

# STANDPOINT

by

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for

Dissertation work, developed by **Elena Hinova-McNamee**, on the topic:

**„Thriving leadership – concept, factors and coaching for  
Leaders and teams development“**

to acquire an educational and scientific degree

"doctor" in the "Business Administration" program,

professional direction 3.7 Administration and management,

scientific specialty: Social Management

The opinion is in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for its Application (PPZRASRB), the requirements of the Regulations for the Application of the Law and the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff in the NBU (**Appendix No. 3 to the Ordinance on the development of the academic staff of the NBU**) and according to the **Order of the Rector -Z-RK- 123/20.02.2024**, as a member of the Scientific Jury. And it follows the structure of a model applied to competitions for filling academic positions.

## **I. Significance of the researched problem, justification of the goals and tasks**

The dissertation has a systematized and logically justified structure: an introduction, three main chapters, 10 sections and a conclusion, presented within 319 pages - with precisely arranged 23 tables, 63 figures, appendices and used 89 literary sources. The set *five research tasks* fully cover and follow the formulated goals, hypotheses, object, subject in the dissertation work.

The author applies a holistic approach and a **new research perspective**, integrating established and emerging leadership theories, separated into 9 thematic groups, but also with complementary guidelines and metrics from: psychological and neurobiological studies; the interaction of cognitive neuroscience, organizational sciences and management. Defines, systematizes, and substantiates characteristics associated with successful leadership. Develops and applies in the

research *a new conceptual apparatus*, reflecting the indicated expanded interdisciplinary base, including: brain dominance and leadership success; organizational epigenetics; energy coaching; success matrix and success zone; essential CORE model; research methods: energy leadership potential assessment and brain dominance assessments; four zones of internal dynamics and energy profile; catabolic and anabolic energy.

The author's interpretation of the *coaching intervention* around four quadrants, through which four levels of insight are achieved respectively: *reflexive, emotional, intuitive and inspirational*, is also original. Tied to the big picture of the meaningful mission of leadership, seen as the interaction of four mindsets - parts of a single brain system "working together for human growth and evolution."

## **II. Research methodology and methodology**

The methodology includes, in an original symbiosis, *qualitative and quantitative approaches*: case studies; assessment of the energy leadership indicator; brain dominance assessment; interviews; testimonials of members of the organization; documentation. The *comparative studies* are also analyzed, which ascertain the following dependencies: successful leadership - the organizational environment (organizational culture) - the social environment (relationships with teams, coaching), but also how they in a complex affect organizational results. And how in the process of personal change of the leader takes place interpersonal change of the management team, leading to organizational prosperity.

In proving the theses and the set tasks for researching the phenomena related to successful leadership, the author applies systematic monitoring for a relatively long period /2016-2022/, using the following innovative - for our theory and practice in organizations, research tools:

1. **Evaluation of the energy leadership index** - Energy Leadership Index™ Assessment - a scientifically validated energy measurement tool used as a marker to measure progress as a result of the coaching intervention with leaders.

2. **The self-assessment of brain dominance** - to prove the hypothesis that brain dominance affects the internal conditions for success, connecting the current "hard" scientific knowledge about the brain, its structure and physiology with the "softer" psychological knowledge about thinking and learning styles .

When researching successful organizations/companies related to the building of human/social capital, the author also uses the term "**psychological well-being**" (PB - psychological well-being), reflecting optimal achievements, realization and development of human potential. By distinguishing between subjective well-being (SB), a hedonistic view of well-being, including happiness, pleasure, and satisfaction, and PB, eudaemonic well-being, including the realization of human potential, psychological growth, and meaning (mission). *Seven key dimensions* of PB are also examined in an organizational context: meaning in life, self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, opportunity to influence the environment, personal growth, tolerance to stress. By drawing conclusions about successful leaders who, in addition to being role models, are also creators of the organizational environment ("organizational epigenetics"), leading employees to organizational prosperity.

### III. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions

In this way, the author offers not only an *interesting perspective* aimed at the new paradigm of leadership, with the new trends of interaction between the development of successful leaders. But also offering productive possibilities of *cognitive neuroscience and organizational science, supporting both organizational change and coaching for successful leadership*: to be seen as a holistic form, including the internal integration of the leader (harmony with his essential nature), but also that of his followers (how they feel with the leader and how they are influenced by him) . However, it should be considered as an application of an integrative/holistic approach to *self-management, realized at the same time at the team and organizational level*.

Therefore, the application in the research toolkit of the categories "**Thrive matrix**" and "**Thrive Space**" - measured on a scale from 1 to 10, but also as an analysis of the intersection points for the "optimal experience" and justification of the process of personal and interpersonal change when leaders and teams work at the level of energy, emotions and transformation of thought patterns, can be seen as an innovative approach to apply neuroscience research in organizations. With **certain research** dimensions to the new paradigm of leadership - through the lens of such states or concepts as "subjective flow" or "parasympathetic activity" when described jointly/parallel with other qualitative components such as: "meaningful vision", "sustainable success" or "commitment to personal change" refracted through the triad: commitment - motivation - passion. It is here that the synergistic effects between personal and interpersonal change in organizations are sought, aimed at: how to lead yourself, but also how to influence others so that they also achieve the desired change.

The author concludes that this set of tools, described as **CORE MODEL**®, is applicable in all cultures and in different types of organizations, since it is not linear and directive, but has a guiding expertise requiring a certain level of training and professional maturity. Predictive and specialized training programs for leaders, teams and organizations. Therefore, the author's projects, in addition to the training he implements at the university, should also function as *real operational programs* in our leading companies. In this sense, the proposals made in the dissertation for the necessary prerequisites for the implementation of this model: with diagnostics of leaders and leadership teams with scientifically validated tools; with the use of the *Energy Leadership Indicator* (measuring individual and collective attitude and addressing key energy); *Belbin's test* for identifying team strengths and opportunities to compose potentially sustainably successful teams has its meaning. But they can be considered only as an initial stage of the author's scientific and applied activity for popularization, specialized training in our companies and full implementation in the constantly "learning organizations" in Bulgaria. Moreover, the author is not only a solid professional - a functioning director in the "human resources" department, but also with 9 years of experience and expertise in coaching with leaders and teams in our and international companies.

The *deductive-inductive style* of presentation, the successful presentation of questions and answers, the interpretations regarding Socratic dialectics, including not instructions, but insights in the conversation - leading to personality development, appropriately woven into the design of the dissertation, make a pleasant impression. Also subject to the author's desire to "tell science as a

story" - stated as the motto of the third chapter. Moreover, this is in sync with the proof of the initial theses, goals and objectives, despite the limitations stated by the author.

The systematized scientific and applied contributions are equivalent to the confirmed hypotheses, realized goals and tracked tasks of the research in the dissertation. But in this direction are also *my tips* for their refinement: scientific contribution No. 4 covers to a certain extent the theoretical foundations for the key concepts indicated in scientific contribution No. 1; as with No. 5 – when definitions are derived, they must be described; the systematized contributions mainly follow the theoretical knowledge, scientific constructs and premises in building models, while the recommendations bring applicability and possibilities to adapt them to the typology, scope and size of organizations. Therefore, the contributions described in this way should rather follow the distinction: **scientific and scientific-applied contributions**.

The testing of the research tools in two international companies: *British and Japanese*, as well as the publication of the obtained data in renowned journals, our and international scientific and practical conferences - a total of four appearances with articles and reports, shows that she is also establishing herself as a research scientist with an innovative approach and expertise to optimize organizations and management.

## **Conclusion**

Based on all of the above, I believe that the dissertation presented by Elena Hinova-McNamee, a doctoral student of independent training, on the topic: „**Thriving leadership – concept, factors and coaching for Leaders and teams development**“, fully meets the requirements for selected innovative methodology, approach and testing of tools carrying scientific and scientific-applied contributions. This gives me the reason to give a positive assessment to **Elena Hinova-Maknamey** for acquiring an educational and scientific degree "**doctor**" in the "**Business Administration**" program, professional direction 3.7 Administration and management, scientific specialty: Social Management.

04/04/2024

Signature:

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