



Original Contribution

THE INFLUENCE OF MANAGERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON THEIR WORK PERFORMANCE IN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS (EMPIRICAL STUDY)

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the number of theoretical studies related to the psychological aspects of human resource management has increased. In the context of behavioral sciences, the orientation of scientists and researchers to the inner essence of individuals, to thought processes and the feelings of people at the workplace, and hence to the resulting work behavior, is completely natural. Work productivity stems from a certain type of employee behavior, and a number of factors influence this behavior in people's work activity. Emotional intelligence is one of the key factors influencing the work behavior of business organizations' leaders. This component encompasses abilities and skills that orient the behavior of managers in their work performance in a direction consistent with the organizational goals and the personal goals of each of these leaders.

Key words: emotional intelligence; work performance; mutual influence

INTRODUCTION

Modern business organizations operate in an economic environment which is dynamic, changing and largely unfavorable for them. This is particularly true for Bulgarian businesses. The strategic objective of ensuring the competitiveness and growth of industrial organizations in the country is heavily based on mechanisms for achieving a competitive advantage in human resources. Psychological and more specifically emotional intelligence and its impact on the work performance of human resources is a strand in human resource management with practical significance and utility. From a scientific point of view, a lot of research has been produced on this issue. There is scientific evidence of the significant influence of the emotional intelligence of human resources on their work performance. At the same time, there is a methodical and applied research gap concerning the above

influence. In the present article, the focus is on key aspects of the impact of emotional intelligence on work performance studied through an own empirical survey, focused on managers in Bulgarian business organizations.

According to Singh, emotions are one of the warning systems of the human nature and are a complex state of the human mind that involves physiological changes on the one hand and psychological changes on the other. He defines intelligence as a person's cognitive ability, i.e. the ability to learn, think, and reason (1).

Emotional intelligence is defined by Mayer and Salovey as "the ability to perceive, evaluate and express emotions accurately; the ability to generate feelings that facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotions and to manage them in order to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (2). According to Petrides and Furnham emotional intelligence is the interconnection between emotionally-dependent subjective perceptions and persuasions of the personality about sustainability and the personal qualities people use to manage emotions (3). Emotional intelligence, according to Golman, is a set of

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skills, including: the ability to motivate oneself, to persevere in difficult moments, to control one's impulses and to postpone the reward for one's efforts, to regulate one's moods and to prevent anxiety from interfering in one's thinking, to show empathy and to live with hope (4). Eketu and Ayondu define emotional intelligence as the ability to learn, understand and apply emotional knowledge and skills (5).

Emotional intelligence is vital to business, human work behavior, the quality of work, engagement and labor morale in general. Emotions, to a greater extent than intellectual abilities, determine the thinking of people and human interactions (6). Emotional intelligence is a set of capabilities that allow emotions to be properly used in decision-making and problem solving in situations which at first glance have a purely pragmatic and rational character. From this it can be concluded that intellectual and emotional skills, when combined, influence the thinking, behavior and work performance of employees. According to Paunov, mental structures that manage emotions and feelings have a greater impact on decision-making than logic and reason. Moreover, emotions have much more power to influence reason than vice versa (7). Employees who recognize their own emotions and know how to control them, while at the same time recognizing others' emotions, are productive, effective, work in a focused manner and achieve better results in their work.

Negative emotions experienced by employees seriously jeopardize the work process and may be an obstacle to increased performance at work. People working under stress think in a more limited scope and lose their imagination and creative thinking. Stress reduces their ability to sense and perceive the feelings, intentions and non-verbal messages coming from others. This leads to "internal closure", lack of empathy and insensitivity, which are signs of low emotional intelligence. On the other hand, employees with high emotional intelligence have the ability to immediately capture negative feelings and try to minimize their influence (8).

According to Quebbeman and Rozell, emotional intelligence has an impact on aggression at work. Although they have no empirical evidence, the authors conclude that people with high emotional intelligence and a strong positive outlook are more likely to

respond to perceived injustices with adaptive and constructive behavior. These people are less likely to show aggression in the event of a conflict (9).

According to Fistolera, when basic emotional skills are present in the workplace, such as a harmonious perception of people's feelings and the ability to manage conflicts so as not to escalate, there are benefits to the work and the organization as a whole. Emotional intelligence helps employees in managing and expressing emotions so that they can achieve better results and cope more successfully in difficult situations (10).

Employees with a high level of emotional intelligence are more satisfied with their work and have positive attitudes towards clients and colleagues (11). Carmeli argues that emotional intelligence increases altruistic behavior, allowing employees to show a positive mood (12). Employees with a positive mood are more likely to provide help and support. When they feel emotionally strong, they show their commitment to the organization they work in (13). Emotional experiences at work affect the behavior and attitudes of employees (14).

Employees with a high level of emotional intelligence are able to understand organizational norms and rules and show a high degree of sensitivity to the work environment (15). Therefore, they are more inclined to show altruistic and polite behavior that is beneficial to the organization as a whole. The probability that such employees will experience high professional stress is lower. They respond with positive emotions to even the most undesirable situations. According to Wong and Law, staff with a high level of emotional intelligence can shape their reactions and are more effective in regulating emotions to achieve the desired emotional state (16). Quebbeman and Rozell theorize that employees with low levels of emotional intelligence are less able to limit negative emotions caused by negative work situations and are therefore more likely to react inappropriately, which can harm the organization or the other employees who work in it (9).

The ability of employees, and especially managers, to recognize and understand the feelings of others, as well as to respond to these feelings in an appropriate way, requires a certain level of "emotional education". People with a high level of emotional intelligence communicate well, share their intentions,

ideas, goals, and are more positive, all of which are very important to the results that employees achieve in the workplace (17).

Emotional intelligence can have a significant impact on the business and team management in business organizations. An ever more significant portion of research links EI to creating strong relationships between employees and scientifically proves a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and successful organizational results (18, 19).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

From a methodological viewpoint, the determination of the degree of emotional intelligence of managers in business organizations encompasses the following stages and steps.

Stage I: Developing a questionnaire to determine the degree of emotional intelligence of managers in business organizations.

Stage II: Determining the degree of emotional intelligence.

Step 1: Calculating the estimates for the five components of emotional intelligence - Self-Knowledge, Self-Control, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills.

Step 2: Calculating the total estimate of emotional intelligence for each supervisor.

In this study, the determination of the level of emotional intelligence is based on a questionnaire developed by the author (20), which includes 50 questions. **The questions in it refer only to the work process of managers in business organizations** and measure the degree of emotional intelligence **in the work environment.**

Different aspects of the five components of emotional intelligence considered in the Golman theoretical model and Wood and Tolly's "Professional Emotional Intelligence Tests" have been taken into account in formulating the questions.

The processing of the results and **the quantitative estimates of emotional intelligence** for each and all respondents expressed as a percentage (%) is introduced and processed using **Microsoft Excel 2010 and the SPSS 20 statistical package.**

The assessment of the performance of managers includes 8 steps.

Step 1: Defining Performance **Indicators.**

Step 2: Determining **Degrees** for Benchmarking.

Step 3: Determining **coefficients for the importance** of the Indicators.

Step 4: Identifying **personal scores** for the individual metrics.

Step 5: Identifying **the maximum possible score** for each metric.

Step 6: Determining **the overall score for all performance indicators.**

Step 7: Determining the sum of the **maximum scores** for all metrics.

Step 8: Calculating **the coefficient that characterizes the overall job performance.**

Evaluating the performance of managers is based on using the **analytical approach** and reaching *quantitative estimates*.

The range of indicators proposed in the article is as follows: 1. Result driven orientation;

2. Professional knowledge and skills;

3. Execution of the duties under the job description;

4. Ability to make decisions;

5. Motivation of the managed staff (or the team members);

6. Managing Conflict Situations;

7. Communication;

8. Building relationships;

9. Level of self-control;

10. Personal motivation;

11. Having empathy;

12. Leadership potential.

The first five indicators are defined as hard indicators and are merged into a Professional Skills scale.

The other seven benchmarking indicators are behavioral and are grouped into a Behavioral Skills scale.

The performance indicators for managers' performance are "decoded" using adequate and relevant indicators.

The benchmarks for assessing the indicators as well as the requirements for awarding the respective score of the indicators are determined.

It is imperative to determine the coefficients of the performance indicators in the performance appraisal in view of their "weight" in the overall assessment of the performance of managers.

The article does not readily refer to the algorithm for determining the personal scores and the overall assessment of the performance of managers, which are measured through a quantifiable quotient.

Establishing the values of the emotional intelligence of leaders and their performance

are in their essence the two phases that precede the determination of the influence of the emotional intelligence of managers on their performance and the strength of that influence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The empirical study was conducted through a survey of 51 employees who hold senior positions in 5 business organizations.

The aim of the study presented in the article is to determine the influence of the emotional intelligence of these leaders on their performance in the selected organizations as well as the power of this influence.

Tasks of the empirical research

1. To analyze and evaluate the degree of emotional intelligence of managers and their performance in business organizations.

2. To study the impact of emotional intelligence on the general performance of managers in business organizations.

3. To investigate the impact of emotional intelligence on managers' performance by analyzing and assessing behavioral ("soft") indicators to assess their performance in business organizations.

Hypotheses of the empirical research

Hypothesis 1: The higher degree of emotional intelligence of managers is a prerequisite and a factor for their better overall performance.

Hypothesis 2: The higher degree of emotional intelligence of the managers has a strong positive influence on their behavior and the level of behavioral indicators in their work activity.

• Analysis and assessment of the level of emotional intelligence of managers in business organizations

Emotional Intelligence (EI) includes the following five components: self-knowledge, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills. Each of the components is represented through a three-level Likert Scale ("High Level", "Medium Level" and "Low Level"). Summarizing the scores of the five components for the high, middle and low levels (or degrees) of emotional intelligence of managers, three EI scales have been deduced: "High EI", "Medium EI" and "Low EI". Their values are expressed in relative shares (%).

The author has verified the reliability of the High EI, Medium EI and Low EI scales based on the calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The results obtained are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Efficiency ratios of emotional intelligence scales

EI scales	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	Std. Deviation
High EI	5	0.778	30.08	6.72
Medium EI	5	0.534	13.75	4.12
Low EI	5	0.731	6.18	4.25

For the High EI scale, which includes five items (or components), the mean value of the scale is Mean = 30.08 with standard deviation Std. Deviation = 6.72. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is equal to 0.778. This coefficient is statistically significant with significance level $Sig. F = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. It is greater than 0.7, therefore there is strong internal consistency between the items in the scale.

For the Medium EI scale, which includes the same five items, the average value of the scale is Mean = 13.75 with standard deviation Std. Deviation = 4.12. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of is equal to 0.534. The ANOVA test indicates that it is a statistically significant coefficient, as $Sig. F = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. This coefficient is less than 0.7, therefore there is a medium-to-moderate internal consistency between the items forming the scale.

For the Low EI scale, which also includes five items, the mean value of the scale is Mean = 6.18 with the standard deviation Std. Deviation = 4.25. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is equal to 0.731. The ANOVA test shows that this coefficient is statistically significant, ie. there is consistency between the numbers, as $Sig. F = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. This coefficient is greater than 0.7, therefore there is a strong internal consistency between the items in the scale.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is highest for the High EI scale, at 0.778, followed by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the Low EI scale, which equals 0.731, and the smallest is Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of for the Medium EI scale - 0.534. The first and third coefficients have a high reliability level of greater than 0.7 while the second coefficient has an average reliability.

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the three EI scales, namely High EI, Medium EI and Low EI and it includes the following

values: *Mean, Standard Error of Mean, Standard. Deviation, Minimum, Maximum, Skewness and Kurtosis.*

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the emotional intelligence scales

		Statistics		
		High EI (%)	Medium EI (%)	Low EI (%)
N	Valid	51	51	51
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		60,16	27,49	12,35
Std. Error of Mean		1,882	1,153	1,190
Std. Deviation		13,439	8,235	8,501
Std. Error of Skewness		,333	,333	,333
Kurtosis		1,004	-,158	8,874
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,656	,656	,656
Minimum		20	14	2
Maximum		82	46	52

The table shows that the highest share of the surveyed managers has a high level of emotional intelligence - 60.16%. A medium level of emotional intelligence was exhibited by 27.49% and only 12.35% have a low level

of emotional intelligence. This result justifies continuing the analysis by examining managers with a high level of emotional intelligence.

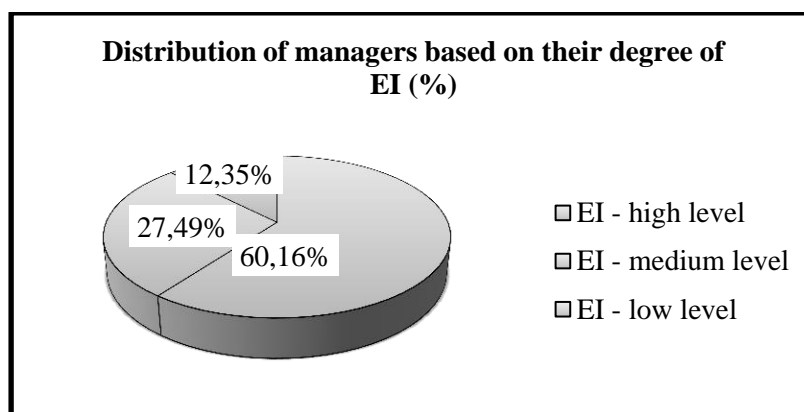


Figure 1. Distribution of managers based on their degree of emotional intelligence (%)

The table below (**Table 3**) presents the distribution of leaders by their degree of emotional intelligence and its determinant

components – self-knowledge, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Table 3. Distribution of leaders by their degree of emotional intelligence and its determinant components (%)

Components	Degree of emotional intelligence		
	High EI	Medium EI	Low EI
Self-knowledge	40.8%	36.9%	22.4%
Self-control	46.3%	36.9%	16.9%
Motivation	70.4%	22.7%	6.9%
Empathy	68.0%	23.1%	8.8%
Social skills	75.3%	17.8%	6.9%
Total:	60.2%	27.4%	12.4%

Comparing the relative shares of the components, in the High EI scale, social skills have the biggest relative share at 75.3%, followed by motivation at 70.4% and empathy at 68.0% while self-control ranks fourth with 46.3% and self-knowledge comes last at 40.8%.

In the Medium EI scale, self-awareness and self-control hold the highest relative share at 36.9% followed by empathy at 23.1%, motivation at 22.7% and social skills at 17.8%.

In the Low EI scale, self-knowledge ranks first with a relative share of 22.4%, self-control is second at 16.9%, empathy follows with 8.8%, and motivation and social skills each have a 6.9% share.

• **Exploring the impact of emotional intelligence on work performance**

The following variables are considered:

- The independent variable (factor) is high emotional intelligence degree (EI high) of managers, measured as a percentage;
- the dependent variable (result) is the work performance (WP), measured as a percentage.

The study looks for a linear correlation pattern of the type:

$$\hat{WP} (\%) = b_0 + b_1 EI_{high} (\%) \quad (1)$$

The following results were obtained:

Table 4. ANOVA test to determine correlational dependence

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1728,927	1	1728,927	25,124	,000
Residual	3371,940	49	68,815		
Total	5100,867	50			

The independent variable is High emotional intelligence degree (%).

The ANOVA test shows that between EI high (%) и WP (%) **there is a linear dependence, as Sig. $F = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$.**

Table 5. Coefficients of the model

Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
High emotional intelligence degree (%)	,438	,087	,582	5,012	,000
(Constant)	48,229	5,378		8,968	,000

Table 5 shows that the constant $b_0 = 48.229$. This coefficient is statistically significant because its significance level is $Sig. t = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. The regression coefficient $b_1 = 0.438$ is also statistically significant because its level of significance $Sig. t = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$.

Therefore, the linear correlation model obtained looks as below:

$$\hat{WP} (\%) = 48.229 + 0.438 EI_{high} (\%) \quad (2)$$

The regression coefficient $b_1 = 0.438$ is positive, which means that there is a direct dependence between the two dimensions observed, i.e. with an increase in the emotional intelligence **EI high of managers (%) their work performance coefficient (%) also grows**. The regression coefficient represents the rate of growth, i.e. 1% growth of **EI high (%)**, **results in a 0.438% increase of the work performance (WP) coefficient**.

Table 6. Coefficients R, R² and Std. Error of the Estimate

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
,582	,339	,325	8,295

The independent variable is High emotional intelligence degree (%).

through analysis and assessment of behavioral performance indicators.

- The independent variable (factor) is high emotional intelligence degree (EI high) of managers, measured as a percentage;

- The dependent variables (result) are **behavioral skills (BS)** of managers, measured as a percentage.

The study looks for a linear correlation pattern of the type:

$$\hat{BS} (\%) = b_0 + b_1 EI_{high} (\%) \tag{3}$$

The following variables are considered:

The correlation coefficient which expresses the strength of correlation dependence is $R = 0.582 < 0.7$. It shows that there is a medium correlation between EI high (%) и WP (%).

The coefficient of determination is $R^2 = 0.339 = 33.9\%$. It shows that 33.9% of the variation in **work performance is determined by the variation of the EI high (%) factor.**

The Standard error of the estimate is $Std. Error of the Estimate = 8.295 (\%)$.

The linear dependency $WP (\%) = 48.229 + 0.438EI_{high} (\%)$ shows that **the increase in emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for better performance, which confirms Hypothesis 1.**

Hypothesis 1.

• **Study of the impact of managers' emotional intelligence on their performance**

Table 7. ANOVA test to determine correlation dependence

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2750,753	1	2750,753	25,205	,000
Residual	5347,667	49	109,136		
Total	8098,420	50			

The independent variable is High emotional intelligence degree (%).

The ANOVA test shows that there is a linear correlation between EI high (%) and BS (%), as *Sig. $F = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$* .

Table 8. Coefficients of the model

Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
High emotional intelligence degree (%)	,552	,110	,583	5,020	,000
(Constant)	37,985	6,773		5,608	,000

Table 8 shows that the constant $b_0 = 37.985$. This coefficient is statistically significant because its significance level is *Sig. $t = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$* . The regression coefficient $b_1 = 0.552$ is also statistically significant because its level of significance is *Sig. $t = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$* .

Therefore, the linear correlation model obtained looks as below:

$$\hat{BS} (\%) = 37.985 + 0.552EI_{high} (\%) \tag{4}$$

The regression coefficient $b_1 = 0.552$ 438 is positive, which means that there is a direct dependence between the two values observed, i.e. with an increase in the emotional intelligence **EI high of managers (%) their behavioral skills coefficient (%) also grows.** The regression coefficient represents the rate of growth, i.e. a 1% growth of **EI high (%)**, **results in a 0.552% increase of the behavioral skills (BS) coefficient.**

Table 9. Coefficients R , R^2 and Std. Error of the Estimate

Model Summary			
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
,583	,340	,326	10,447
The independent variable is High emotional intelligence degree (%).			

The correlation coefficient is $R = 0.583 < 0.7$. It shows that there is a medium correlation between EI high (%) and BS (%).

The coefficient of determination is $R^2 = 0.340 = 34.0\%$. It shows that 34.0% of the variation in **behavioral skills is determined by the variation of the EI high (%) factor.**

The Standard error of the model is Std. Error of the Estimate = 10.447 (%).

The linear dependency $BS (\%) = 37.985 + 0.552EI_{high} (\%)$ shows that **the increase in emotional intelligence has a strongly positive influence on behavioral performance indicators for managers, which confirms Hypothesis 2.**

CONCLUSION

This empirical study, presented in a synthesized manner, is based on the author's self-developed research methodology and is part of a richer study. It gives grounds to draw the following conclusions:

- The study has focused on managers with a high level of emotional intelligence. The specifically chosen five components of emotional intelligence and their contribution to the overall assessment of emotional intelligence enable us to realistically highlight good and bad practices based on the following approach: high scores on the individual components of emotional intelligence are good practices; low scores represent bad practices. The approach taken has utility and can be used in two aspects: it targets the necessary improvements in the low-rated components of the emotional intelligence of the managers and it opens up opportunities to transfer and use experience in validating capabilities and skills within the range of emotional intelligence where there are highly rated components.

- The two scales of the indicators for the performance of the managers, respectively the Professional Skills scale and the Behavior Skills scale, and the established average values of the two scales show a higher average for the first scale. Higher rated hard indicators from

the first scale are to a certain extent attributable to their assigned higher significance ratios given by those surveyed. A second important argument in this regard is related to the well-established belief in managers that their performance depends (and is assessed) mainly based on hard and formalized indicators, and to a lesser extent on indicators that characterize their behavior in the work activity.

- The specific values of the indicators on the two scales as ordered in descending order reveal the good and bad practices in the managers' performance. For example, for the "Professional Skills" scale, the average score for the "Professional Knowledge and Skill" (10.35) is highest, while the "Employee Motivation" indicator is the lowest (7.69). For the "Behavioral Skills" scale, the average score for the "Communication" indicator (10.75) is highest, and Leadership Potential (6.16) and "Building Relationships" (6.24) are at the bottom. The low values of these indicators in the two scales represent real problem areas in the work performance of the surveyed managers. Opportunities to raise the low values of these indicators should be sought and utilized on the basis of managers' self-assessment of weaknesses and shortcomings in each indicator.

- This article establishes the influence of the emotional intelligence of managers on their performance in two main directions. In the first direction, a multifactorial linear regression model is used to determine the influence of the EI of managers on their overall performance. There is evidence which leads to the exclusion from the study of managers exhibiting two of the factor variables: Medium EI and Low EI, from there, the study is based on a one-factor linear correlation model, covering only the influence of High EI of senior executives on their performance. The results obtained confirm the existence of a direct dependence between the emotional intelligence of managers and their performance, i.e. with the increase of the emotional intelligence of the leaders, the coefficient of their performance rises – there

are improvements in the work performance of the managers that reflect the strength of the above influence.

- The study of the influence of high EI on the "Behavioral Skills" scale (or behavioral performance indicators) confirms the direct relationship between the two indicators; it provides evidence that the coefficient of behavioral skills (indicators) grows steadily with the increase in the EI (%) of managers. In this respect, the influence of emotional intelligence is most significant when applied to the behavioral indicators in the assessment of their performance.

- The statistical tools used are instrumental for the results obtained on the influence of managers' emotional intelligence on their performance. The above-mentioned tools are indispensable for application in the practice of Bulgarian organizations in order to discern the above explained influence and reveal problem areas in order to overcome them. It can be utilized (including through training) by managers and specialists in human resources management in organizations.

- The topic presented in the article on the impact of emotional intelligence on work performance, for understandable reasons, is directed at key figures and individuals from business organizations such as managers in the leadership hierarchy. At the same time, future research can be targeted at:

- representatives of the other two categories of staff in business organizations: specialists and workers;

- key representatives of the specialist category, i.e. specialist employees with a significant contribution to the organization or expected significant contribution;

- enriching research strands where it would be possible to investigate and establish the influence of emotional intelligence on work performance, etc.

In summary, it can be concluded that the studied issues and the achieved results are a step in enriching the field of human resource management in business organizations and in particular in its psychological direction. This scientific methodological and practical enrichment has a clear economic dimension in the quality of leadership in business organizations and its impact on the achieved organizational goals.

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