

# RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND THE CLIMATE OF QUALITY SERVICE IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS IN ISRAEL

Elyia YEHUDA<sup>1</sup>

Submitted: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Approved: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018

---

## **Abstract**

*This paper discusses the main concepts that underpin the relation between responsible transformational leadership style. It is presenting several literature based arguments for supporting the general hypothesis that responsible transformational style in positively influencing the climate of quality service in public organization from Israel. The research method is quantitative, based on a survey administrated to 300 managers and employes of Israeli public organizations. The teoretical contribution is a proposed definition of the responsible transformational leadership style and the practical will be validate the formulated hypothesis.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

We will present the hypothesis for the research related to the influence of responsible leadership on the climate of quality service in public organizations from israel in 2018. These hypothesis are based on a comprehensive critical literature review. We are currently undertaking the recovering of distributed questionnaires to managers and employees from all the types of public organizations from Israel. The main contribution of this article is the proposed definition of the concept of responsible transformational leadership style and of the positive strong influence of this leadership style on the climate of quality service in the Israeli public institutions.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITY**

Responsibility has long been recognized as one of the cornerstones of successful public administration (Forrer, Kee, Newcomer & Boyer, 2010). The relationship between leadership and accountability is presented by Grimshaw, Baron, Mike & Edwards (2006) who argue that the process of promoting a culture of "accountability" in the public organization is a process carried out by managers and leaders. The motives for the process are the variables that determine whether the followers will perform what is expected of them.

Responsibility as a leadership concept has been found to promote supportive behavior, pro-social behavior, which similarly plays an important role in determining service-oriented behavior (Williams, & Sanchez, 1998). Organizations that have a system of process management policies that include employee accountability are organizations that excel in promoting customer service. Schneider and others (2005) have defined as common perceptions of employees and relate to methods, processes and behaviors that are rewarded and valued - by the organization in everything related to customer service and quality of service.

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD Student, West University of Timisoara, Romania

The characteristics of accountability as defined by Winston et al. (2005) and Roberts (2002) discuss transparency, reliability, responsibility, and responsiveness. The role of managers in the organization is to assimilate these values. The role of accountability as a process factor is to help the organization's managers develop an atmosphere of sharing and developing a service climate within the organization, as part of the policy set by the organization's leaders.

In order to achieve a higher level of accountability management has become more challenging in modern management paradigms. These paradigms hold that organizations that provide public service must reinvent themselves and sometimes even redesign their activities, all in order to provide better service to their customers (Kearns, 1996).

### **3. TRANSFORMATIONAL RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP STYLE, A NEW CONCEPT**

Leadership styles deal with behaviors towards peers and subordinates throughout the process once objectives have been set through planning and executing the task to drawing lessons from the experience and results. If responsibility is required throughout the process, and not only in the evaluation of results, then the question is, what is the weight attributed to it by the leader and if is it different from one leadership style to another? For each of the three styles of leadership, avoidance leadership, rewarding leadership and formative leadership, the characteristics of how the leader behaves represent a personal positive example to be followed and that also encourages responsibility and openness in his relationships between the leader and his/her followers.

Bass (1985) argues that formative leadership creates identification and internalization of values that the leader wishes to assimilate. The style of transformational leadership is based on an inspirational relationship that breaks through the familiar management barriers of manager-subordinate relations. This leadership style captures the hearts of employees and encourages them towards challenging goals. The level of employee awareness of their growth potential within the organization validates their self-expression and motivates them to a higher level of performance. Transformational leadership influences employees in shaping beliefs and value systems (Vigoda-Gadot & Angert, 2007).

Two characteristics identified with the transformational leadership as defined by Bass & Avolio (1997) in the full range model of leadership are: a) intellectual stimulation, b) solving problems by encouraging innovation.

The first characteristic, intellectual stimulation constitutes the high point in the continuum of formative leadership, with emphasis on moral and behavioral models, and emphasis on the moral and ideological considerations involved in decision making by the leader. This is an activity that leads followers towards the identification and imitation of the leader. The leaders are willing to sacrifice personal interests in favor of the interests of the organization, do not hesitate to take risks and do not avoid taking responsibility for actions carried out by their people.

The second characteristic deals with solving problems by encouraging innovation and creativity through challenging the accepted methods, and tolerance towards making mistakes and considering them a constructive part of the learning process. The leader does not necessarily solve the problem without his followers, he/she acts to improve their ability to solve it themselves. The leader encourages his people to ask, to show openness to criticism, and to offer creative alternatives. The

followers demonstrate deep, independent and critical thinking. These characteristics are in direct relation with the encouragement of accountability and activity under full transparency.

Wood & Winston (2005) define the responsibility of the leader as: a) the leader's agreement to bear the inherent responsibilities of the leadership, in order to serve the interests of the organization; b) the expectation that he/she (the leader) will stand behind his words, actions and reactions, directly or implicitly; c) the expectation that the leader may be called upon to explain his beliefs, decisions and commitments.

The role of leaders who act based on the principles of "accountability" is to assimilate these principles within their organization, too. In examining the three factors discussed above that make up accountability according to Wood & Winston (2005), we have remarked that the characteristics that define responsibility are characteristics inherent in the definition of transformational leadership. These characteristics are: taking responsibility on the part of the leader, the manager providing support to his/her employees, encouraging bi-directional critical thinking without fear of sanctions, emphasis placed by the leader on moral and behavioral models, and explaining the ideological considerations involved in making decisions.

Therefore, we define the transformational responsible leadership as the transformational leadership style that explicitly is based on the three aspects of the leader's responsibilities: 1) to act responsible and show responsiveness in serving the interests of the organization; 2) to fulfill the expectations of his followers that he will stand behind his words, actions and reactions; and 3) to fulfill the expectations to explain his beliefs, decisions and commitments to his superiors and followers.

#### **4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP STYLE AND CLIMATE OF QUALITY SERVICE IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS**

Following to the increasing demand for better involvement of citizens and interest groups in policy making and policy implementation, public sector managers need to work to develop their management capacity (Markovits et al, 2011), while the trend of providing services to the public through outsourcing has increased, with the desire to provide quick and quality services in areas such as sanitation and infrastructure services. The New Public Management (NPM) has made the citizen a significant player in the interaction between the government and service providers to the public.

Therefore, a situation is created in which the citizen as a client constantly raises the level of demands placed on the government for responsiveness, transparency and accountability (Vigoda-Gadot&Meisler, 2010; Vigoda-Gadot&Mizrahi, 2008). Gill (2009) examined the relationship between leadership and service climate while comparing the private and public sectors and argued that leadership has a greater influence today than in the past on the service climate in the public sector.

Another dimension that influences the relationship between leadership and service is the formal and informal supervision by various media and interest groups on the activities of public organizations. Unlike the private sector, there is transparency regarding the activity of managers in the public sector. This transparency enables an examination of the performance of the public organization and of the level of service it provides.

Guthridge & Wearing (2003) argue that there is a strong connection between

the manager's leadership style and the service climate in the organization. They argue that this connection between the manager's leadership style and the service climate in the organization is also influenced by the leader's ability to create a suitable climate and environment for the development of the service climate. This relationship is important for building a service climate in the public organization that meets the needs of the public today.

Service quality in the public sector is the yardstick for the functioning of the public organization. It is the responsibility of the leader to act in order to meet public demands for high level quality of the service. Vigoda-Gadot & Anger (2007) found that the leadership style by which managers operate in public organizations has a direct impact on the performance of the organization. Vigoda-Gadot & Mizrahi (2008) argue that based on the new public management approach, public service providers are expected to address their duties and tasks differently than in the past in an attempt to respond first to citizens' needs.

On the other hand, Walumbwa et al, (2010) argue that leaders who have a positive attitude that enables and encourages a service climate in an organization will positively influence the employees in the service they provide. They argue that a positive service climate makes it possible to define a goal that targets employees to achieve excellent service performance.

There are key actions that managers can take to be effective leaders. These actions can be grouped into three main clusters: 1) Task-oriented operations; 2) Actions directed at people; 3) Actions characterized by morality. Such actions are: making at taking decisions at the appropriate timing, motivating employees, providing instructions and setting plans and dates for implementation.

In an effective service environment, managers influence and encourage employee service behavior by setting goals for the service providers. Managers of this type are empowering, energizing, rewarding and serving as role models for their employees, in order that service providers in the organization will be made aware of how the best of them could provide the best service (Hui et al., 2007).

A combination of leadership theory and organizational climate perspectives in a study conducted by Kozlowski& Doherty (1989) found that employees who are supported and backed by their managers will have a more positive attitude towards the organizational climate than those who have little contact with their managers. Salvaggio et al, (2007) found that the manager in the organization is a factor influencing service orientation and influencing the service climate.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that leaders who are aware of the importance of quality of service will act in such a way as to enable the construction of a service climate in the organization (Schneider et al., 1998). They have found a link between leadership that creates commitment to the role and organization and high levels of service climate. Hossain (2010) argues that interpersonal relationships can facilitate the assimilation of responsible behavior that operates within formal professional and social frameworks, between this style of leadership and inspirational motivation and cooperation, which harness the worker to the processes in the organization and build a commitment to the organization. According to her, social relations have a strong influence on the accountability and performance of public office holders.

From a review of this part, I have surmised that there is a strong positive relationship between responsible leadership and the climate of service in the public organization.

According to Vigoda-Gadot and others (2016), the climate of service in the public sector is now characterized by a change in paradigms that were common in

outdated bureaucratic organizations. In the current period, marketing orientation, organizational flexibility, efficiency and responsiveness to citizens' needs are increasing. Such a process requires different thinking of renewal and abandonment of established norms. This demand for flexibility and openness to change is inconsistent with the rewarding leadership style. Therefore, we will research only the transformational responsible leadership style in Israeli public organizations.

## **5. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Based on the literature review we have formulated the following six research hypotheses:

1. There is a positive relation between transformational responsible leadership and the climate of quality of public service.
2. There is a positive relation between classical transformational leadership and the climate of quality of public service.
3. There is a positive relation between responsibilities and the climate of quality of public service.
4. There is a positive relation between accountability of the leader and the climate of quality of public service.
5. There is a positive relation between the accountability of employee and the climate of quality of public service.
6. There is a positive relation between the organization's accountability and the climate of quality of service.

The approach we are undertaking is a quantitative research, using a survey based on a specific questionnaire.

We are currently in the process of executing a survey of the situation in the public sector organizations in Israel. The research population refers to all employees and managers in the public sector in Israel. Of these, a sample of about 300 employees and managers from all the organizations in the public sector will be selected randomly.

A questionnaire will be distributed in order to examine the research variables. The questions in the questionnaire of the research variables will be composed of indexes that have been examined in the literature in the past, and describe the dependent variable - the quality of service and the independent variables in the research - leadership and accountability.

For the independent variable “Leadership” we have used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 360 (MLQ 360) of Bass and Avolio (1990). The MLQ 360 is composed of two forms: the Leader Form (36 items) and the Rater Form (45 items). It is a multi-rater form, meaning that it analyzes the leader's self-assessment alongside how superiors, peers, subordinates, and others perceive their leadership behaviors. The MLQ 360 measures transformational leadership, transactional leadership, passive/avoidant behaviors, and outcomes of leadership. We have used the Rater form consisting of 36 questions.

The Quality Service climate questionnaire consists of 7 questions that are asking respondents to evaluate (to scale) various aspects related to the service quality climate in their own organization. Description of what happens in people's work units with regard to the service-focused policies, practices, and procedures they experience as well as the behaviors they observe being rewarded, supported, and expected (Schneider, White, and Paul, 1998).

Currently, the research is the stage of distribution and collection of questionnaires. The research results and discussion will be presented in another article following the completion of the field research.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Responsibility has long been recognized as one of the cornerstones of successful public administration (Forrer, Kee, Newcomer & Boyer, 2010). The process of promoting a culture of "accountability" in the public organization is a process carried out by managers and leaders.

Service quality in the public sector is the yardstick for the effective functioning of the public organization. It is the responsibility of the leader to act to ensure a climate of quality service in order to meet public demands for high level quality of the service.

The climate of quality service in the public sector is now characterized by a change in paradigms that were common in outdated bureaucratic organizations. In the current period, marketing orientation, organizational flexibility, efficiency and responsiveness to citizens' needs are increasing. Such a process requires different thinking of renewal and abandonment of established norms. This demand for flexibility and openness to change is inconsistent with the rewarding leadership style. Therefore, we will focus our research on the transformational responsible leadership style in Israeli public organizations.

We consider that transformational responsible leadership is the transformational leadership style that is explicitly based on three aspects of the leader's responsibilities: 1) to act responsible and show responsiveness in serving the interests of the organization; 2) to fulfill the expectations of his followers that he will stand behind his words, actions and reactions; and 3) to fulfill the expectations to explain his beliefs, decisions and commitments to his superiors and followers.

## REFERENCES

- Avolio, B.J. (2011) "Full range leadership development". Sage Publication Inc, Thousand Oaks, California
- Bass, B. M. (1985). "Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations". New York. Free Press.
- Bass, B.M. & Avolio, B.J. (1990). "The Implication of Transformational and Transactional Leadership for Individual, Team, and Organizational Development". *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, 4, .72-231.
- Dean, A. M. & Rainnie, R. (2009). "Frontline Employees' Views on organizational Factors that Affect the Delivery of Service Quality in Call Centers". *The Journal of Services Marketing*. 23. (5). Pp. 326- 337.
- Bowen, (2015). "A Service Climate Synthesis and Future Research Agenda". Available from:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278061012\\_A\\_Service\\_Climate\\_Synthesis\\_and\\_Future\\_Research\\_Agenda](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278061012_A_Service_Climate_Synthesis_and_Future_Research_Agenda) [accessed June 12 2018].
- Evans, J.R. & Lindsay, W.M. 2002. "The Management and Control of Quality", 5th edition. Cincinnati, Ohio : South-Western.
- Forrer, J., Kee, J. E., Newcomer, K. E. & Boyer, E. 2010. "Public-Private Partnerships and the Public Accountability Question". *Public Administration Review*. 70. (3). Pp. 475-

484.

- Gill, R. (2009). "What is Leadership?" In *Aspects of Leadership*. Jennifer Buttery (Editor) Ross-on-Wye: The Leadership Trust, Marea Britanie
- Grimshaw, J., Baron, G., Mike, B. & Edwards, N. 2006. "How to Combat a Culture of Excuses and Promote Accountability". *Strategy & Leadership*. 34. (5). Pp. 11- 18.
- Guthridge, M. D., & Wearing, A. J. (2003). "Leadership, psychological climate, service climate, and contextual performance in health care". *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 55, 126-126
- Hossain, N (2010)."Rude Accountability: Informal Pressures on Frontline Bureaucrats in Bangladesh", *Development and Change*, Volume 41, Issue 5
- Hui, C. H., Chiu, W. C. K., Yu, P. L. H., Cheng, K., & Tse, H. H. M. (2007). "The effects of service climate and the effective leadership behaviour of supervisors on frontline employee service quality: A multi-level analysis". *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 80(1), 151-172.
- James, W. (2005). "The Impact of Corporatization and National Competition Policy: An Exploratory Study of Organizational Change and Leadership Style". *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 26. Pp. 289-309.
- Johnson, J. W. (1996). "Linking Employee Perceptions of Service Climate to Customer Satisfaction". *Personnel Psychology*. 49. (4). Pp. 831-851.
- Kearns, KP (1996). "Managing for Accountability: Preserving the Public Trust in Public and Nonprofit Organizations". 1st Edition, Josey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.
- Kozlowski, S. W., & Doherty, M. L. (1989). "Integration of climate and leadership: Examination of a neglected issue". *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 74(4), 546-553.
- Lawler, J. (2008). "Individualization and Public Sector Leadership". *Public Administration*. 86. (1). Pp. 21–34.
- Markovits, Y, Davis, AJ, Dick R, (2011) "Organizational Commitment Profiles and Job Satisfaction among Greek Private and Public Sector Employees" *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 2007 Vol 7(1): 77–99
- Paarlberg, L. E., Lavigna, B. (2010). "Transformational Leadership and Public Service Motivation: Driving Individual and Organizational Performance". *Public Administration Review*. 70. (5). Pp. 710-718.
- Roberts, NC, (2002). "Keeping public officials accountable through dialogue: resolving the accountability paradox", *Public Administration Review*, Wiley Online Library
- Salvaggio, A. N., Schneider, B., Nishii, L. H., Mayer, D. M., Ramesh, A., & Lyon, J. S. (2007). "Manager personality, manager service quality orientation, and service climate: Test of a model". *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(6), 1741-1750.
- Schneider, B. & Bowen, D. E. (1993). "The Service Organization: Human Resources Management Is Crucial". *Organizational Dynamics*. 21. (4). Pp. 39-52.
- Schneider, B., White, S.S. & Paul, M.C. 1998. "Linking Service Climate and Customer Perceptions of Service quality: Test of a Casual Model". *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 83. (2). Pp. 150-63.
- Schneider B, Ehrhart MG, Mayer DM, Saltz JL, Niles-Jolly K. (2005). "Understanding organization–customerlinks in service settings" *Academy of Management Journal*, 48:1017–32.
- Vigoda-Gadot E. & Mizrahi S. (2014). « Israeli Public Sector Performance: Citizens Survey and National Assessment". Center for Public Policy and Management. University of Haifa.
- Vigoda-Gadot E. & Drory A. (Eds.). (2016)." Handbook of Organizational Politics: Looking back and to the Future". Cheltenham, UK; Edwars Elgar.
- Vigoda-Gadot, A. & Mizrahi, S. 2014. "Performance of the Public Sector in Israel: Analysis of Civilian Positions and National Evaluation of the Situation". Working Paper 14, School of Political Science of the University of Haifa and the Faculty of Management of Ben-Gurion University.

- Vigoda-Gadot, E. & Angert, L. 2007. “Goal Setting Theory, Job Feedback, and OCB: Lessons from a Longitudinal Study”. *Basic & Applied Social Psychology*. 29. (2). Pp. 119-128.
- Vigoda-Gadot, E., & Meisler, G. (2010). « Emotions in management and the management of emotions: the impact of emotional intelligence and organizational politics on public sector employees”. *Public Administration Review*, 70(1), 72-86.
- Vigoda-Gadot, E. & Mizrahi, S. 2008. « Public Sector Management and the Democratic Ethos: A 5-Year Study of Key Relationships in Israel”. *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory*. 18. (1). Pp. 79-07.
- Walumbwa, F. O., Peterson, S. J., Avolio, B. J., & Hartnell, C. A. (2010).” An investigation of the relationships among leader and follower psychological capital, service climate, and job performance”. *Personnel Psychology*, 63(4), 937-963.
- Williams, M., & Sanchez, J.I. (1998). “Customer Service-Oriented Behavior: Person and Situational Antecedents”. *Journal of Quality Management*, Vol.3 No.1, pp.101-116.
- Wood, J. A. & Winston, B.E. (2005). “Toward a New Understanding of Leader Accountability: Defining a Critical Construct”. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 11. Pp.84-94.