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"The quality of public administration in relation to the leadership efficiency: impact on satisfaction and efficiency of Human Resources."

А В Т О Р Е Ф Е Р А Т

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The dissertation was discussed and proposed for defense, under the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, by the Department of Public Administration at Sofia University "St. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI", Sofia.

The author is a doctoral student in a free form of education at the Department of Public Administration at Sofia University "St. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI".

The dissertation consists of 203 standard pages (along with the list of abbreviations, bibliography, and appendices). Structurally, it consists of a) an introduction, b) an exposition in seven chapters, and c) conclusions (applications of the dissertation and proposals are included). The literature used is a total of 314 sources. In support of the analysis, 12 tables, and 20 figures are given.

The internal defense of the dissertation has taken place on the 22nd of June 2020 at 15:00 via WebEx. The committee members of the Department of Public Administration of Sofia University "St. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI" and the author participated in the internal defense of the dissertation.

The materials on the defense are available to those interested in the Department of Doctoral Studies and Academic Development at Sofia University "St. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI", Sofia.

ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on the public healthcare sector. No one should forget that public hospitals are organizations offering a social commodity that of health, which holds a primary position on the scale of human values-needs. The effectiveness and efficiency of any Healthcare system depend on effective leadership which involves continuous improvement of organizational procedures in order to meet the needs of the workforce, the patients, and of the whole society for proper healthcare services.

The object of the current thesis is the effective leadership and its influence on the efficiency of human resources and the subject is management's and organizational procedures' measurement as a prerequisite for the workforce's and customers' satisfaction. The purpose of this research is to examine whether the organization (a public hospital) is taking action so that management can collect the necessary data and foster a culture of accountability and continuous learning with regard to the provision of healthcare services. Furthermore, another goal is to examine whether, through the dissemination of such a culture, leaders can develop a philosophy and mentality that promotes the continuous improvement of procedures. Management should have the ability to overcome and act outside existing prevalent cultural boundaries, with the aim to create a new innovative context of continuous improvement and staff participation in decision-making.

The theoretical framework supports that organizations represent much more than just a group of individuals; they encompass people, systems, procedures, and past experience. Leaders should be in a position to take advantage of the knowledge and skills of individuals. Organizations depend on the development and training of their workforce, which have a major effect on the leader's planning and strategy execution. Organizational culture is a vital variable of management, which fundamentally affects the organization's effectiveness and efficiency, the satisfaction of employees and patients, as well as the quality of the provided services. It is also important the workforce be able to identify the processes that are directly related to achieving the strategic goals of the organization and to customer satisfaction in particular.

The department heads, the assessment group, the nursing staff and the patients of the Serres General Hospital comprise the research field. The primary data were collected by the use of a questionnaire based on a six point-Likert scale, which allows econometric techniques. The current research investigates the relationships between the assessment of organizational procedures with the nursing staff's perceptions and with the patients' satisfaction. Additionally, it is examined whether the satisfaction of nursing staff can predict patient satisfaction.

An effective leader must set realistic and achievable goals and use stakeholders' surveys in order to shape appropriate strategies. Management planning in healthcare services is absolutely essential, and the process of planning depends on the identification of the organizational goals in relation to the procedures implemented, the motivation of the healthcare staff, and the measurement for the rational allocation of all resources.

Title: ***"The quality of public administration in relation to the leadership efficiency: impact on satisfaction and efficiency of Human Resources."***

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTATION WORK

1. Relevance of the research

There is a need for a transition in public administration, including local government, from a bureaucratic system to a modern management model aimed at effectiveness and efficiency, with the ultimate goal of providing integrated quality services to citizens and enhancing citizen participation in decision-making processes (Manitakis, 2014)[1].

Nowadays, public organisations have come to realize that in order to ensure their success, it does no suffice for their top executives to have effective management skills, they also need to be leaders with an aptitude for strategic planning. Leaders are people who, by undertaking specific actions, manage to persuade others to "follow them willingly and voluntarily". Regardless of the organisation or hierarchical level they are at, good leaders are able to attain remarkable results assisted by their contented associates.

Organisations represent much more than just a group of individuals; they encompass people, systems, procedures and past experience. A person's growth and development is a very basic factor in this process, but it does not mark the end of the process. Leaders should be in a position to take advantage of the knowledge and skills of individuals. They do not realise that organisations are unavoidably led to a standstill when they do not pay heed to the development and training of their workforce, and that this can have a detrimental effect on the organisation

The most important factor for the success of any organisation is its workforce. The more enjoyable and interesting the work the employees undertake, and the more they take part in decision-making, the more decisively they will contribute to the organisation's efficient operation (Leopold, 2002)[2].

As taught by Aristotle: "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work".

Processes must be in place for the selection of leaders demonstrating substantial and formal qualifications, with knowledge of the sensitive public healthcare sector, scientific views that comply with a systemic approach, self-awareness and emotional intelligence, who will be able to shape and bring to view new leaders from the mixed groups or quality circles operating at the hospital. Leaders are required, both in a political and an operational-hospital context, who will cooperate reflectively and function as analytical realists, able to take effective action vis-à-vis the numerous and varied competing behaviours they need to assess through a meritocratic lens. A change in organizational culture is needed.

Generally speaking, we could say that the definition of organizational culture includes the employees and senior officials, products, procedures and values established by an organization's leadership. It also includes individual experiences, general expectations, as well as the internal philosophy and principles that keep the workforce united and are reflected in the external image, interactions and future plans of the organization (Belias & Koustelios, 2014)[3].

Hospitals are complex, fast-growing organizations. Most employees have to put their knowledge to good use on a daily basis so as to carry out their work through the application of procedures, based on their own background, perspective, educational

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[1] Manitakis, A. (2014): The administrative reform takes time. Speech at the Greek National Center for Public Administration and Government.

[2] Leopold, J.(2002). *Human Resources in Organizations*. Prentice Hall, London.

[3] Belias, D. & Koustelios, A. (2014). The influence of demographic characteristics of Greek bank employees on their perceptions of organization culture. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 4(1), 81-100.

needs and certification procedures (Drucker, 2006)[4]. The procedures resulting from learning and knowledge pertaining to the health sector can be beneficial for patients, workers, operators and public health in general, e.g. in controlling infectious diseases in hospitals (Chen et al., 2013)[5]. Leaders should promote a culture that encourages problem-solving (Sánchez-Polo & Cegarra- Navarro, 2008)[6] and a spirit of lifelong learning (Chang et al, 2009)[7]. Organizations should also pay attention to an assessment of workflow before proceeding with any interventions (Ash et al., 2012)[8].

The role of human resources is particularly vital for the smooth operation of healthcare bodies. The selection, training and suitable use of the staff is a precondition for the correct organisation and functioning of such institutions.

Compared to other institutions, the organisation and functioning of hospitals has certain particularities (Stathis, 2000)[9]. Consequently, the proper management of human resources is a fundamental issue for improving quality (Sun et al., 2000)[10].

Oikonomidou & Konstantinidis (2019)[11] emphasize that when the organization creates frameworks to allow people to assume greater responsibility and to take more initiative, people contribute to the development of the workplace.

The differences in organisations belonging to the healthcare sector compared to other organisations do not only relate to the level of management but also extend to its organisation. As is the case with other institutions, it is important to connect the individual departments within the healthcare sector in order to improve performance. In fact, the integration of departments in the field of healthcare aims at direct, coordinated and swift action being taken that is decisive for the lives of patients (Kostagiolas, 2008)[12]. Developed skills are required, which means that training should be provided that aims at refining skills and is based on the principles and techniques of quality improvement (Kyriopoulos et al., 2003)[13].

The differentiation caused by specialisation in healthcare professions and the varying levels of decision-making and initiatives, makes the management of such organisations very demanding (Sigalas, 1999)[14].

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[4] Drucker, P. (2006). *On executive leadership and effectiveness*. In F. Hesselbein & M. Goldsmith (Eds.), *Leader to leader institute. The leader of the future 2: Visions, strategies, and practices for the new era* (p. 3–27). Jossey -Bass.

[5] Chen KY, Yang CM, Lien CH, Chiou HY, Lin MR, Chang HR, et al. Burnout, job satisfaction, and medical malpractice among physicians. International journal of medical sciences. 2013;10(11):1471-8.

[6] Sanchez-Polo, MT. & Cegarra-Navarro, JG. (2008). Implementing knowledge management practices in hospital-in-the-home units. J Nurs Care Qual 23(1), 18-22.

[7] Chang, YY. Hsu, PF., Li MH. & Chang, CC. (2009). Performance evaluation of knowledge management among hospital employees. International Journal Health Care Qual Assure 24(5), 348-365.

[8] Ash et al., (2012). Recommended practices for computerized clinical decision support and knowledge management in community settings: A qualitative study. BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making 12(1):6.

[9] Stathis, G. (2000). *Dialogues on hospital management*. Minutes of the 1st Pan-Hellenic Scientific Conference on Hospital Management, Athens: Mediforce.

[10] Sun, H., Hui, I.K., Tam A.Y.K & Frick, J. (2000). *Employee involvement and quality*, The TQM Magazine, 14(2): 110-119.

[11] Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2020). The effect of administrative actions on the satisfaction of Primary and Secondary public school principals. Paper presented at 2nd International Congress on Management of Educational Units 29 November-1 December 2019, Thessaloniki, Greece. (Confirmation of publication at the *Journal of Contemporary Education Theory & Research -JCETR*).

[12] Kostagiolas, P. et al. (2008). Improving Quality in Health Services, Athens: Papasotiriou.

[13] Kyriopoulos et al., (2003).Quality in Health Services, Athens: Themeli Publications.

[14] Sigalas, I. (1999). *Organizations and Health Services "in Fair et al. (editing), Basic Principles of Health Service Management*, Hellenic Open University, Athens, 1999, Vol. 2, pp. 57-112.

Human resource planning in healthcare services is absolutely essential, since the operation of the system depends on the competence, quality and rational allocation of the healthcare staff.

According to the above, it is the duty of any leader to ensure that the relevant conditions exist that can lead to a continuous improvement of procedures. Such conditions can be created by incorporating a suitable strategy of planning, implementation, systematic control, process redesign and simplification that will turn them into the driving force for the success of the public organization.

2. Object and subject of the research

The object of the current thesis is the effective leadership and its influence on the efficiency of human resources and the subject is management's and organizational procedures' measurement as a prerequisite for the workforce's and customers' satisfaction. The results through staff's and customers' perceptions measurement provide valuable information that concerns the relationships between the above concepts and also can be used as feedback and data for the top management's planning. Management should have the ability to overcome and act outside existing prevalent cultural boundaries, with the aim to create a new innovative context of continuous improvement of strategy and staff participation in decision-making.

3. Research Thesis

The present study focuses on the public healthcare sector. No one should forget that public hospitals are organisations offering a social commodity that of health, which holds a primary position on the scale of human values-needs. The effectiveness and efficiency of any Healthcare system depend on effective leadership which involves continuous improvement of organizational procedures in order to meet the needs of the workforce, the patients, and of the whole society for proper healthcare services.

Its focus is the study of management issues and organizational procedures, and their monitoring and assessment by the leadership. Its aim is to contribute to the continuous improvement of management actions and policies by the leader, and also provide a system of continuous feedback and revision of organizational procedures under a quality cycle process.

The current research investigates the relationships between the assessment of organizational procedures with the nursing staff's perceptions and with the patients' satisfaction. Additionally, it is examined whether the satisfaction of nursing staff can predict patient satisfaction.

4. Purpose and Tasks of the dissertation

The purpose of this study is to confirm that when effective management and innovative organizational procedures are aligned with a public organization's strategy, these affect the employees' perceptions of the organization and have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

In addition the purpose of the empirical research is to examine whether the organization (a public hospital) is taking action in order to improve management and organizational procedures in a continuous course for sustainable development. This research investigates the perceptions of the heads of departments as well as the rest staff's and customers' satisfaction, so that management collect the necessary data in order to fix the problematic areas and foster a culture of accountability and continuous learning with regard to the provision of healthcare services. The empirical study depicts whether reforms are being introduced into the workplace of the public

hospital, with the aim to establish a strategic management system that will connect the object and content of work with the organizational structure of the organization. It also examines whether a common goal of these reforms is to respond to the demand for simplification of procedures, transparency, meritocratic selection, and hierarchical promotion, development of knowledge and skills (organizational learning) based on specific functions and duties. Finally, the study explores whether there is a tendency to shape and serve civil society-customers according to the terms of an ethical, conscious and conscientious public service, but also in terms of an ethical, conscious and conscientious leadership.

In the sector of public hospitals, procedures pertaining to nursing services are managed by the majority of the workforce and their results have a direct impact on the main customers of the hospital (patients). Thus, the present study chose to examine nursing services due to their major impact both on the internal and external hospital environment and also due to the close contact of the nursing staff with the external customers (patients). Moreover, nursing procedures are directly related to the actions of the medical staff and overlap with several administrative functions (e.g. with the supplies and HR departments), while the immediate and end users of their output are the patients and society.

5. The objectives of the research

The current research's aim is to explore the relationships between management and organizational procedures' operation with employees' and patients' satisfaction. Data analysis also examines the weaknesses of management and organizational procedures' operation for the continuous improvement of the nursing services. Furthermore, leaders, as well as the department managers, can be aware and manage any problematic area by creating a mid-term improvement program, supporting the strategic management in prioritizing actions and outlining of the action plan, based on primary research data. As far as organizational procedures in the field of hospital public health are concerned, those of the nursing services contribute effectively to achieving the mission of the hospital's strategy. Identifying, designing, and creating innovative procedures contribute to the improvement of organizational learning on an on-going basis and, support the strategic and operational goals of the organization.

A main research's goal is to examine whether through the dissemination of such a culture, leaders can develop a philosophy and mentality that promotes the continuous improvement of procedures. Management should have the ability to overcome and act outside existing prevalent cultural boundaries, with the aim to create a new innovative context of continuous improvement and staff participation in decision-making. Furthermore, another goal is to examine whether through the dissemination of such a culture, leaders can develop a philosophy and mentality that promotes the continuous improvement of procedures among hospital management staff, and recognizes the fundamental public value of their work. In this way, the provided services will cater to the needs of their users, within a framework of trust, legality, quality, safety, personal utility, and satisfaction. It is therefore obvious that the eradication of rigid hospital administration practices may only begin with a change of behaviour and attitude towards services of public value.

6. Research field

The field of research was the General Hospital of Serres, which provides its services to one of the largest prefectures in Greece and is the only hospital in the area. The city of Serres ranks in the list of the top ten cities in Greece with regard to its population.

The hospital opened in 2003 and is one of the newest hospitals in the country. An important reason for choosing this particular hospital for the research is the fact that it is classed as a large-scale institution with a relevant large-scale operational and organizational structure. Its overall capacity is set at four hundred and fifty (450) beds, which is why it can cater for a relatively high number of patients. The General Hospital of Serres includes all departments of medicine and care and provides extensive and varied services. All nursing wings are also in operation.

A major reason for choosing this particular hospital for the research is the fact that a study of a large number of clinics and laboratories in a large general hospital, such as the hospital of Serres, imparts validity to the research. There is an isomorphic situation characterizing the relevant procedures and practices, as well as the attitudes and behaviour of staff, when such a large number of clinics are involved.

Special mention should be given to the fact that the hospital has been in operation for under fifteen years in a new ultramodern building, with comfortable facilities and new equipment. Therefore, it is not possible to make observations, comments or to interpret facts by pointing at problems pertaining to its technological and other facilities, i.e. to the hard elements of the system, but only to its soft elements, such as human resources and leadership, administrative procedures and the overall cultural level of the particular area covered by the hospital, and of Greek society.

Furthermore, there is no issue concerning a lack of adequate technical means and resources, which is a problem that usually affects all small hospitals and could potentially shift our attention from administrative and organizational problems to problems of a technical nature, linked to infrastructure and resources

Another principal reason for which this particular hospital was selected for the research is the fact that this organization introduced the Common Assessment Framework in 2018 as a quality management tool in order to improve performance. The organizations that embark on CAF implementation strive for an optimum performance and the employees themselves, through their active participation, wish to introduce a climate of excellency within the organization. All hospital employees, particularly those who were members of the assessment groups, were familiarized with the concepts studied in this research. The reason being that they had been trained in the relevant administrative terminology and assessment methods according to the principles of quality and could therefore respond to questions and issues pertaining to our research with greater accuracy and reliability. Moreover, after receiving training and comprehending that this assessment promotes their personal advancement and that of the organization in which they work, the staff involved were interested in actively taking part in research that studied their level of satisfaction and evaluated the management of the organization they work for. They perceived that the primary goal of such studies is for management to record and evaluate their content in order to further improve the hospital's efficiency and effectiveness.

Finally, it was also feasible to conduct the research due to the overall structure of the hospital. The environment of Serres hospital helped to address the research questions with regard to measuring the satisfaction of patients, of the nursing staff and of managers so that this particular pioneering research could be completed, which focused both on the procedures and on the organizational learning that takes place at the hospital on a daily basis, and also on the level of satisfaction of the hospital's customers/patients.

7. Research methodology

In this particular research, the case study research strategy was adopted. The main reason for choosing this strategy is the researcher's intention to examine the composite variables under study in depth and display the relations that connect them to the answers collected via questionnaires and interviews from a variety of population groups, namely: a) the director of the Hospital, b) the quality department, c) the heads of nursing services, d) the employees (nursing staff) and e) patients admitted during a particular period in 2018-2019 to the Public General Hospital of Serres, an organisation active in the prefecture of Serres in Northern Greece.

The research methodology aimed to give the opportunity to all members of the nursing personnel (the heads of department and existing staff) to express their views and satisfaction regarding the role of management and leadership, with regard to the procedures followed and the organizational culture adopted in the workplace. In addition, a patient opinion survey was conducted which focused on the provided nursing services. It is important, apart from researching internal customers, to also examine the views of external customers. The study of the views of all above-mentioned research target groups created the context for a number of comparisons that led us to identify specific relationships and reliable conclusions.

The setting for this study consists of the distribution of three questionnaires. The heads of the nursing departments' heads and the members of the assessment group answered the first questionnaire and their perceptions on management issues and the continuous revision of procedures were depicted. All the relevant research information has been collected with the support of the hospital's top management.

Moreover, the study relied on primary data obtained through the second questionnaire by the nursing staff of Serres Hospital. Finally, the study relied on data from its key customers, which are the patients as main users of the nursing services.

According to the methodological approach, the regression was estimated using the ordinary least squares method (OLS) and the OLOGIT analysis. The results concerning the independent and dependent variables are also analyzed descriptively per question and are classified at a low to medium level for answers 0-2 of the rating scale and at a medium to a high level for answers 3-5 of the rating scale.

The descriptive analysis investigates the level of organizational procedures improvement and efficient management actions application with regard to the nursing service and highlights the best practices according to the heads of departments and the assessment group perceptions, as well as employees' and customers' satisfaction. In addition, the descriptive analysis shows the lowest ratings and the problematic fields which are in need of improvement actions. The content of the research is the effect of the continuous improvement of procedures and of best management practices on the nursing staff's and customers' satisfaction. These results can be used as valuable information and data in the disposal of leaders for the execution of effective leadership.

8. Research hypotheses

The empirical research sheds light through its hypotheses on the actions of top management and the following aspects of a public hospital operation:

a. whether there are opportunities for undertaking initiatives, and innovative decisions that focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of employees, and b. whether procedures can be used to develop commitment and loyalty to the organisation, as well as an emphasis on innovation and competitiveness, thus offering motivation to employees. Thus, **Hypothesis 1** is that the continuous improvement of the

organizational procedures significantly affects the positive perceptions of the nursing staff about the hospital.

b. whether there is support for participative decision-making including customers and how it benefits staff's satisfaction and the improvement of the provided services. Thus, **Hypothesis 2** is that procedures for citizen/customer-oriented services significantly affect the satisfaction of the nursing staff concerning the management of the hospital.

c. whether management coordinates and organises the daily operations and procedures of the hospital, while simultaneously taking decisions that contribute to its competitiveness, focus on the results of operations, promote innovation and undertake risk within the context of participative management. Thus, **Hypothesis 3** is that management planning is a key leadership factor which significantly affects the positive perceptions of the nursing staff about the hospital

d. whether the skills' development is organized and aligned with the organization's strategy. Thus, **Hypothesis 4** is that skills' development significantly affects the satisfaction of the nursing staff concerning the management of the hospital.

e. whether the management's policy is characterized by a team spirit, consensus, participation, innovation, personal initiative, freedom, originality with a focus on the production and achievement of goals, and respect for the personal value of each member of the hospital. Thus, **Hypothesis 5** is that organizational culture of learning significantly affects the positive perceptions of the nursing staff about the hospital.

f. whether employees' satisfaction provokes customers' satisfaction. Thus, **Hypothesis 6** examines if there is a significant relationship between the satisfaction of the nursing staff and patients' satisfaction.

9. Results of the research

The approval of the research hypotheses involved four levels and four distinct studies were carried out for their control. The contributions of the research are revealed in the results of these separate studies and are listed below

The first study confirmed that the identification, design and management of innovative organizational procedures on an ongoing basis, which involves all stakeholders, has a greater impact on satisfaction than other factors. The second factor in line that affects satisfaction is skills' development.

The second focuses on the descriptive study of the assessors' perceptions concerning organizational procedures and management actions, in combination with the satisfaction of the nursing staff, as internal customers and with the patients' satisfaction, as external customers.

The second study revealed that patients were extremely satisfied, on the contrary to the nursing staff's satisfaction and the heads of departments' perceptions about the procedures and management actions, which are recorded in low to medium level. Probably, the nursing services and procedures cannot be assessed, in-depth, by patients, due to the fact that they do not possess knowledge relevant to the field of nursing and thus they can assess nothing else but the nursing staff's kindness and behavior.

3. The third study examines the effect of the organizational procedures and management actions (in five groups), on each satisfaction parameter. The third study revealed that each group affects significantly specific satisfaction parameters. This information could be used as valuable data for leadership in order to proceed to the next step of strategy, i.e. planning.

4. The fourth study examines the effect of the satisfaction of nursing staff on patients' satisfaction.

The fourth study revealed that patients' survey in the specific field is not significantly be affected by employees' satisfaction survey, and thus, patients are not the appropriate stakeholders in order to give reliable information and feedback about nursing services.

10. The importance of the dissertation

The main originality of the dissertation lies in the parallel study of the main stakeholders' perceptions and satisfaction in order to find the problematic areas that need improvement actions and highlight the best management practices implemented, as well as to depict a reliable and impartial image of the public organization.

The findings of the dissertation can help hospital leaders. In this way, the organizational - administrative and financial - management function will be improved and the efficiency and effectiveness of the hospital, the satisfaction of the employees and the patients as well as the quality the provided services will be positively affected. Hence, important is its contribution to the enrichment of the international literature with the development and control of the structural model that supports the positive impact of management actions' measurement as well as employees' surveys implementation for the promotion of an organizational culture of change and innovation.

11. Restrictive study conditions

The fact that this empirical research is limited to the specific field of the nursing care provided in public hospitals and to a specific geographical area calls for its implementation in other fields of public healthcare, in other public institutions, and also in other geographical parts of the country. Additionally, it is suggested that the structural model of the first and third study should be expanded and enriched with other variables with regard to indicators for improving organizational procedures.

Finally, in the case of public hospitals, it would be interesting to obtain an assessment of the nursing services by other relevant stakeholders except for the patients. Further research could examine the views of other parties/target groups, such as the medical staff or the supplies department staff, since they are able to assess the provided nursing services in-depth, due to their knowledge of the subject.

II. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

Structurally, the dissertation consists of contributions (2 pages), an abstract (1 page), content catalog (1 page), an introduction (7 pages), a presentation presented in seven chapters (159 pages), a conclusion (10 pages), a list of references (19 pages) and annexes – questionnaires (4 pages).

The structure of the dissertation is listed as follows:

Contents
List of abbreviations used
List of figures
List of tables and graphics

Chapter 1: LEADERSHIP

In accordance with the belief of Ancient Greeks and Romans, leaders are born. This theory has lost its importance with the rise of the influence of psychology. The "charisma" only without the development of leadership skills does not yield the best results. Conversely, the "lesser gift", with systematic training and skill development, can be greatly improved. This argument is justified by the contents of the leadership's styles. Improving leadership means developing self-awareness, dissemination of information and transparency.

The leadership should have the ability to overcome and act outside existing prevalent cultural boundaries, with the aim to create a new innovative context of continuous improvement and staff participation in decision-making. An effective leader must set realistic and achievable goals and use stakeholders' surveys in order to shape appropriate strategies. Management planning in healthcare services is absolutely essential, and the process of planning depends on the identification of the organizational goals in relation to the procedures implemented, the motivation of the healthcare staff, and the measurement for the rational allocation of all resources. Leaders are people who, by undertaking specific actions, manage to persuade others to "follow them willingly and voluntarily". Regardless of the organisation or hierarchical level they are at, good leaders are able to attain remarkable results assisted by their contented associates.

The concept of effective leadership includes a complex and dynamic function. This means that in order to be understood in its entirety, it is necessary to see it as a process based on pillars, such as the personality of the leader (or collective leadership), the profile of the group of followers/ members/subordinates, the organizational culture, the value system, the source of power, the strengths and weaknesses of the organization as well as the opportunities and threats of the external environment.

In the past decades, management experts have undergone a revolution in how they define leadership and what their attitudes are toward it. They have gone from a very classical autocratic approach to a very creative, participative approach. However,

different styles were needed for different situations and each leader needed to know when to exhibit a particular approach (Kendra Cherry, 2012)[15].

The implementation of the strategic management is a powerful tool in the hands of leaders and helps them to make rational decisions in conditions of uncertainty.

For Johnston, R, Clark, R. & Shulver, M. (2012)[16] the phases of the strategy are:

1. analysis configuration and strategy choice
2. application - implementation strategy
3. evaluation strategy

Strategic Planning is defined as a dynamic and complex process through which long-term viable choices of an organization are developed and evaluated, taking into account the critical external and internal factors that affect the ongoing competitiveness, efficiency, performance and ultimately the success of the organization. Strategic planning must aim at creating an effective state that will contribute to sustainable economic and social development.

The main difference between leadership and management is that leaders have people that follow them, while managers have people who simply work for them. Leadership is about getting people to comprehend and believe in the vision you set for the company and to work with you on achieving your goals, while management is more about administering and making sure the day-to-day activities are happening as they should.

> ❖ LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT INSPIRING AND MANAGEMENT IS ABOUT PLANNING

The main difference between public and private management is that the main goal of private management is to maximize business profit while the main goal in public management is to maximize the public interest (Wisniewski, 2001)[17]. Thus, public services are funded from the state budget, i.e. through taxation or through contributions from employees and employers, while private businesses rely on customers (Wisniewski & Donelly, 1996)[18]. In addition, competition does not have the same importance for the private and public sectors. In the private sector, the unsatisfied customer of a business is highly likely to address to a competitor, which cannot happen in many public services because of their monopoly character (Black et al., 2001)[19].

Chapter 2: THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING & PROCEDURES

The explosive pace of changes in the international environment is forcing organizations to constantly seek ways to improve their quality. It is necessary to adopt strategies in order to improve administrative procedures, so that the output quality of one unit is a prerequisite for ensuring the output quality of the next.

Continuous improvement through lifelong learning is essential not only so as to correct specific mistakes, but also continuously gain new knowledge, skills and competencies, and proceed with the implementation of new management policies, by

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[15] Kendra Cherry (2012) Leadership Styles, http://psychology.about.com/od/leadership/.

[16] Johnston, R, Clark, R. & Shulver, M. (2012). *Service operations management.* Essex: Pearson Education.

[17] Wisniewski, M. (2001). Using SERVQUAL to assess customer satisfaction with public sector services. *Managing Service Quality*, Vol.11, n.6, 380-388.

[18] Wisniewski, M. & Donnelly, M. (1996). Measuring service quality in the public sector: the potential for SERVQUAL. Total Quality Management, Vol.7, n.4, 357-365.

[19] Black, B, et al. (2001). Service quality performance measurement in public/private sectors. *Managing Auditing Journal*, v.16/7, 400-405.

enhancing the learning capacity of organizations. All researchers come to the common conclusion that there is a strong link between organizational learning and performance, quality of processes and effectiveness of services.

A process is defined as a series/sequence of actions that take place in organizations and businesses aiming to convert inputs (by adding value) into outputs/results, i.e. products and services addressed to their existing and/or potential clients (Evans & Lindsay, 2007)[20]. Each process has objectives that have to be achieved, inputs and outputs, and actions that contribute more or less, directly or indirectly, to adding value (Zairi, 1997)[21]. Improving the performance and quality of processes should be a priority of the organization's leadership (Zavlanos, 2006)[22]. Simple, understandable, applicable and user-friendly procedures must be the philosophy of the public sector.

Redesigning administrative procedures for the public sector, while taking into account Davenport's principles, involves the evolution of the architectural structure of public bodies that will link the strategy of an organization to its administrative processes in order to fulfill its goals and visions.

For Papadimitropoulos (2008)[23], the simplification of procedures is "the continuous and systematic revision of the legislative and regulatory frameworks and of the administrative practices that define administrative procedures in order for them to be compatible with the principles of effective legislation and the efficient – effective operation of public services based on serving the citizens concerned". The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2009)[24] defines the simplification of procedures as a limitation of bureaucracy. The simplification of procedures has an impact on citizens, businesses and the daily work of public sector employees. Simplification strategies, are complex plans that have long-term goals and a comprehensive government policy. Simplification strategies usually include five (5) successive phases:

First phase: Programming, Phase 2: Consultation, Phase 3: Planning, Phase 4: Application, Phase 5: Monitoring and evaluation

Chapter 3: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN GREEK PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

There is a need for a transition in public administration, including local government, from a bureaucratic system to a modern management model aimed at effectiveness and efficiency, with the ultimate goal of providing integrated quality services to citizens and enhancing citizen participation in decision-making processes (Manitakis, 2014)[25]. The Public Organizations should focus on the needs and expectations of users, promoting the research of their views and their active participation in the development of their services (Oikonomidou & Konstantinidis, 2020)[26].

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It is necessary for reforms to "provide a specific outlook" surrounding their role- to welcome human expectations, adapt them to the needs of the organization and direct them to the realization of its goals. There can be no reform if the latter does not aim at re-shaping modes of action, employee roles and motivation"(Tsivakou, 1999)[27].

The most important factor for the success of any organisation is its workforce. The more enjoyable and interesting the work the employees undertake, and the more they take part in decision-making, the more decisively they will contribute to the organisation's efficient operation (Leopold, 2002)[28].

As taught by Aristotle: "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work".

According Katsimardos & Bouas (2015)[29] reforming Human Resource Management (HRM) policy is probably the most important challenge for Greek public administration. The severe ongoing crisis and the need to sharply reduce public expenditure created a suffocating framework for HRM policy. Undoubtedly, fiscal consolidation is a sine qua non condition to overcome the crisis and restore stability. In this context, the exercise of restrictive policies concerning public sectors' human capital seems inevitable. At the same time, reducing salaries makes the public sector unattractive, thus unable both to maintain qualified executives, as well as attract new skillful and highly qualified personnel. Moreover, wider depreciation of public employment, inevitably conducts to demoralization, loss of productivity and rise of corruption. The overall capability of public administration to plan and implement public policies is seriously undermined.

Having in mind these trends, risks and challenges, it becomes apparent, that Greece is trying to implement reforms, which either remain incomplete, delayed or even aborted due to fiscal constraints and cost-cutting priorities. Reforms are underway concerning HRM data management as well. A quarterly recruitment planning is now in place, while entries, exits and transfers of employees among public entities are monitored on a monthly basis. Public employees' census data base is now interconnected with the agency which is in charge for employees' compensation. This is regarded as a first step towards an attempt to align HRM policy with budget processes and financial management but further interventions are needed. Workforce planning can't be limited simply in recording quantitative data but must be enhanced with the capacity to collect qualitative data concerning competency needs, thus helping managers to recruit and allocate human resources in the most efficient way.

Focusing on agility, HRM strategy should be structured in a way that supports and promotes a management that is dynamic, adaptable, extrovert and oriented towards quality of work and service. The transition to a new model of human resources' organization and management presupposes the exploitation of modern techniques and methods, adapted to the special characteristics of Greek administration and administrative culture. The whole set of human resources' management tools, such as the system of hiring, remuneration, promotion, valuation, mobility and training should be restructured so as to correspond to the flexibility and adaptability needs, without ignoring the budgetary constraints.

The current Greek HRM policy fails to counterbalance the negative impacts of cost-cutting measures on administrative capacity. Structural reforms are actually

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undermined, postponed or delayed, as fiscal adjustment gains full priority and absorb all attention, efforts and resources. Thus, it is not a surprise that the productivity and efficiency of Greek public organizations remains low, while fiscal measures go on reducing administration resources, competencies and morale.

There are a large number of best practices that have shown to lead to superior performance for the organization. The 7 Human Resource best practices presented below have been proposed by Pfeffer (1998)[30]:
These best practices are:
1. Providing security to employees
2. Selective hiring: Hiring the right people
3. Self-managed and effective teams
4. Fair and performance-based compensation
5. Training in relevant skills
6. Creating a flat and egalitarian organization
7. Making information easily accessible to those who need it

Human resource planning in healthcare services is absolutely essential, since the operation of the system depends on the competence, quality and rational allocation of the healthcare staff. The role of human resources is particularly vital for the smooth operation of healthcare bodies. The selection, training and suitable use of the staff is a precondition for the correct organisation and functioning of such institutions. Certain characteristics of the healthcare sector include the need for continuous development, the high level of labour distribution, its complexity and its multi-level structure. The workforce groups that comprise this structure, i.e. doctors, nurses, administrative staff, technicians etc., all have a different educational, economic and social background. The differentiation caused by specialisation in healthcare professions and the varying levels of decision-making and initiatives, makes the management of such organisations very demanding (Sigalas, 1999)[31]. Nevertheless, due to the great shortage of staff (especially in nursing staff), its unequal distribution all over the country and the underfunding of the system, it is necessary to promote a plan for the reform and rationalisation of the healthcare system. Professional burnout and the prevalent harsh conditions could lead to a downgrading of healthcare services and the occurrence of more frequent accidents in the workplace. A redesign of the country's healthcare chart, by connecting supply and demand for healthcare professionals, adapting the educational system to modern requirements, securing the necessary human resources through recruitment, supporting the role of lifelong learning, as well as through the ethical recognition of healthcare professionals, all form the basis for the restructuring of the healthcare system in Greece.

Only if the best practices that we have in HR are aligned with what the organization is striving for can we create an HR function that adds value and that truly supports the organization.

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Chapter 4: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN GREEK PUBLIC HOSPITALS

The public hospital sector has been the target of major restructuring and cost-saving efforts as part of the EAP, particularly because of persistent deficits and inefficient management. Structural reforms got under way in 2013 to reduce the number of beds, clinics and specialist units but have had limited implementation. There has been more success with reforms to improve transparency, reduce the cost of supplies and change the hospital payment system. These have helped hospitals to rationalize expenditures but have not necessarily translated into a fully efficient resource allocation (Kaitelidou et al., 2016)[32].

The problem is even more pressing with regard to nursing personnel. There have always been shortages of nurses due to low numbers and this is particularly the case for public facilities. The challenge of staffing public facilities adequately is exacerbated by the hiring freeze on all public sector personnel, including health professionals, that has been in place since 2010. In particular, adequate staffing levels will need to be secured in the implementation of the new primary care system.

Hospitals are complex fast-growing organizations (Drucker, 2006)[33]. Strategic management is required in hospitals in order to: develop economic efficiency (better management of resources), develop an appropriate mission and culture (clarification of objectives and vision), improve programming and organizational planning (information strategy provision to senior management), increase competitiveness (the ability to develop innovative actions), configure improved communication channels, provide incentives for human resources and others.

When health professionals become aware, through knowledge management, of the existence of the organization's available knowledge capital, they will be able to make more credible and informed decisions. Furthermore, even when the dissemination of knowledge involves cases of medical errors, it can contribute to the process of learning by identifying the omissions made in earlier cases of patient treatment, thus leading to better healthcare. Knowledge Management is a philosophy of exploiting the power of knowledge in today's age of competition and lack of resources. In the administration of healthcare units in particular, the implementation of knowledge management strategies can help reduce mistakes, which is extremely important for improving the quality of the healthcare services provided (Karamitri, 2016)[34].

Chapter 5: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

In this particular research, the case study research strategy was adopted. The main reason for choosing this strategy is the researcher's intention to examine the composite variables under study in depth and display the relations that connect them to the answers collected via questionnaires and interviews from a variety of population groups, namely: a) the director of the Hospital, b) the quality department,

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c) the heads of nursing services, d) the employees (nursing staff) and e) patients admitted during a particular period in 2018-2019 to the Public General Hospital of Serres, an organisation active in the prefecture of Serres in Northern Greece.

Based on the principle of '**triangulation'**, the data was collected from three different sources (questionnaires, personal interviews and official documents) with the aim to extract the most reliable data possible. It was also considered necessary to adopt this strategy due to the increased degree of 'circularity' and 'reflexivity' of the research process in relation to the research questions/hypotheses and the collection/interpretation of the data. This observation is further reinforced both by the conceptual confusion observed among the variables under study and the existence of indistinct findings that concern their interrelation, as well as by the lack of similar studies pertaining to Greek public administration.

The **purpose** of this study is to confirm that when effective management and innovative organizational procedures are aligned with a public organization's strategy, these affect the employees' perceptions of the organization and have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Its focus is the study of management issues and organizational procedures, and their monitoring and assessment by the leadership. Its aim is to contribute to the continuous improvement of management actions and policies by the leader, and also provide a system of continuous feedback and revision of organizational procedures under a quality cycle process.

The department heads, the assessment group, the nursing staff and the patients of the Serres General Hospital comprise the **research field**. An important reason for choosing this particular hospital for the research is the fact that it is classed as a large-scale institution with a relevant large-scale operational and organizational structure.

The primary data were collected by the use of a questionnaire **based on a six point-Likert scale**, which allows econometric techniques.

The current research investigates the relationships between the assessment of organizational procedures with the nursing staff's perceptions and with the patients' satisfaction. Additionally, it is examined whether the satisfaction of nursing staff can predict patient satisfaction.

The setting for this study consists of the distribution of three questionnaires. The heads of the nursing departments' heads and the members of the assessment group answered the first questionnaire and their perceptions on management issues and the continuous revision of procedures were depicted. All the relevant research information has been collected with the support of the hospital's top management.

Moreover, the study relied on primary data obtained through the second questionnaire by the nursing staff of Serres Hospital. Finally, the study relied on data from its key customers, which are the patients as main users of the nursing services.

According to the methodological approach, the regression was estimated using the ordinary **least squares method (OLS)** and the **OLOGIT analysis**. The results concerning the independent and dependent variables **are also analyzed descriptively** per question and are classified at a low to medium level for answers 0-2 of the rating scale and at a medium to a high level for answers 3-5 of the rating scale.

The descriptive analysis investigates the level of organizational procedures improvement and efficient management actions application with regard to the nursing service and highlights the best practices according to the heads of departments and the assessment group perceptions, as well as employees' and customers' satisfaction. In

addition, the descriptive analysis shows the lowest ratings and the problematic fields which are in need of improvement actions. The content of the research is the effect of the continuous improvement of procedures and of best management practices on the nursing staff's and customers' satisfaction. These results can be used as valuable information and data in the disposal of leaders for the execution of effective leadership.

The current research's aim is to explore the relationships between management and organizational procedures' operation with employees' and patients' satisfaction. Data analysis also examines the weaknesses of management and organizational procedures' operation for the continuous improvement of the nursing services. Furthermore, leaders, as well as the department managers, can be aware and manage any problematic area by creating a mid-term improvement program, supporting the strategic management in prioritizing actions and outlining of the action plan, based on primary research data. As far as organizational procedures in the field of hospital public health are concerned, those of the nursing services contribute effectively to achieving the mission of the hospital's strategy. Identifying, designing, and creating innovative procedures contribute to the improvement of organizational learning on an on-going basis and, support the strategic and operational goals of the organization.

The empirical research sheds light through its hypotheses on the actions of top management and **the following aspects of a public hospital operation**:

a. whether there are opportunities for undertaking initiatives, and innovative decisions that focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of employees, and b. whether procedures can be used to develop commitment and loyalty to the organisation, as well as an emphasis on innovation and competitiveness, thus offering motivation to employees. Thus, **Hypothesis 1** is that the continuous improvement of the organizational procedures significantly affects the positive perceptions of the nursing staff about the hospital.

b. whether there is support for participative decision-making including customers and how it benefits staff's satisfaction and the improvement of the provided services. Thus, **Hypothesis 2** is that procedures for citizen/customer-oriented services significantly affect the satisfaction of the nursing staff concerning the management of the hospital.

c. whether management coordinates and organises the daily operations and procedures of the hospital, while simultaneously taking decisions that contribute to its competitiveness, focus on the results of operations, promote innovation and undertake risk within the context of participative management. Thus, **Hypothesis 3** is that management planning is a key leadership factor which significantly affects the positive perceptions of the nursing staff about the hospital

d. whether the skills' development is organized and aligned with the organization's strategy. Thus, **Hypothesis 4** is that skills' development significantly affects the satisfaction of the nursing staff concerning the management of the hospital.

e. whether the management's policy is characterized by a team spirit, consensus, participation, innovation, personal initiative, freedom, originality with a focus on the production and achievement of goals, and respect for the personal value of each member of the hospital. Thus, **Hypothesis 5** is that organizational culture of learning significantly affects the positive perceptions of the nursing staff about the hospital.

f. whether employees' satisfaction provokes customers' satisfaction. Thus, **Hypothesis 6** examines if there is a significant relationship between the satisfaction of the nursing staff and patients' satisfaction.

Chapter 6: ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The descriptive analysis investigates the level of organizational procedures improvement and efficient management actions application with regard to the nursing service and highlights the best practices according to the heads of departments and the assessment group perceptions, as well as employees' and customers' satisfaction. In addition, the descriptive analysis shows the lowest ratings and the problematic fields which are in need of improvement actions. The content of the research is the effect of the continuous improvement of procedures and of best management practices on the nursing staff's and customers' satisfaction. These results can be used as valuable information and data in the disposal of leaders for the execution of effective leadership.

Descriptive analysis depicted the best practices, management areas to be improved, and the aspects of employee and patient satisfaction as follows:

Those working in the nursing department point out that care should be taken for a more precise distribution of duties among the hospital workforce. In this way, the lack of equality, injustice and favouritism will be eliminated and replaced by equality, fairness, participation and identification with the organization.

The nursing staff observed that the development and management of IT systems by the hospital needs to be upgraded in order to fully support the daily operation of the hospital and ensure the dissemination of knowledge within the organization. Making use of the knowledge, experience and creativity of the staff is an incentive that can greatly enhance performance.

It was also noted that the employees' satisfaction would increase by improving their knowledge and skills through further, organized training. Although this may be a costly and organizationally complex process, it is nevertheless an investment both for the employees and for the future of the organization. Relevant and adequate training at all stages and levels can help to improve and simplify both administrative and nursing procedures.

It was revealed that the factors that affect the research results to a medium degree with regard to the satisfaction of the nursing staff are the wishes of all staff for a better communication of the hospital's operational goals, for more dialogue and contact within the workplace, for an enhanced effort to promote the administrative modernization of the hospital and for care in addressing employees in accordance with the principle of equality.

There is also care for employees with special needs. The management pays particular attention to the personal problems of the employees and understands their family commitments, while the overtime which is required on special occasions is not compulsory, and depends on the agreement and willingness of the employees. Efforts are also made to effectively manage other issues, such as comfort, hygiene and safety at the workplace.

The approval of the research hypotheses involved four levels and four distinct studies were carried out for their control. The contributions of the research are revealed in the results of these separate studies and are listed below:

The first study confirmed that the identification, design and management of innovative organizational procedures on an ongoing basis, which involves all stakeholders, has a greater impact on satisfaction than other factors. The second factor in line that affects satisfaction is skills' development.

The second study revealed that patients were extremely satisfied, on the contrary to the nursing staff's satisfaction and the heads of departments' perceptions about the procedures and management actions, which are recorded in low to medium level. Probably, the nursing services and procedures cannot be assessed, in-depth, by patients, due to the fact that they do not possess knowledge relevant to the field of nursing and thus they can assess nothing else but the nursing staff's kindness and behavior.

3. The third study examines the effect of the organizational procedures and management actions (in five groups), on each satisfaction parameter. The third study revealed that each group affects significantly specific satisfaction parameters. This information could be used as valuable data for leadership in order to proceed to the next step of strategy, i.e. planning.

4. The fourth study revealed that patients' survey in the specific field is not significantly be affected by employees' satisfaction survey, and thus, patients are not the appropriate stakeholders in order to give reliable information and feedback about nursing services.

Table : OLS regression for each group. Dependent variable: mean of questions on the perception measurement of the nursing staff concerning the management of the hospital.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
mean_IVa	0.523*** (0.0891)				
mean_IVb		0.406*** (0.0971)			
mean_IVc			0.382*** (0.0806)		
mean_IVd				0.509*** (0.0828)	
mean_IVe					0.395*** (0.0843)
Constant	0.916*** (0.181)	1.097*** (0.202)	1.242*** (0.147)	0.927*** (0.158)	1.145*** (0.168)
Observations	103	103	103	103	103
R-squared	0.395	0.252	0.222	0.311	0.248

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$.

The **independent variables** are the mean value of the questions for each group, e.g. mean_IVa is derived from the mean value of the 1st group questions. So the independent variables are mean_IVa, mean_IVb, mean_IVc, mean_IVd and mean_IVe.

Chapter 7: CONCLUSIONS

Research results indicate that the main tool for the survival and development of Greek public hospitals is the adoption of the principles of participatory management and the promotion of an organizational culture of learning that will lead to a continuous restructuring - simplification of procedures, with the final aim of customer/citizen and employee satisfaction.

As a general conclusion, it is noted that hospital leadership should foster collaboration between the managers of the various healthcare departments, and further cooperation between managers, professors, consultants, trainers, internal and external associates, the local authorities etc. This should be done in order to enhance the organizational learning of the staff and pave the way for the next generation through training introduced in the early stages of a person's professional life and applied throughout, when following a career in the healthcare sector. Finally, the management of nursing staff requires systematic study and methodical steps in order to arrive at the desired outcome. Those who are involved in management should have knowledge of strategic planning issues and always set priorities. After all, learning, as a phenomenon incorporated in the operational culture of an organization, can positively affect the four processes or outcomes of learning: knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation and organizational memory. Furthermore, most members of top management and the nursing staff believe that the development and management of IT systems by the hospital is a major competitive advantage that can greatly enhance the daily operation of the hospital and the dissemination of knowledge within the organization. Making use of the knowledge, expertise and inventiveness of the staff is a key incentive for performance improvement. The staff will subsequently be able to more readily accept and adapt to any changes in procedures, and even be keen to undertake responsibilities and initiatives, thus contributing to the implementation of the operational plans of leadership and to the success of its strategy with an impact on the local community and the external customers (patients).

IV. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF DISSERTATION CONTRIBUTIONS

The main originality of the dissertation lies in the parallel study of the main stakeholders' perceptions and satisfaction in order to find the problematic areas that need improvement actions and highlight the best management practices implemented, as well as to depict a reliable and impartial image of the public organization. The findings of the dissertation can help hospital leaders. In this way, the organizational - administrative and financial - management function will be improved and the efficiency and effectiveness of the hospital, the satisfaction of the employees and the patients as well as the quality the provided services will be positively affected. Hence, important is its contribution to the enrichment of the international literature with the development and control of the structural model that supports the positive impact of management actions' measurement as well as employees' surveys implementation for the promotion of an organizational culture of change and innovation.

The findings of this dissertation to assist hospital management. In this way, the organizational-administrative and financial-management functions of the hospital will be improved, and its efficiency and effectiveness, the satisfaction of the employees and patients, as well as the quality of the provided services will be positively affected.

In this way, it can substantially contribute to the enrichment of the international literature through the development and control of a structural model that supports the positive impact of measuring management actions and implementing employee surveys on the promotion of an organizational culture of change and innovation.

The fact that **this empirical research is limited** to the specific field of the nursing care provided in public hospitals and to a specific geographical area calls for its implementation in other fields of public healthcare, in other public institutions, and also in other geographical parts of the country. Additionally, it is suggested that the structural model of the first and third study should be expanded and enriched with other variables with regard to indicators for improving organizational procedures.

Finally, in the case of public hospitals, it would be interesting to obtain an assessment of the nursing services by other relevant stakeholders except for the patients. **Further research** could examine the views of other parties/target groups, such as the medical staff or the supplies department staff, since they are able to assess the provided nursing services in-depth, due to their knowledge of the subject.

Furthermore, the expectations of customers/citizens could be examined, through an analysis of the needs of the social environment and a focus on the basic requirements of citizens from the relevant services. This could form the field of research for a future study.

Powerful leaders should set realistic and attainable goals and formulate appropriate strategies in order to achieve them. Management planning in healthcare services is absolutely essential, and the process of planning depends on the identification of organizational goals in relation to the implemented procedures, the motivation of healthcare staff and measurements for the rational allocation of all resources.

V. CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS & SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION

Conference Presentations:

Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2019). Three papers presented at the 3rd International Public Administration Conference, organized by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". 30 Years of Public Governance Political Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe: The Next Horizon. - Sofia, Bulgaria, April 11 - 12, 2019.

Oikonomidou M. & Konstantinidis I. (2019). *The effect of administrative actions on the satisfaction of Primary and Secondary public school principals*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Congress on Management of Educational Units."Educationcivilization-innovation at crossroads-The way ahead" (2nd ICOMEU 2019, 29 November-1 December 2019, Thessaloniki, Greece) (e-book). ISBN: 978-61880440-8-1

Scientific Publications:

Konstantinidis I. & Oikonomidou M. (2019). Evaluating HRM practices in public administration: the 1st CAF f implementation in public hospital of Serres, in the region of north Greece. *Journal of Public Policy and Good Governance*, Volume 10/Number 3/September 2019

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