**BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES**

Doctoral School of Business Administration I



**DOCTORAL THESIS**

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Title of the doctoral thesis:

**THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP ON ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY**

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# ABSTRACT

This doctoral thesis analyzes the evolution of the concept of leadership, identifying the main leadership styles in relation with the impact on organizational sustainability. The study also highlights the link between the leader and the integration of ESG principles (environment, social, governance) emphasizing the evolutionary principle of their characteristics and the evolution towards a model of the ethical leader, in response to the needs of pursuing sustainability in organizations.

In the first part of the research, an analytical research of the specialized literature is carried out, regarding leadership styles and the transition from authoritarian and transactional models, to more flexible, inclusive and transformation-oriented leadership styles. The study emphasizes the fact that, in the current context, the authentic, ethical and sustainable leader is becoming increasingly relevant. In this sense, the characteristics, advantages and challenges of each model were analyzed, relating them to the expectations and the implementation of sustainability. The research concludes that leadership is a living concept, in continuous transformation and a universally effective leadership style does not exist. Success, moreover, consists in studying the particularities of the organization, its strategic objectives and the context in which it operates and in adapting the style according to them.

Another major result of the research is the highlighting of ethical leadership as a model of the honest and sustainable future, capable of responding to the growing needs of the organizational and global environment. The study emphasizes that modern leaders must navigate complex ethical challenges, promote transparency and adopt decisions based on values ​​and social responsibility.

The case study analyzes a real model of implementation of ESG factors (environmental, social and governance), which through the assumed targets and existing intermediate results, offers a practical example, for organizations to analyze and apply in making their own decisions in the field of sustainability.

Last but not least, the quantitative research conducted based on the questionnaire completed by 249 respondents analyzes the connection between leaders and employees' attitudes towards this concept, concluding that leaders are the ones who perceive a greater impact of leadership on sustainability and have a higher commitment to sustainability, their authenticity being decisive in achieving a positive influence among employees.

**Keywords:** sustainability, ESG, leadership, leader, management, CSR