

# Effectiveness of the program for developing leadership skills among managers of police organizations as a guarantee of their mental health

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** The aim is to substantiate the program for developing leadership skills among managers of police organizations and to test its effectiveness.

**Materials and Methods:** The research, which was conducted in 2022-2024, involved 64 mid-level managers of police organizations and 462 officers from police units (departments, divisions) directly subordinated to these managers. To achieve the aim, a set of methods was used: bibliosemantic, diagnostic, analysis and generalization, statistical.

**Results:** The program for developing leadership skills among managers of police organizations has been worked out and substantiated. It has been found that well-organized and targeted psychological work with police unit managers allows for changing the indicators of the staff management style towards improving efficiency. An increase in the indicator of a high level of efficiency of the service activities of police unit managers (formation of the category "successful manager") has been revealed. The positive dynamics convincingly indicate the appropriate mobilization of leadership qualities, even for those managers who do not meet the requirements of management activities and cannot be useful to subordinate staff

**Conclusions:** The authors' program outlines the organizational and psychological conditions for the effective development of leadership qualities in police managers, namely: creating a personality-oriented developmental environment in training and real interaction with staff; taking measures to identify their advantages and disadvantages, showing respect and care for all members of the team, etc. Moreover, a high level of leadership qualities of managers of police organizations will contribute to strengthening their mental health and improving the efficiency of their professional activity.

**KEY WORDS:** leadership skills, psychological qualities, managers of police organizations, mental health

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## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of leadership in a police organization is based on the relevant socio-psychological prerequisites, which provide for the presence of stable individual psychological qualities of the leader (purposefulness, perseverance, self-confidence, responsibility, initiative, etc.), their developed social and psychological skills (ability to organize a favorable atmosphere in the team, put oneself in the place of other people, mediate a conflict between officers, show respect for team members, demonstrate a high communication culture in relations with other people). Organizational skills and abilities of leaders are also important, which include the ability to set up productive activities of the organization's officers, set clear tasks for the team, monitor the progress of the execution of assignments and orders, be responsible together with everyone for the final result of work, etc. [1-3].

It should be noted that leadership standpoints in police organizations often depend on the manager's position and are determined by his or her authority, ability to lead, inspire, take care of the team, form a team, organize and maintain effective interpersonal interaction with officers; be able to make decisions in conditions of uncertainty; solve problems; apply a creative approach to solving management problems [4-6].

According to some researchers [7-10], leadership is the result of both objective factors (goals and objectives of a social (labor) group in a particular situation) and subjective factors (interests, needs, individual and typological characteristics of group members), as well as the actions of the leader as an initiator and organizer of professional activity. In addition, scholars often argue that the problem of leadership among police managers is currently quite urgent [11-13], as quite frequently in this area, some specialists do not have suf-

ficient professional competence, organizational skills, leader motivation, etc. Instead, realizing the manager's leadership standpoints directly determines the staff's effectiveness and the organization's success. That is why the problem of leadership realization among managers of police organizations requires scientific and applied research and the search for effective ways to develop the leadership qualities of managers.

## AIM

The aim is to substantiate the program for developing leadership skills among managers of police organizations and to test its effectiveness.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research involved 64 mid-level managers of police organizations in Kyiv, Kyiv and Kharkiv regions (Ukraine) and 462 officers from police units (departments, divisions) directly subordinated to these managers. Special ranks of managers ranged from captain to colonel of police. The selection of police officers for the respondents' category was voluntary. The respondents' intellectual level, performance indicators of their service activities, and psycho-emotional state did not differ.

The research was conducted in 2022-2024 at the National Academy of Internal Affairs (Kyiv, Ukraine), Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs (Kharkiv, Ukraine), and included several stages. The first stage involved an analytical review of the literature on the problem of leadership implementation among managers of police organizations and the determination of the diagnostic and methodological tools for the research. At the second stage the author's program for developing leadership skills among managers of mid-level police organizations was designed and implemented. In the third stage, the managers were diagnosed, and their subordinate staff was interviewed. The dynamics were determined, the data were interpreted logically and semantically, and the research conclusions were formed.

To achieve the aim, a set of methods was used: bibliosemantic, diagnostic, analysis and generalization, statistical. The main block of diagnostics included a psychological examination and a social survey of the respondents using valid methods, namely: 1) the methodology referred to as "Diagnostics of Leadership Abilities"; 2) the methodology referred to as "Leadership Effectiveness"; 3) the methodology referred to as "Expert Assessment of the Manager's Activities Effectiveness" [14].

The methodology referred to as "Diagnostics of Leadership Qualities" is designed to determine a person's

level of leadership potential and the ability of a person to be a leader in a team-spirited workforce. The respondents were offered a methodology form containing 50 questions, to which they had to choose an affirmative or negative answer (in those questions with "yes" and "no" options) or choose among the proposed ones (with two other answer options). Processing occurs according to the methodology's key, where 1 point is awarded for each match and 0 points for a non-match. The total amount of points determines the level of expressiveness of the respondent's leadership qualities: 0-25 points – weakly expressed leadership qualities, low level; 26-35 points – leadership is manifested in a mediocre way, average level; 36-40 points – leadership qualities are expressed sufficiently for effective work; more than 40 points – excessive level of leadership qualities, the respondent's tendency to total domination and control.

The methodology referred to as "Leadership Effectiveness" is designed primarily to determine the potential effectiveness of the manager's practical activities as a leader. The methodology includes 42 questions that must be answered unequivocally: "yes" or "no". For each positive answer to the proposed questions ("yes"), the respondent receives 1 point, and for each negative answer ("no") – 0 points. The sum of points determines the effectiveness of the leadership of the management team of a particular organization: from 30 to 40 points – the leadership style of the leader is considered highly effective; from 11 to 29 points – the leadership style is supposed to be medium effective; 10 points or less – the leadership style of the leader is considered to be ineffective, and they are not recommended to be the team leader.

The methodology referred to as "Expert Assessment of the Manager's Activities Effectiveness" is aimed at determining the levels of effectiveness of the management activities of managers-leaders. The methodology makes it possible to assess several factors that form the basis for an opinion on the effectiveness of a particular manager. First, this methodology is suitable for evaluating mid-level managers of police departments. The respondents were given a methodology form and instructions on evaluating 30 factors that characterize a particular manager on a 7-point scale. The processing process involves determining the total result. This makes it possible to visualize the degree of expressiveness of each leader-manager. The levels of effectiveness of a leader-manager's management activity are defined as follows: 30-48 points – the manager does not meet the requirements of the management activity (very low level); 49-60 points – the manager has few reasons to be useful for the organization (low level); 61-90 points – the

manager's performance is too low (reduced level); 91-120 points – the manager is not effective enough, the effectiveness of the leader-manager's style is below average; 121-150 points – it is advisable to reconsider the leadership style (average level); 151-179 points – there are all opportunities to increase one's effectiveness (above-average level); 180-210 points – an effective manager (high level).

The author's program for developing leadership skills and optimizing the leadership style of mid-level managers consisted of 6 training sessions totaling 2 hours each on the following topics: "Who is a Leader, What is Leadership?", "An Authoritative Leader", "Traits of a True Leader", "Ethics and Charisma in the Life of a Leader", "Influence of Leadership Styles on the Success of a Leader in a Team", "Stimulation of Self-Development of Leadership Potential". The program's main objectives are to familiarize oneself with the techniques and recommendations for gaining authority in the team of subordinates, to practice the acquired knowledge and skills; to stimulate managers to achieve important professional goals, to intensify the desire for self-development and self-improvement, etc.

The data processing involved qualitative data analysis, calculation of percentage values, and their generalization. The research results made it possible to form conclusions about the peculiarities of the manifestation of leadership implementation by managers of police organizations. The statistical method was used to process the experimental data obtained. The reliability of the difference between the indicators was determined using Pearson's Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) criterion. The significance of the difference was set at  $p < 0.05$ . This research followed the regulations of the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki and ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. Informed consent was received from all respondents who took part in this research.

## RESULTS

Based on the literature analysis, we consider it advisable to conduct specially organized psychological work with mid-level managers to develop their leadership skills and optimize the leadership style in the team. For this purpose, the author's program for developing leadership qualities and optimizing leadership style in mid-level managers has been created. The program aims to promote the development of leadership qualities in managers, to develop activity and initiative, responsibility in making management decisions, to form an individual leadership style, and to stimulate self-development and self-improvement. The developed program was imple-

mented during training work with mid-level managers. During the training sessions with mid-level managers, a lot of attention was paid to developing leadership skills in the team, planning their work on self-development, and improving organizational qualities and abilities. During the practical exercises, the training sessions participants were able to practice their skills in applying different leadership styles, using criticism in communication with subordinates, discussing the specifics of creating a favorable climate in the team, and receiving recommendations on business ethics in dealing with officers. At the end of each session, mid-level managers summarized the knowledge and skills they had gained, and each time, they found something useful for their practice. Another positive result of the program implementation was the development of group and individual plans for improving leadership skills and developing leadership potential, which were drawn up by mid-level managers while participating in various brainstorming sessions, practical exercises, discussions, art therapy exercises, etc.

To verify the effectiveness of the author's program and the psychological work done, mid-level managers ( $n=64$ ) and their subordinates in police units ( $n=462$ ) were re-diagnosed for changes in the manifestations of leadership skills and the effectiveness of the leadership style in the team. Here are the results of the survey of managers and their subordinates. First, we noted a positive trend in the manifestations of leadership qualities of mid-level police managers (Table 1).

Thus, as can be seen from the results, the author's program developed by us contributed to significant changes ( $p < 0.001$ ) in the level of leadership qualities development, namely: the number of successful leaders increased (46.3 % of managers and 35.5 % of subordinate officers indicated a sufficient level) (dynamics: +11.9 % and +9.1 %, respectively). At the same time, there is a drop in the indicator of management's lack of aptitude for leadership – it has decreased by more than 10 % in two groups of respondents. This indicates that unsuccessful leaders focused on self-improvement practices, including working with staff and self-presentation.

At the same time, the redefinition of leadership style among police unit leaders also showed a significant improvement (Table 2).

The results show that the indicators of the leadership style of police unit managers have significantly changed in the direction of improving efficiency. In particular, 50.0 % of managers and 41.4 % of subordinate officers state it as highly effective (dynamics: +15.6 and +19.1, respectively). At the same time, there is a decline in the indicators of an ineffective style of unit management (dynamics: -6.2 and -13.2, respectively). This indicates

**Table 1.** Levels of leadership qualities manifestations among mid-level police managers

Levels of leadership qualities manifestations among police managers	Categories of respondents				Reliability of the difference	
	Mid-level police managers (n = 64)		Police units officers (n = 462)		$\chi^2$	p
	%	Dynamics	%	Dynamics		
Very high level, tendency to dictatorship	0	0	0	0	4.41	<0.001
Sufficient level of leadership qualities development, successful leader	46.3	+11.9	35.5	+9.1		
Average level of leadership qualities and skills	48.6	-1.4	52.4	+1.3		
Low level, not aptitude for leadership	5.1	-10.5	12.1	-10.4		

**Table 2.** Leadership styles of mid-level managers of police units

Leadership style of the leader	Categories of respondents				Reliability of the difference	
	Mid-level police managers (n = 64)		Police units officers (n = 462)		$\chi^2$	p
	%	Dynamics	%	Dynamics		
Highly effective leadership style of the leader	50.0	+15.6	41.4	+19.1	2.72	<0.05
Medium effective leadership style	43.7	-9.4	46.5	-5.9		
Ineffective leadership style of the leader	6.3	-6.2	12.1	-13.2		

**Table 3.** Levels of management activities effectiveness of mid-level police manager

Levels of management activities effectiveness of police manager	Categories of respondents				Reliability of the difference	
	Mid-level police managers (n = 64)		Police units officers (n = 462)		$\chi^2$	p
	%	Dynamics	%	Dynamics		
High level, effective manager	35.9	+10.9	28.6	+11.9	3.95	<0.001
Above-average level, performance can be improved	40.7	+4.8	36.1	+2.8		
Average level, it is advisable to review the management style (management methods)	20.3	-6.3	27.5	+2.6		
Effectiveness of the manager-leader's style is below average	3.1	-4.7	5.2	-6.5		
Reduced level, the effectiveness of the manager's work is too low	0	-4.7	2.6	-7.1		
Low level, the manager cannot be useful to the organization	0	0	0	-3.7		
Very low level, the manager does not meet the requirements of management activities	0	0	0	0		

that managers are rethinking the approaches to their management activities, revising the priority incentives for self-development and self-improvement, which is felt even from the perspective of subordinate officers of police organizations.

Later, using the methodology referred to as "Expert Assessment of the Manager's Activities Effectiveness" again, we obtained changed results of the diagnosis of the respondents of both groups (Table 3).

Hence, we can see a certain difference in the effectiveness of management activities that managers and subordinate officers assess. However, despite this, there is a clear trend toward improving the level of manage-

ment activities and effectiveness of police managers. This is evidenced by an increase in the indicator of the high level of management activities effectiveness (among respondents from among managers, there is a +10.9 % increase, and among subordinate staff, +11.9 %). The data on the effectiveness of above-average management activities also increased to some extent (+4.8 % and 2.8 %, respectively). At the same time, we also paid attention to the effectiveness of the below-average levels of management activities. Here, we noted a negative trend, which convincingly indicates the appropriate mobilization of the leadership and organizational potential of those managers with these levels.

Thus, the psychological work with managers contributed to improving the effectiveness of their team management style and optimized the development of their leadership skills. Such managers not only began to meet the requirements of management activities but also became useful to their organization, which undoubtedly demonstrates the effectiveness of targeted and well-organized psychological work with mid-level managers of the police. Moreover, a high level of leadership qualities of managers of police organizations will contribute to strengthening their mental health and improving the efficiency of their professional activity.

## DISCUSSION

It is also worth noting that it is justified for a manager to turn to an organizational psychologist who will not only familiarize them with the list of leadership qualities but will also help to create a self-improvement program for the development of these qualities, offer individual exercises and techniques aimed at awakening leadership potential. In particular, self-hypnosis, relaxation, and auto-training exercises have proven effective, during which the leader increases their faith in their strength, attracts internal energy to find more optimal self-development, and activates the desire to succeed [10]. In addition, participation in psychological training and specially organized exercises and games contributes to the development of leadership qualities of managers [15]. Our observations in the research showed that psychologists, through specially designed training programs, can help managers understand their motives and develop leadership skills, direct the leadership activity of the individual, and help develop leadership skills. However, in our opinion, organizational and psychological conditions for the effective development of leadership qualities of an individual should include:

- taking into account individual psychological characteristics and the development of leadership motivation in an individual;
- development of responsibility (from specific situational to responsibility as a stable personal trait) as the basis of responsible leadership;
- creation of a personality-oriented developmental environment in training and real interaction, which is marked by relevant characteristics (content of activities, group dynamics, problematics, reflection);
- ensuring the targeted development of leadership qualities of individuals through team organization, etc.

According to G. Campbell [16], to ensure favorable conditions for the development of leadership qualities of managers, it is advisable to create a “launching pad” associated with the availability of relevant professionally significant qualities of the personality of managers,

as well as instilling in them an interest in corporate changes. Under such conditions, an updated tactic of psychological selection of persons suitable for this type of activity becomes relevant, which, according to our research, currently has certain problems and difficulties.

Due to purposeful and properly organized work with the management of police units, results can be achieved when the level of management activities and effectiveness of police units improves. A new category of specialists is being formed – the successful manager. At the same time, the number of managers who demonstrate an ineffective management style and are relatively useful for their police organization may decrease proportionally. To this end, some scholars rightly recommend developing the motivation of leadership and the desire to lead followers; increasing self-confidence and adequate self-esteem, getting to know yourself, your strengths and weaknesses better, taking them into account when working with the team; learning to show respect and care for all team members; creating a favorable psychological climate in the team [17-19].

In general, our results complement and expand the findings of many scientists on this range of problems [8, 10, 13, 20-23].

## CONCLUSIONS

The program for developing leadership skills among managers of police organizations has been worked out and substantiated. With the help of training, special motivational games aimed at developing leadership qualities, role-playing exercises, dialogues, and problem situations, a manager can build leadership skills and form their style of leadership influence on the team. It has been proven that well-organized and targeted psychological work with police unit managers allows for changing the indicators of the staff management style to improve effectiveness. This contributes to managers rethinking their management approaches and revising priority incentives for self-development and self-improvement, which is felt from the standpoint of subordinate officers.

The increase in the indicator of high level and above-average level of police unit managers' effectiveness has been revealed. The positive dynamics convincingly demonstrate the appropriate mobilization of leadership and organizational qualities even for managers who do not meet the requirements of management activities and cannot be useful for their police organization.

Organizational and psychological conditions for the effective development of leadership qualities of modern police managers should include taking into account

individual psychological characteristics of an individual; creating a personality-oriented developmental environment in training and real interaction; conducting activities to increase self-confidence, highlighting one's advantages and disadvantages, taking them into account when working with the team; showing respect and care for all team members; creating a favorable psychological climate in the team, etc. Moreover, a high level of leadership qualities of managers of police

organizations will contribute to strengthening their mental health and improving the efficiency of their professional activity.

## PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is planned to study the impact of communication skills of police unit managers on the effectiveness of their service activities.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare no conflict of interest

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