

A manager or a leader? Analysis of managerial and leadership competences in Lithuanian civil service

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The article is focused on a discussion of civil servants' managerial and leadership competences. By presenting empirical evidence from a research on leadership in the Lithuanian Civil Service, funded by Civil Service Department under the Ministry of the Interior, the article discusses the concept of civil servant-leader. The discussion leads to the analysis of two models – “civil servant as a manager” and “civil servant as a leader”. The paper seeks to analyze leadership dimensions in civil service and is based on the management notion relevant to a new type of manager. Empirical research is focused on the challenging opportunity to compare “ideal” and “real” models of civil servant: features, competencies, skills, and value orientations. On the basis of the obtained results, the main civil servant manager / leader types are discussed.

Key words: civil service, managerial competences, leadership, value orientations

INTRODUCTION

Leadership has been a popular topic in academic and scientific discussions for most of the last century. With the evolvement of public governance conception in public life, a lot of interest in management and leadership concepts in public service occurs in society. As Horton (2010: 121) notices, over the last twenty-five years around the world there have been significant changes in the way people are managed in the public sector. The emphasis in nowadays' management is put on the new-type manager who focuses on organizational humanism and not on traditional administration. In this context, managerial competences and value orientation become relevant dimensions of management.

In the general sense, the civil service system is a reflection of the society it serves. Academic literature shares many different definitions of leadership and management, but it seems to have a common feature in defining – all are based on the ability to influence others, to go in a certain direction (Lawton, Rose 1994: 90).

The paper seeks to analyze managerial and leadership dimensions in civil service and is based on the management notion relevant to the new type of manager. The analysis is oriented towards both managerial competences and value orientations.

The study dwells on a two-fold approach: theoretical insights and empirical interpretation. The first part of the article introduces theoretical insights into the specificity of contemporary public service; however, the paper is focused on empirical evidence presented in the second part of the article. The paper reveals two leadership dimensions that exist in civil service: 1) the “ideal” type of leadership, which is a normative one and involves the values and competences that leaders in civil service are supposed to have; and 2) the “real” type of

leadership, which reveals the features of the civil servants that are identified as leaders in their organization.

Empirical interpretations are based on the results of quantitative and qualitative surveys on leadership and managerial competences of civil servants in Lithuania, which was conducted in 2008 and funded by Civil Service Department under the Ministry of Interior.

THEORETICAL INSIGHTS ON MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS

The history of human resource management in public administration is “as old as civilizations” (Farazmand 2007: 9). It has been in practice since ancient civilizations – for example, in Persia, China, Assyria, Egypt and Rome having “long-term career professional experts for key strategic positions in government and public administration leadership” (Farazmand 2007: 9). Thus, leadership and management issues have been a relevant component of the public administration system since centuries.

Rost (1991) has noted that leadership is studied by various disciplines, but it is not a separate and distinct discipline. Most authors approach the concept of leadership as follower(s) who are influenced by a leader. Kreitner (1995) and Northouse (1997) define leadership as a process in which an individual (the leader) influences others (the followers) to reach a common goal. However, Burns (1977) has introduced the idea of transformational leadership. Burns argues that leaders may also transform followers, i. e. change their approaches and perspectives.

Before WWII, most leadership theories were based on trait theories striving to reveal the traits and features of a successful leader. Stogdil (1948) attempted to find common traits of a great leader that researchers could agree upon. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) declare that traits are important because leaders are different from other people or else they would not be leaders. It is widely accepted that Stogdil’s research helped to shift the focus of leadership research from the traits that leaders possessed to the leadership styles that leaders utilize. Two styles of leadership were identified: a people orientation (oriented towards personal relations) and a task orientation (oriented towards aims and methods as most relevant). Blake and Moutain (1985) argue that a style combining both task and people orientations is the best style for all.

Thus, there have appeared the so-called situational leadership theories which claim that different managerial styles are appropriate for different situations. Situational theorists believe that different situations require different styles of leadership. According to most theorists (Northouse Kreitner; 1995; Bass 1985), two the most important characteristics of leaders are charisma and vision.

Another important aspect in leadership analysis is value orientations. According to Schwartz (1992), most of social scientists view the values as deeply rooted, abstract motivations that guide, justify or explain the attitudes, norms, opinions and actions. However, each basic value can be characterized by describing its central motivational goal. Schwartz (1992, 1994) introduces ten basic motivational contents of values, which are as follows: Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-direction, Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity, and Security.

According to Schwartz (1992, 1994), *power orientation* means social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources (social power, authority, wealth, preserving my public image). *Achievement orientation* means personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards (successful, capable, ambitious, and influential). *Hedonism orientation* expresses pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgence). The keywords of *stimulation orientation* are excitement, novelty, and

challenge in life (daring, a varied life, an exciting life). Orientation towards *self-direction* means independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring (creativity, freedom, independence, curiosity, choosing one's own goals). The keywords of *universalism* are as follows: understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature (broadminded, wisdom, social justice, equality, the world at peace, the world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment). The next orientation – *benevolence* – is the expression of preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact (helpful, honest, forgiving, loyal, and responsible). Orientation towards *tradition* means respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self with (humble, accepting my portion in life, devout, respect tradition, moderate). The *conformity* orientation incorporates abstention from actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms (politeness, obedience, self-discipline, honoring parents and elders). And the tenth orientation – *security* – strives towards safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships, and of oneself (family security, national security, social order, purity, reciprocation of favours).

Figure 1 presents the total pattern of conflict and congruity relations among the values postulated by the Schwartz theory.

The circular arrangement of the values represents a motivational continuum. The closer are any of two values in either direction around the circle, the more similar their underlying motivations. On the other hand, the more distant any of two values, the more antagonistic their underlying motivations (see more Schwartz 1992, 1994).

Schwartz's model of motivational value types, introduced above (Fig. 1), is a well-validated theory and one of the most popular methods of analyzing and explaining differences in value orientations among individuals.

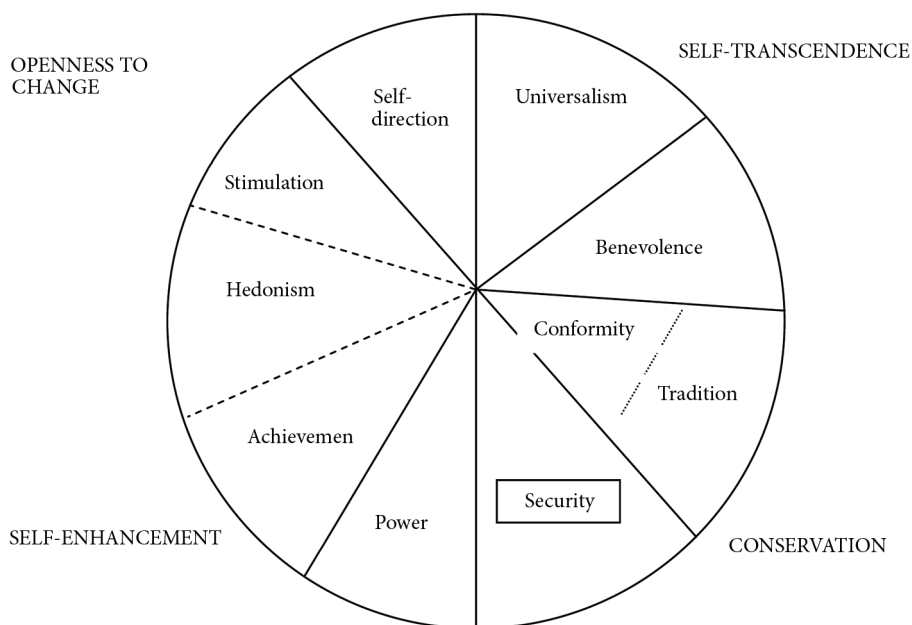


Fig. 1. Theoretical model of relations among ten motivational types of values (Schwartz 2002, 2004)

NEW TRENDS OF LEADERSHIP THEORY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: TRADITIONAL VS. CONTEMPORARY MANAGER

In the context of contemporary public administration, it appears appropriate to introduce the new dimensions of leadership – theory of leadership in public administration institutions. This theory is based on practical issues and comprises various leader features, professional experience, competences and value orientations. Farazmand (2007: 9) argues that “leadership is a glue of organization” and “no organization can exist or operate without a competent cadre of personnel, and managerial soundness requires understanding, appreciation, and proper utilization of valuable human resources that constitute the human capital of the organization, especially in the knowledge society of the 21st century” (Farazmand 2007). Lacy and Gibson (2000) distinguished between the traditional and the contemporary types of leader with the characteristics presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Leader types and personal traits (Lacy, Gibson 2000)

Traditional managers	Contemporary managers
Expert / guarded learner	Open learner information
Coalition builder	Consensus builder
Controlling	Facilitating
Directing	Sharing
Manipulative	Empowering
Impatient	Patient / tolerant
Goal-focused	Goal-negotiable
Filtered accessibility	Accessible
Motivated / driven	Motivator / motivating
Assertive / aggressive	Flexible / permissive
Information filter	Disseminator tour
Gate keeper	Guide / conductor

Table 1 presents the matching pairs of traits and characteristics that are important elements in the new leadership paradigm. These traits suggest fundamental characteristics and skills that members of public processes have to possess. Lacy and Gibson argue that leadership is not an individual but a collective trait shared in the political culture of a group and strongly embedded in the processes being used by the group, and use the labels of “traditional managers” and “contemporary managers” to contrast the old and the new paradigms (Lacy, Gibson 2000).

In the discussion on new trends in leadership theory, Farazmand (2007: 9) presents three distinct leadership sub-dimensions oriented, in particular, to civil service.

The first dimension of leadership is focused on the interrelation of two groups – political and career appointees. Political appointees are formal leaders, political managers in charge of organizational leadership. Below them are career cadre of experienced professional civil servants whose “longevity in service, expertise, professionalism afford them invaluable institutional memory so vital to organizational leadership” (Farazmand 2007: 9). These two groups are often in conflict due to management power, but their cooperation is essential for the organization’s success.

The second dimension of leadership refers to the civil service system and the machinery of government and is an extension of the first dimension. The civil service system can vary according to the public policy models, rules and laws that institutionalize the role of career civil servants and their dependence on political decision.

The third dimension of leadership is “the policy matter that plays as a guiding lever in organizational performance by its personnel” (Farazmand 2007: 9). The dimension deals with organization policy in personnel recruitment, planning, development, training, motivation and other functions that demonstrate organizational culture and values. It also reflects the priorities and preferences of the governing political leader – formal manager.

In reference to the aim of the paper and the above-mentioned context of analysis, this empirical study was focused mainly on the third dimension.

Leadership in Lithuanian civil service: empirical analysis of features, competences and values of civil servants – leaders

The empirical research was conducted in 2008; 511 civil servants participated in the survey. The empirical research focused on two leadership dimensions in civil service:

- 1) the model of “ideal” civil servant–leader, which is a normative one and involves the personal features, competences, and values that managers in civil service are supposed to have;
- 2) the model of “real” leadership, i. e. personal features, competences, and values of the civil servants that are identified as leaders in their organization.

As is evident from Fig. 2, the empirical data show that a civil servant–leader should be first of all honest (this feature was mentioned by 179 respondents), secondly, responsible (136 respondents) and, thirdly, communicative (106 respondents). He or she should have good professional competences (165 respondents). A “real” civil servant–leader also shares similar features: responsibility as the most important feature of civil servants–leaders was mentioned by 83 respondents, friendliness was emphasized by 56, diligence and honesty – by 50, professional competences by 111 respondents. A comparison of “ideal” and “real” models is presented in Fig. 2. Thus, we may assume that the ideal model of a civil servant–leader is based on characteristics of a real leader.

Empirical data show that civil servants emphasize a combination of three value orientations as the most significant ones that should be intrinsic to civil servants–leaders (see Table 2), i. e.:

- self-direction (mean value 4.93, scale 1–6);
- universalism (mean value 4.88, scale 1–6);
- achievements (mean value 4.85, scale 1–6).

Thus, in an ideal case, a leader in civil service should be curious, creating and exploring. It should be important for him / her to have independent thought and the freedom of

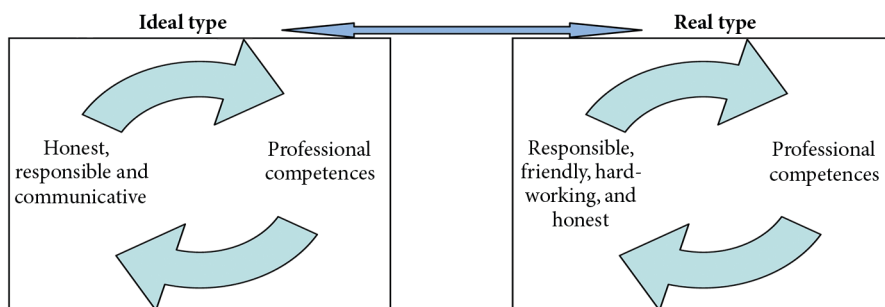


Fig. 2. Features and competences of civil servant – leader: comparison of Ideal and Real types

Table 2. Ideal model of civil servant–leader's value orientations (mean, value range in scale 1–6)

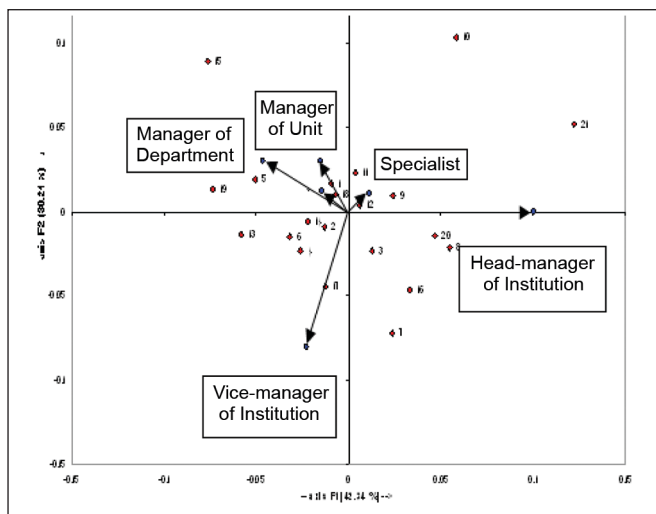
Value orientation	Items	Mean
SELF-DIRECTION	1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way. 11. It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free to plan and to choose his activities for himself.	4.93
UNIVERSALISM	3. He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He wants justice for everybody, even for people he doesn't know. 8. It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them. 19. He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.	4.88
ACHIEVEMENT	4. It is very important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does. 13. Being very successful is important to him. He likes to impress other people.	4.85
SECURITY	5. It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety. 14. It is very important to him that his country be safe from threats from within and without. He is concerned that social order be protected.	4.76
BENEVOLENCE	12. It's very important to him to help people around him. He wants to care for other people. 18. It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.	4.67
CONFORMITY	7. He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching. 16. It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	4.67
STIMULATION	6. He likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. 15. He looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He wants to have an exciting life.	4.29
TRADITION	9. He thinks it's important not to ask for more than what you have. He believes that people should be satisfied with what they have. 20. Religious belief is important to him. He tries hard to do what his religion requires.	4.27
POWER	2. It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things. 17. It is important to him to be in charge and tell others what to do. He wants people to do what he says.	4.04
HEDONISM	10. Having a good time is important to him. He likes to "spoil" himself. 21. He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure.	3.62

action-choosing. He or she should be oriented towards understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection of the welfare of all people and nature. A civil servant–leader should be broadminded, emphasize wisdom, social justice, equality, the world at peace, the world of beauty, unity with nature, and be ready to protect the environment. At the same time, for a civil servant – leader personal success should be important, but through demonstration of competence according to social standards. He / she should be successful, capable, ambitious, and influential (see Table 2).

On the other hand, the least important for a civil servant–leader should be orientation towards hedonism, i. e. pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself (pleasure, enjoying life, self-indulgence). Civil servant–leader should not emphasize social power, control or dominance over people and resources (power orientation).

Analysis of civil servants' value orientations shows that in real life different categories of managers have different value orientations.

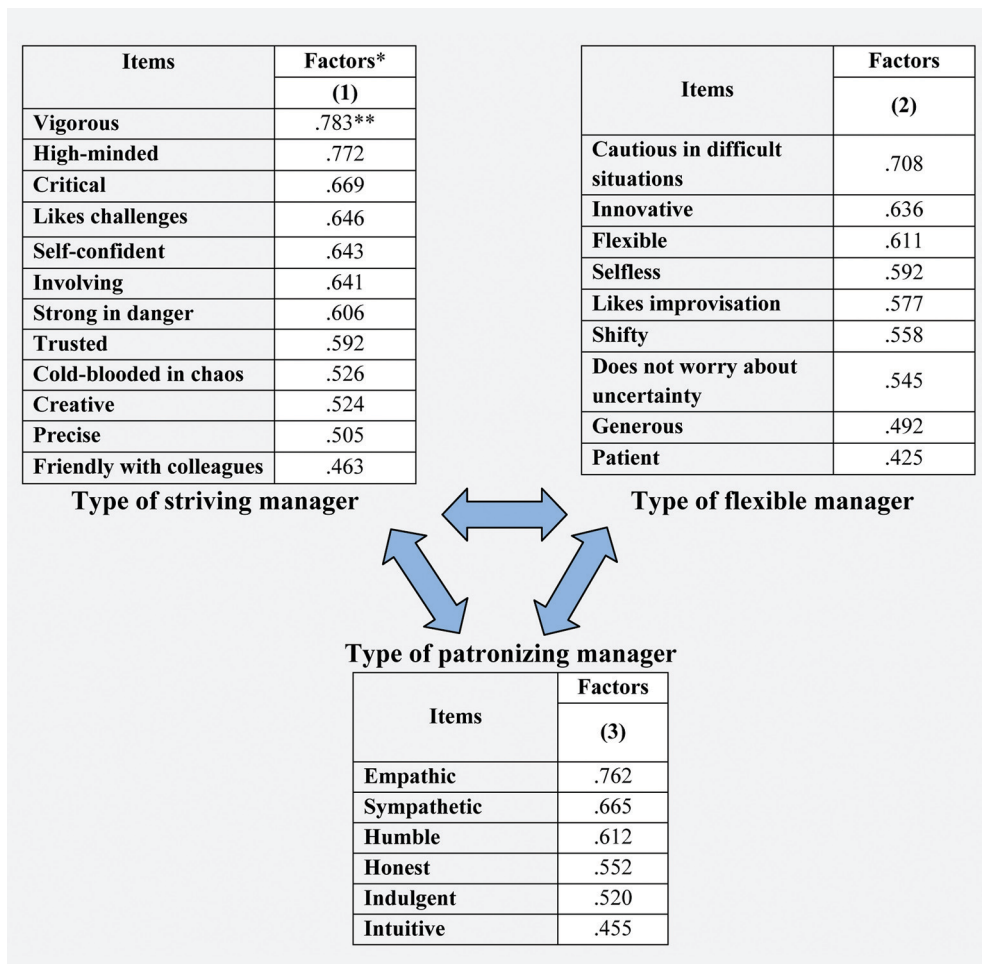
As is evident from Fig. 3, head-managers of institution are more oriented towards hedonism and traditions while vice-managers are oriented towards power. For the head-managers



Notes:

1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way.
2. It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.
3. He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He wants justice for everybody, even for people he doesn't know.
4. It is very important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does.
5. It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety.
6. He likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.
7. He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching.
8. It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.
9. He thinks it's important not to ask for more than what you have. He believes that people should be satisfied with what they have.
10. Having a good time is important to him. He likes to "spoil" himself.
11. It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free to plan and to choose his activities for himself.
12. It's very important to him to help people around him. He wants to care for other people.
13. Being very successful is important to him. He likes to impress other people.
14. It is very important to him that his country be safe from threats from within and without. He is concerned that social order be protected.
15. He looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He wants to have an exciting life.
16. It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.
17. It is important to him to be in charge and tell others what to do. He wants people to do what he says.
18. It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.
19. He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.
20. Religious belief is important to him. He tries hard to do what his religion requires.
21. He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure.

Fig. 3. "Real" model of civil servant – leader's value orientations according to different categories of managers (results of correspondence analysis)



Notes:

* Selected items that have eigenvalues > 1 (Čekanavičius, Murauskas 2002: 250).

** factor weights ≤ -0.40 or ≥ 0.40 (Čekanavičius, Murauskas 2002: 251).

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test value = 0.820. Bartlett’s test of sphericity, approx. $\chi^2 = 1054.872$ ($p < 0.05$).

Extraction method: principal component analysis. Rotation method: equamax with Kaiser normalization.

Total variance explained (cumulative %) 52,236 (% of variance explained for Factor 1 = 40.969 (22.299); Factor 2 = 6.304 (15.832); Factor 3 = 4.962 (14.105).

Fig. 4. Types of civil servants–managers (results of factor analysis)

of an institution it is important to have a good time, to do things that give him / her pleasure. Also, head-managers believe that people should be satisfied with what they have. For vice-managers, it is important to be rich, to have a lot of money and expensive things, to be in charge and tell others what to do.

The middle level of management shares the same value orientations. Managers of departments and units are oriented towards self-direction, achievement and security. It is important for them thinking up new ideas and being creative, and at the same time being very successful. It is very important to them to show their abilities, as they like to impress other people. It is

very important to them that their country would be safe from threats and the social order be protected.

Specialists are more oriented towards universalism and benevolence. For them, it is important that every person in the world would be treated equally. Also, they want to help and care for other people.

Types of civil servants–managers: empirical evidence

Data of empirical research show that there are several types of managers in the Lithuanian Civil Service (see Fig. 4).

According to results of factor analysis, three main types of managers could be distinguished:

- *striving manager*, who is vigorous, high-minded, precise, self-confident, critical, strong in danger, cold-blooded in chaos, as well as involving, trusted, creating and friendly with colleagues. Managers that belong to this type like challenges.
- *flexible manager*, who is cautious in complex situations, flexible, selfless, shift, as well as innovative, generous and patient. Managers that belong to this type like improvisation and do not worry about uncertainty.
- and finally, *patronizing manager*. Such managers are empathic, sympathetic, humble, honest, indulgent and intuitive.

Respondents evaluated their own managers. According to empirical data, managers in Civil Service are often understood as representatives of the organization. They emphasize their own achievements and encourage their supervised personnel to do the same. Usually they are good professionals. These results indicate that managers in Civil Service are more oriented towards new public management principles.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The concept of leadership is rather broad and fuzzy in both theoretical interpretations and practical understanding. Nevertheless, some general aspects could be distinguished: leadership and management theories are mostly focused on personality traits and value orientations. In practice, the concepts of leadership and management are often used synonymously; however, leadership is considered to be closer to a new manager type, while management is often identified in a traditional bureaucratic context.

Empirical data show that the normative (“ideal”) model of civil servant–leader incorporates personal features such as honesty, responsibility and communicativeness. Also, good professional competences are emphasized. The “real” civil servant–leader shares similar features: professional competences, responsibility, friendliness, diligence, and honesty. Thus, we can assume that the ideal model of a civil servant–leader is based on the characteristics of a real leader.

Civil servants emphasize a combination of three value orientations as the most significant ones that should be intrinsic to civil servants–leaders. These are self-direction, universalism and achievements. Thus, in the ideal case, a leader in civil service should be curious, creating and exploring. It should be important for him / her to have independent thought and the freedom of action-choosing.

The data of empirical research show that there are several types of managers in the Lithuanian Civil Service: (1) the type of *striving manager* – vigorous, high-minded, precise, self-confident, critical, strong in danger, cold-blooded in chaos, as well as involving, trusted, creating and

friendly with colleagues; (2) the type of *flexible manager* – cautious in complex situations, flexible, selfless, shift, as well as innovative, generous and patient. The managers that belong to this type like improvisation and do not worry about uncertainty; and finally, (3) the type of *patronizing manager*, who is empathic, sympathetic, humble, honest, indulgent and intuitive.

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Vadovas ar lyderis? Vadovavimo ir lyderystės kompetencijų Lietuvos valstybės tarnyboje analizė

Santrauka

Straipsnio tikslas – atskleisti vadovavimo bruožus ir lyderystės raišką Lietuvos valstybės tarnyboje. Lyginami du lyderystės kontekstai: (1) „idealūs“ valstybės tarnautojo-lyderio modelis, atskleidžiantis, kokiomis savybėmis, kompetencijomis ir vertybėmis turėtų pasižymėti valstybės tarnautojas-lyderis; ir (2) „realūs“ valstybės tarnautojo-lyderio modelis, atskleidžiantis, kokiomis savybėmis ir kompetencijomis pasižymi valstybės tarnautojai, kuriuos bendradarbiai įvardija lyderiais. Straipsnyje taip pat nagrinėjami valstybės tarnautojų-vadovų bruožai ir šios analizės pagrindu išskiriami vadovų Lietuvos valstybės tarnyboje tipai.

Raktažodžiai: valstybės tarnyba, vadovavimo kompetencijos, lyderystė, vertybinės orientacijos