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Natalia KYRYLKO, PhD in economic sciences, senior Lecturer,
Department of Management and Smart Innovations
Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design
Kyiv, Ukraine

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP DURING THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

Adaptive leadership during the Russian-Ukrainian war has become particularly relevant, as the military context requires rapid response to dynamic changes, uncertainty, and emergencies.

War as an emergency requires an immediate transformation of management approaches. Adaptive leadership is a key model that allows leaders to operate effectively in conditions of uncertainty, rapid change, and high risk. In this context, adaptive leadership is viewed as the ability of leaders – in both the public and civil sectors – to mobilize resources, transform organizations, maintain morale, and ensure societal resilience.

The main aspects of adaptive leadership in wartime are highlighted:

– *First*, rapid adaptation to change, where Ukrainian leaders, from political leaders to local community leaders, are forced to make decisions in the face of a constantly changing security situation. Examples include rapid restructuring of logistics chains, reorganization of humanitarian aid, or rapid response to threats of shelling.

– *Secondly*, decentralization and trust in local leaders. The war stimulated the delegation of authority to the local level. City mayors, heads of OVAs, and volunteer initiatives often make critical decisions without direct coordination from above, demonstrating adaptability and initiative.

– *Third*, leadership based on emotional intelligence. That is, adaptive leaders communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, support hope and psychological resilience. Volodymyr Zelenskyy has become an example of such leadership at the international level, combining determination with humanity.

– *Fourth*, the willingness to change strategies. The conditions of war often make previous plans unsuitable. Adaptive leaders are ready to abandon established approaches and are determined to develop new strategies - both in the military and in the economic or information sectors.

– *Fifth*, the integration of civil society. The active participation of volunteers, public organizations, and businesses in solving critical war tasks indicates the interaction between formal and informal leaders as one of the key features of adaptive leadership.

It is worth noting that adaptive leadership as a concept was proposed by Ronald Heifetz and consists of the ability to lead people through complex changes that do not have simple solutions [1]. This is especially important during war, since most of the challenges are adaptive, not technical.

He sees adaptive leadership as a management model that involves the ability to mobilize resources in the face of uncertainty, abandon outdated paradigms, and collectively address new challenges.

In the Ukrainian context, this is reflected in the ability of leaders to change priorities and structures in response to security threats, damaged infrastructure, and humanitarian crises.

Also, in modern conditions, decentralized decision-making is taking place. The war contributed to strengthening the role of local authorities, which became key actors in resolving

security, social and economic issues. Mayors, heads of local self-government bodies, community leaders took on great responsibility, demonstrating adaptability through flexibility, efficiency and innovation in responding to local crises.

Ukrainian leaders are increasingly relying on ethical principles such as honesty, transparency, accountability, and service to the community. This is especially important in the context of social mobilization, when the leader is not just an administrator, but a moral guide and bearer of a national idea.

It is worth noting that effective leaders in Ukraine have adapted their communication to the conditions of war, using social media, video messages, and open reports to maintain trust, explain government actions, and motivate the population. An example is the regular addresses of the President of Ukraine, which have become a tool for national unity.

Civil society integration is taking place. The adaptability of leaders is manifested in the ability to cooperate with volunteer and community organizations, which allows for effective mobilization of resources, coordination of assistance, and formation of joint recovery initiatives.

In various sectors of the economy, namely in education, medicine, and the army, adaptive leadership is manifested through flexible planning, digitalization, and new models of collaboration (e.g., mobile medical teams, online education, civil-military cooperation, etc.).

Thus, the adaptation of leaders in Ukraine in the context of war is not just a reaction to challenges, but an active rethinking of the role of a leader who must act quickly, morally responsibly, and innovatively.

This is a multidimensional process that requires new management and communication skills, the ability to think strategically, and the maintenance of social capital. Adaptive leadership in wartime not only allows for effective crisis management, but also becomes the basis for the formation of a new leadership culture in post-war society. Its development is a strategic resource for national resilience and recovery.

References

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