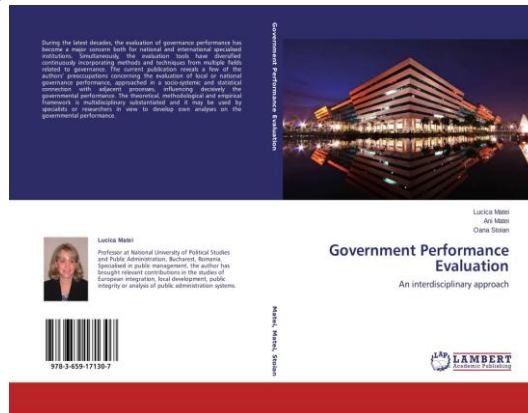


BOOK REVIEW

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Lucica Matei, Ani Matei, Oana Stoian. (2014). *Government Performance Evaluation: An interdisciplinary approach*, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 160 pages, ISBN-10: 3659171301, ISBN-13: 978-3659171307.



The book “Government Performance Evaluation: An interdisciplinary approach”, written by professors, specialists in administrative sciences, is dedicated to students and practitioners in the public sector, as well as to readers interested by this topic, wishing to know and study the instruments and modalities for evaluating the public sector performance.

Lucica Matei (1956-2014) was Professor and Jean Monnet Chair Holder at the Faculty of Public Administration of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, prestigious professor researcher, appreciated in the national and international academia due to her outstanding outcomes. Her expertise was acknowledged in public management and public services, European administration, local development, public and nonprofit marketing. She published as author or editor over 30 books at Romanian or foreign publishing houses. “Government Performance Evaluation: An interdisciplinary approach” represents her last book. At the same time, she was author or co-author of over 100 articles focused on her areas of expertise. She was member of several editorial teams of prestigious foreign journals, as well as coordinator of thematic series: “Science of Administration and Public Management” (Economica Publishing House, Bucharest), “Jean Monnet Handbooks” (Economica Publishing House, Bucharest), “Administrative Studies and Public Management” (Shaker Verlag,

Germania). Her outstanding career of professor and researcher represents an example for the young generation.

The book is focused on empirical research and it reviews a few modalities for government performance attempting to integrate finalities of daily socio-economic processes within a coherent ensemble, and to evaluate the possible impact on government performance.

After the introductive and explicative part, the structure of the book follows the process of performance evaluation in the public sector and it presents both a theoretical framework for performance in the public sector as well as original models for its evaluation. The authors refer to the models of reducing the administrative burden on administrative efficiency, such as using PFIC as European model for internal control, Europeanization instrument or instrument of New Public Management and using BARS (Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale) in view to evaluate the performance of local government.

The methods are approached interdisciplinary and may be developed and applied by the public managers interested in general in performance of public sector and in particular in performance of public organizations.

The authors achieve an excellent connection concerning the evaluation of government performance in particular and evaluation of public sector performance in general.

The book is structured in five chapters, the first presenting the theoretical and conceptual framework of governance, government performance, public service performance, reducing the administrative expenditures and evaluation of public sector performance.

The second chapter analyses and describes the instruments for performance evaluation (Common Assessment Framework, Sustaining European governance - financial management instruments and Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale) in the public sector.

The third chapter presents two empirical studies: 1. an empirical support in view to analyze government performance in the EU, a comparative study in the EU Member States and accession countries and 2. an empirical study focused on a sample of 11 states in South-Eastern Europe, situated on different integration levels into the EU, both studies concerning public integrity, economic freedom and government performance. The vision and approach are apparently restrictive, using GDP per capita as single indicator. The complexity of analysis overcomes this issue, elements of government performance being revealed by the concepts of public integrity or economic freedom.

The fourth chapter presents the methodological research framework, specific to behavioral sciences, adequate to the requirements of the current research (Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale - BARS). The stages of research in BARS refer to triangulation method, grounded theory – the qualitative perspective and the quantitative approach.

The last chapter presents a case study in Romania, precisely in Cluj Napoca, based on *de facto* situation of the city, continuing with the description of empirical proofs and data analysis. This chapter highlights the role of administrative and political structure

in the evaluation of local government performance. The authors have analyzed the situation on reporting performance to local councilors in Cluj-Napoca.

The book represents a relevant study for the evaluation of public sector performance in general and evaluation of local government performance in particular in Cluj-Napoca.

The book holds significant attributes of originality and it is useful as it reveals new models and it turns into account the theoretical framework for systemic substantiation.

The models presented are successful ones, especially within the context that there is no single model to comply with all real situations.

Beyond the pragmatically approach of performance evaluation in the public sector, the book has other strengths: broad bibliography based on studies and field literature, accuracy, several practical examples, a series of tables, figures and charts in view to emphasize the most important practical elements. The authors emphasize that the study of the current paper should be accompanied by profound studying and understanding fundamental publications, which have been each time highlighted in quotations or references.

Concluding, the book provides innovative, interdisciplinary ideas in light to understand the processes specific for performance evaluation in the public sector.