customers of goods and services, or as employees in the market, as well as users of the environment, often living in regions far away from the organisation's headquarters, who are interested in the organisation's impact on their lives. This influence also extends to other individuals and organisations, especially those working with the organisation. Organisational trust thus encompasses social but also economic processes. It has been recognised as an economic imperative for organisational resilience (Blomqvist et al., 2000; Sienkiewicz-Matjurek, 2020).

understood here as the ability to overcome crisis situations mainly through the creative and flexible use of high organisational competences embodied in the human capital possessed. It is also important to treat trust as an indispensable organisational resource that has the capacity to eliminate or reduce business expenses and costs, e.g. those related to compensation or purchasing access to information.

Trusted contacts are associated with the day-to-day contracting of employees, managers, customers and other organisations. This is accompanied by in-person or online contact, which requires acting in good faith or positively assessing the trustworthiness of counterparties.

The most popular approach to organisational trust was proposed by R. Mayer, J. Davis and F.D. Schoorman (Mayer et al., 1995). Although the approach analysed, only covers the inside of an organisation, it has had a great impact on the growing interest in organisational trust. These authors, based on the literature and their own research, aptly concluded that the tendency of a person to rely on perceived factors of trustworthiness of the trusted person determines whether he or she will trust someone. These included benevolence as the attitude and willingness to act in the best interests of the person being trusted; integrity as the ability and willingness to maintain one's moral and ethical values.

Other examples of understanding relate organisational trust *per se* to a single organisation or two or more organisations. They may also focus on the interior of an organisation or include inter-organisational relationships:

- routine trust, which occurs in connection with long-term institutionalised relationships, and general trust at the firm level, which is based on the firm's good reputation or resources (Barney & Hansen, 1994; Kroeger, 2012);
- trust tailored to the needs of stakeholders facilitating their influence on the functioning of the organisation (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000);
- trust between teams, across the organisation and between organisations (Hacker et al., 2002);
- An organisation's willingness to trust, embedded in its culture and communication behaviour, based on the belief that another person, group or

organisation is competent, open and honest, caring, reliable and identifies with shared goals, norms and values (Gills, 2003);

- The relationship of trust between employees and management (Stanley, 2005);
- interpersonal interactions that deepen the relationship between supervisor and subordinate (Long & Sitkin, 2006);
- behavioural trust having aspects such as trust in competence, intentions, honesty and truthfulness, availability of resources and resilience (Nooteboom, 2006);
- competence, reliability, lack of dependency, predictability, information sharing, fostering a move away from formal contracts (Seppänen et al., 2007);
- trust between members of an organisation, between members of different organisations, but also between members or groups of members to the organisation as an abstract system (Adams et al., 2008);
- organisational climate related to the willingness to trust and the credibility of the organisation (Sankowska, 2011);
- trust between colleagues, superiors and subordinates and in the organisation (Lewicka & Krot, 2016).

Building and sustaining of organisational trust is the direct responsibility of leaders. A critical review of the literature has identified the trust management construct (Paliszkievicz et al., 2015), which consists of 10 characteristics (Table 3). Analysis of these characteristics leads to the conclusion that the vast majority of them include characteristics that can be related to leadership.

**Table 3.** Characteristics of the trust management constructs

No	Elements	Characteristics
1.	Ability/Competence	One's demonstration of ability and competence (knowledge, skills, aptitude, qualification) lead to improved trust.
2.	Benevolence	One's expression of compassion and empathy.
3.	Communication	One's ability to effectively and constantly communicate (verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual).
4.	Congruency	Displaying the attitude and enthusiasm of partnership and association among people.
5.	Consistency	One's demonstration of consistency in performing various tasks.
6.	Dependability	Exhibiting dedication, truthfulness, responsibility, and trustworthiness.
7.	Integrity	Displaying honesty and exhibiting moral and ethical principles.
8.	Openness	Showing acceptance and broad-mindedness.
9.	Reliability	Exhibiting the ability to be depended on in performing tasks.
10.	Transparency	One's ability to be transparent (not to hide or block information that is needed to perform tasks)

Source: (Paliszkievicz et al., 2015).

The discussion so far confirms that solving management and organisation problems requires a focus on organisational relationships, i.e. the relationships that occur between the constituent parts of an organisation and other organisations.

This justifies a succinct definition of organisational trust as an intangible phenomenon existing between parties linked by organisational relationships under conditions of uncertainty involving future events.

## Public trust

Public trust refers to the situation where public organisations are competent, open, and honest, characterised by concern for stakeholders and responsibility to them, and identified with public goals, norms, and values (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2003). In other words, from the organisational perspective, public trust can

be defined as a relationship reflecting the degree to which all stakeholders trust the organisation's competences, organisational goals, shared standards and values, organisational principles, processes, and procedures, and also codes of conduct and care for internal and external stakeholders (Kożuch & Dobrowolski, 2014).

In this listing there is the public sector as a whole, but units of public organisations in this sector, are not taken into account. The probable reason is identifying the publicness as a collection of certain elements, but not as a set of specific dimensions of the nature of public organisation.

From the perspective of traditional approaches to public trust, at the core of the concept of political, or public trust, and of social trust as well, or up to a point of integrative concepts of publicness (Bozeman & Moulton, 2011; Bouckaert, 2012) the emphasis placed on the organisational aspects of functioning political and economic systems and their organisations as well as individual political leaders and public managers are missed.

The nature of public organisations is clearly explained in the definition of organisational publicness, which refers only to public organisations as their inter-related five attributes. These are (Kożuch et. al., 2016):

1. Pursuing the public interest, which refers to common values relevant to a given society. In practice, this interest is shared by the majority of citizens.
2. Functioning in complex and politically, economically, and socially unstable environments. The recipients of public goods and services are different classes of stakeholders. Traditionally, public organisations have focused solely on their own organisational goals. Current practice shows that public organisations increasingly operate through organisational networks.
3. A distinctive nature of the aims of public organisations ensuring simultaneous satisfaction of various stakeholder groups without the support of which contemporary public organisations cannot exist.
4. A formalised nature of the decision-making processes to ensure their legitimacy and transparency, and its accountability to citizens, which affects the shape of the organisational structure.
5. Steward roles of public managers; focusing on empowerment, collaboration and participation.

Understanding the specificity of public organisations makes it possible to know the mechanism for creating and maintaining public trust. Starting from the organisational perspective of public trust, this mechanism can be described in a simplified way using a model that consists of four components in which positive characteristics and interdependence create or enhance the public trust within organisations and between them:

- 1.** the ability of public organisations to effectively provide public services;
- 2.** positive attitudes towards citizens as stakeholders and responding to the collective needs of citizens;
- 3.** consistency of proclaimed public values and organisational practices;
- 4.** stakeholders' knowledge of public service delivery and public organisation's responsibility, particularly when it is acquired through prior experience in dealing with a given public organisation (Kożuch, 2014).

The intra-organisational perspective of public trust is thus formed by such processes: (Shaw, 1997; Shockley-Zabalak et al., 2010):

- 1.** signaling trust within public organisations due to knowledge of employees about the whole organisations, propensity to trust, participation, and empowerment;
- 2.** achieving planned outcomes pursuing compliance of goals and means, effective implementation of the organisational strategy, collaboration within the organisation, and a use of high technology and artificial intelligence;
- 3.** integration of activities due to employing coherence of objectives, impartiality, concern for public affairs;
- 4.** creating conditions for organisational commitment focusing on delegation of power, fair treatment of employees.

In turn, the perspective of inter-organisational trust is created by following components (Kożuch, 2014):

1. understanding intra-organisational public trust as the basis for shaping inter-organisational trust relationships employing the will and the ability of public organisations to serve the public interest;
2. pursuing effective realisation of organisational goals in collaboration with external stakeholders, such as establishing partnerships, initiating networking;
3. shaping general and specific competencies of public managers and appropriate attitudes to stakeholders, like high level of public management skills or implementation of modern management methods and techniques;
4. endowing stakeholders with knowledge about the ability to meet organisational goals and being responsible to citizens and other stakeholders, such as sending reliable communication, gaining knowledge of public organisations through joint actions or through other individuals or organisations.

When the organisational components of the public trust perspective are characterised by high ethical and efficiency standards, these organisations are able to achieve established organisational goals more effectively. However, when the factual characteristics are below high standards, then a low level of intra-organisational trust results below expectations of the stakeholders and it limits possibilities to establish inter-organisational public trust.

## Characteristics of the public trust-based leadership

In the literature of the field two forms of characterising trust-based leadership can be distinguished.

First, it is a way of approaching that issue directly or indirectly. Direct analysis uses the term “trust-based leadership” and describes specific features of the notion, particularly pointing out similarities and differences of TBL and other concepts of organisational leadership.

The second way of approaching the researched issue is presenting and analysing certain characteristics coinciding with TBL however without a use of the term “trust-based leadership”.

There is relatively a small amount of research on trust-based leadership.

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First, it is a way of approaching that issue directly or indirectly. Direct analyses use the term “trust-based leadership” and describe specific features of the notion, particularly pointing out similarities and differences of TBL and other concepts of organisational leadership. Second way of approaching researched issue is presenting and analysing certain characteristics convergent with TBL however without a use of the term “trust-based leadership”.

The example of on the direct definition of TBL is seeing it as an organizational resource that is aimed at building and facilitating trust. It enables the distribution of autonomy and decision-making, and allows to increase task complexity and innovation. Furthermore, formal leadership has a special position regarding the shaping of organisational conditions for trust (Siverbo et al., 2023).

The study carried out by S. Hakkinen was aimed directly at TBL (2012). The author claims that “(...) the question of trust is based on the follower’s trust in the leaders’ actions to guarantee the success of the company (i.e. durability of work). The trust in the leader relies on: trust in the organization, trust in the leader’s trustworthy behaviour, which consists of integrity, and on overall competency to lead individuals and to manage the business” (p. 117). It must be admitted that these aptly indicated elements appear in various descriptions of the examined issue. S. Hakkinen’s work can be classified as the first way of approaching TBL.

The same is true of E. Marin (2016), who developed 5 Characteristics of trust-based leadership (p. 11–17):

- 1.** Heart-based leadership. The heart is connected with our intuition and emotion.



Our body is the vessel to make things happen, our strength to overcome obstacles. “Heart” drives feelings, emotions, intuitions, actions, and reactions. Therefore, the heart “knows”. He knows how best to deal with specific situations, with the complexity of our world. Heart-based leadership takes the whole into account, not just the limited ego of the leader himself or the ego of others.

2. Humility. “Leading from Heart. Serving and developing your team. This is where humility is needed, and needs to be cultivated. That cannot be done with the ego in the driver seat. We see leaders stealing credit for those that are underneath them and then never protecting them when something goes wrong. We see leaders not making decisions or implementing ideas from other people just because of their own egos.
3. Attracting like-minded people, and becoming a “magnet”. “Some might call it law of attraction or law of resonance. Because trust/collaboration/respect/empathy/wholeness is how you see the world, how you look at situations in which you get involved, you naturally see the good in others, you see and appreciate their potential. It is not about being naïve or helpless. It is just about being, without putting a mask on, and seeing the human being in others too”.
4. Looking for mindfulness. Mindfulness helps us to see how sometimes we can be driven by fear and ego. It all starts with this profound awareness first. If we do not develop that new awareness, we will continuously be driven by fear, even without knowing it. The good news is that you will allow others, as a mirror of the changes happening in you, to also move from a place of fear to a place of trust.
5. Organisations allowing trust-based leadership. These organisations can operate effectively with a system based on peer relationships, without the need for either hierarchy or consensus, and they can develop a consistent set of practices that invite peers to reclaim their inner wholeness and bring all of who they are to work. This type of organisations strive to have a life and a sense of direction of their own. Instead of trying to predict and control the future, members of the organisation are invited

to listen in and understand what the organisation wants to become, what purpose it wants to serve.

According to E. Marin (2016, p. 8), by practicing trust-based perspective, one can start to embody a new kind of leadership. Trust-based perspective is illustrated as follows:

- 1.** Doing the right things.
- 2.** Sharing the Why and Empower teams.
- 3.** Working with the right stakeholders and moving on with speed.
- 4.** Trusting and leveraging people’s own inner leadership and insight.
- 5.** Free flow of information. Share and support as much as you can.
- 6.** Tap into the team’s collective intelligence and define a more agile decision process.
- 7.** Applying holocratic approach to decision making and work.
- 8.** Encouraging creativity.

The second way of approaching trust-based leadership can be concentrating on details of TBL but deliberating about responsibilities of a trust-based board of organisation (7 Responsibilities, 2020). Characteristics of these responsibilities are described in Table 4 Examining its content one can see that characteristics from the table 4 can be referred to trust-based leadership. Furthermore, from this description, a coherent overview of the properties of TBL emerges.

**Table 4.** Responsibilities of trust-based board

Characteristics	Description
1. Stewarding the organisation's strategy for executive leadership	This can involve overseeing governance, defining foundation values and strategic direction (in partnership with staff and community), approving grant categories and grantmaking priorities, and considering external collaborations.
2. Establishing a culture of trust for the organisation	An internal embodiment of trust-based values is a prerequisite for foundations to truly embody these values externally such a culture of trust cannot fully develop without the board. Consequently, it is imperative that the board ensures that trust-based values serve as the ultimate touchstone for the organisation. Setting a norm of prioritizing and centring trust-based relationships throughout the entire organisation should therefore be seen as one of the board's most important ongoing responsibilities.
3. Ensuring values-aligned financial practices	A trust-based board plays an important leadership in financial oversight, especially in examining all financial practices and ensuring that they are values-aligned. Board members have the unique capability to examine their finances and endowment through a trust-based lens and align it with their foundation's mission and values. In doing so, they can cultivate a truly holistic practice of trust-based leadership that is both responsive and strategic.
4. Leveraging power in support of organisation's partners	Board members might consider mapping out, individually and collectively, their skills, connections, and resources (beyond financial capital) that might be of use to organisation's partners.
5. Supporting organisation's leadership and staff	The trust-based value of "partnering in a spirit of service" applies not only to organisation's partners, but also to the relationship between boards and staff. In stewarding a trust-based organisation, boards make it a practice to check in with leadership and staff, not to oversee or inspect their work, but rather to learn about and support emerging organisational needs.

Source: adapted from [www.ncfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/7-Responsibilities-of-a-Trust-Based-Board-TBPP-2020.pdf](http://www.ncfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/7-Responsibilities-of-a-Trust-Based-Board-TBPP-2020.pdf).

Analysed characteristics of TBL it still needs to be adapted to the specificities of public organisations in order to complete description of a public trust-based leaderships.

References to TBL can also be found in publications on trust-based management, in which there are references to TBL features (Siverbo et al., 2023; Svare et al., 2023). A feature of these publications is the specific impact of

leadership-based on trust on shaping positive organisational relations, and in consequence on functioning of organisation as a whole. Analysed characteristics of TBL it still need to be adapted to the specificities of public organisations in order to complete description a public trust-based leaderships.

The logic of the arguments presented in the article supports the following features of public trust-based leadership:

- 1.** Stewarding the organisation's strategy for executive leadership.
- 2.** Achieving planned outcomes pursuing compliance of goals and means, effective implementation of the organisational strategy, collaboration within the organisation, and a use of high technology and artificial intelligence.
- 3.** Establishing a culture of trust for the public organisations.
- 4.** Ensuring public values-aligned financial practices.
- 5.** Supporting public organisation's leadership and staff.
- 6.** Implementing heart-based public leadership.
- 7.** Integrating leadership activities due to employing coherence of objectives, impartiality, concern for public affairs.
- 8.** Linking humility and professional will.
- 9.** Looking for mindfulness.
- 10.** Organisations allowing trust-based leadership.

The statements contained in points 1–10 constitute a set of related and interpenetrating properties of public trust-based leadership.

They are based on analyses of various TBL approaches. This is particularly important in the case of public organisations whose nature is to meet the collective needs of people. These organisations are distinguished by a specific type of effectiveness, which is measured by the degree of satisfaction of citizens and other recipients of public services.

The Public TBL concept is complex because it takes into account three significant aspects, i.e. leadership itself, organisational trust, and organisational publicness. Public trust-based leadership can become a highly desirable leadership style in theory and in the practice of public management.

Public trust-based leadership can become a highly desirable leadership style in theory and in the practice of public management.

## Concluding thoughts

The purpose of this paper was to identify critical attributes of public trust-based leadership. The analysis of exemplary TBL concepts carried out in the context of organisational publicity allowed to distinguish the characteristics of public trust-based leadership. Therefore, the issues concerning the possibilities and limitations of implementing this concept in the management practice of public organizations have not been addressed. It should be noted here that most of the considerations for this type of leadership focus on the characteristics of TBL. Exceptions include publications indicating the main issues of research on the implementation of trust-based management, as they also include issues devoted to leadership.

Bearing in mind the proposal to distinguish between the concepts of public leadership and public service leadership, it should be emphasized that the term “public leadership” refers to one of the types/styles of generic leadership embedded in management and organisation theories, and not to the public sphere, which is established in sociological theories. It is true that sociology is one of the fields of knowledge that feeds management and organisation, but J. Hartley’s proposal introduces some ambiguity.

However, interest in TBL among management researchers and practitioners is still at an early stage, theoretical and empirical research in the analyzed area can be expected with high probability. Further research on public trust-based leadership must foster more widespread understanding and acceptance of its presence in public contemporary organisations.

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