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MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE MODEL OF SELF – GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Key words: competence, competence model, competence management, manager, managerial effectiveness, self – governmental organization.

Abstract

Effective management of organizations is determined by many factors. One of the most important factors are managerial competence since the optimal usage of organizations' resources, picking up occasions and possibilities existing in the environment depends on managers.

The objective of the following research is the empirical verification of the competences theoretical model along with defining managerial competence model of self – governmental organization of the future. The realization of the above objective was based on theoretical considerations, self – valuation of commune officers from the north – east part of Poland and investigations based on empirical data gathered during the research process.

MODEL KOMPETENCJI MENEDŻERÓW ORGANIZACJI SAMORZĄDOWYCH

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Słowa kluczowe: kompetencje, model kompetencji, zarządzanie kompetencjami, menedżer, efektywność menedżerska, organizacja samorządowa.

Abstrakt

Efektywne zarządzanie organizacjami jest zdeterminowane wieloma czynnikami. Kompetencje menedżerów zalicza się do jednych z ważniejszych czynników, albowiem to od kadry zarządzającej zależy optymalne wykorzystywanie zasobów organizacyjnych oraz wychwytywanie okazji i możliwości tkwiących w otoczeniu.

Celem pracy jest empiryczna weryfikacja teoretycznego modelu kompetencji oraz zdefiniowanie modelu kompetencji menedżera samorządowej organizacji przyszłości. Realizację celu oparto na teoretycznych rozważaniach, samoocenie osób pełniących funkcje wójtów gmin wiejskich zlokalizowanych w północno-wschodnim rejonie Polski oraz dociekaniach na podstawie materiału empirycznego zgromadzonego w postępowaniu badawczym.

Introduction

Effective management of organizations depends on many factors which are connected with their interior and the constantly changing surrounding. The internal factors are connected with material, financial, informational and human resources of the organization. Although the condition and quality of all those resources are very important the literature on the subject emphasizes the role of human resources in the modern world. The first reason for this is the optimal utilization of the rest of resources and the second – the effective adaptation to the environment (i.e. its objectives, tasks, structures,...) in which the organization exists and acts in a benefit of. The most favourable activities for the internal resources utilization and the ability of opportunity and chances notification in the environment are mostly determined by quantitative and qualitative conditions of all employees, especially management staff.

Nowadays the issue of managers competence is a contemporary theme and a lot of researchers are interested in it. There was a lot of books written about the qualification of engineers even before the term 'competence' was introduced because it was them who mostly took managerial posts.

The literature on the subject introduces the model sets of competence of managers working in organizations turned towards profits. But there is definitely no scientific discernment of management staff profiles directing public organizations.

The subject of the investigation was a competence model of the self – governmental managers at the level of local administration of commune council. In this research the competence model has been adapted as a standard competence set contributing to the efficient activity of a manager. With reference to operation activities the model includes competence currently demanded in a given post but the strategic expression gives a hypothetical competence set in perspective. In this investigation the current competence model is presented as a profile and the expected competence model as a register. In this work a manager of a public organization is a person managing a local government unit. The subject of the research were chief officers of the rural communes.

The limitation of the extent of research to one type of public organization has been intentional and resulted from the following circumstances:

- managing a self governmental organizations belongs to comparatively new trends in the Polish science of management
- political, economical, legal, social and cultural transformation that took place in Poland after the year 1989 have mostly affected the self-governmental organizations that are expected to manage public resources in an efficient way and to solve many problems of a local commune in an efficacious way

- the accession of Poland to the European structures has forced the abidance of the standards valid in countries of the European Union (EU). Activities according to these standards can be secured only by managers with different competences than so far.

The new challenges mentioned above and the insufficiencies in the activities of the self – governmental organizations have been concentrated on the competence of persons managing these organizations. The complexity of those problems and the small scientific recognition until now has based the treatment of these matters as the object of investigation. The additional base of the necessity of the scientific treatment of the accepted object of research resulted also from after – mentioned factors:

- the literature of the objective of research is mostly related to theoretical models of managerial competence especially with the competence of managers managing business organizations,
- the models of competence elaborated in other countries are very cognitively valuable on one hand but on the other should not be transferred directly to the Polish reality. This prudence results from the different political, economical, social and cultural conditions and 'the young age' of Polish self governmental organization,
- in an editorial market the insufficiency of scientific descriptions related to the competences of managers managing self – governmental organizations can be noticed. It means mainly editions based on the empiric material. Researches presented are a partial supplement of this gap.

The circumstances mentioned above as well as the conviction about the occurrence of the social and economic demand for the applicable results are a main inspiration for these studies.

Assumptions of the research

The empirical verification of the theoretical model of competence and the elaboration of the model of competence of a person managing a self – governmental organization of the future were the main objectives of this researches. According to this main objective the subject of the verification was mainly the concordance of the theoretical model with opinions about the self – governmental managers competences expressed by themselves. The realization of this objective was based on theoretic considerations, the self – valuation of people acting as chief officers of the rural communes located in the north – east part of Poland and investigations based on the empirical materials collected during the investigation process.

The problem contained in the following question: which of the competence useful in a operational and strategic measure creates a key – model of self – governmental manager competence and what does it mean for the efficiency of the organization? The investigation guiding to the answer to this question was related with the solution of following detailed problems:

- 1. what components make up the competence of a manager?
- 2. what is the hierarchy of importance of each competence in a self valuation of the self governmental managers?
- 3. in what degree the key competence of the self governmental managers are in line with the competence of business managers?
- 4. in which area of chief officers' competence can the biggest malfunctions at present be identified?
- 5. which management styles and which attitude towards inspection dominate among self governmental managers?
- 6. what is the degree of the deprivation of needs related with work?
- 7. what type of company culture do self governmental managers prefer?
- 8. which competences should build up the key model of competence of a person managing a self governmental organization in the future?
- 9. in what way ought the management education be changed?

The following research hypothesis was formulated in context of the accepted objectives and research problems: the competence potential of self – governmental managers of organizations is lowered mainly by the insufficient knowledge and skills in the discipline of management. In consequences the organization is less efficient because these people manifested the tendency to fall into rut and bureaucratic activities. In this hypothesis the importance of knowledge comparing with other components of competence was mainly accentuated, assuming that the bigger knowledge resources the easier formation of practical skills, attitudes and behaviour of the employees desirable in a work process. The determinants of rut and bureaucratic activities were: the hypothesis of needs related with work and their deprivation degree, the style of management, the inclination to internal audit and cultural standards.

The research was realized during 2000–2003. In the first phase the method of literature studies was used. This approach permitted to establish fundaments for considerations that leaded to the project of theoretic model of self – governmental manager competence. Finding a point of reference, a point that would be the start to forming a new model was an investigative difficulty. As it was mentioned before, the literature of the subject is unusually poor especially with reference to managers of self – governmental organizations. That is why the models of managers managing business organizations presented in the Polish and foreign literature were adopted as a starting point.

Two methods were used in pilot and fundamental studies: diagnostic pool and self-valuation. The researches were carried out by means of questionnaire method and conversation with respondents. The processing of competences making up the model was carried out according to the assumption of the ABC method based on the Pareto's law (20/80). The results obtained made the elaboration of a hierarchical model differentiating each

competences, for holding a post of a chief officer, according to the criterion of their importance (in the self – valuation of respondents) possible. The description of the competence profile for self – governmental managers was enriched by the results of additional diagnoses related with a style of management, the inclination to internal audit, the needs' depravation and the company culture. These diagnoses were executed using standard instruments applied by L. ZBIEGEŃ-MACIAG (1999, p. 162-169) and S. TOKARSKI (1997, p. 64-71) and home grown questionnaires.

The questionnaires were distributed between 149 chief officers of rural communes located in the Podlaskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie provinces. The current professional status was the criterion used during the selection of respondents process. All of the 122 returned questionnaires were taken into consideration.

Findings

The list of competences - theoretical model

The theoretic model – a list of 51 competences (tab. 1) was based on:

- responsibilities of commune councils,
- duties and competences of managers of commune councils,
- contents included in the project related with The British Know How Foundation Programme of Supporting Local Autonomies (Bartkowska-Nowak, Nowak 2000);
- key model of competences of efficient business managers (on the basis of literature)
- a profile of a Polish manager of the 90 ties (on the basis of literature);
- key competences of American self governmental managers (on the basis of literature)
- key competences of self governmental managers in chosen European countries (on the basis of literature)
- experiences of self governmental administration in the USA and in European countries related with methods improving the efficiency (on the basis of literature)
- rules and decisions of The European Code of Good Administration and the European Card of The Territorial Autonomy.

The register of competences verified in piloting studies (tab. 2) are divided into three sub – sets i.e.: professional (managerial knowledge and skills assuring an efficient and successful organization management), social (knowledge about attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups and influent qualities for actions according to the objectives of the organization and its members) and business (enterprising skills guiding into profitable activities) competence.

Table 1
The theoretical model of competence of self – administrational managers

| | The name of competence | |
|--|--|--|
| - comprehensive thinking - management knowledge - acts and regulations knowledge, also concerning the EU - absorbing and understanding ability - commune problems knowledge - strategic thinking - high education - ability to create flexible company structures - analytical thinking - attitude towards self and co - workers development - fluent English - good mental and physical condition - planning and work organizing skills - decision making ability - tasks delegation skills | - attitude towards risk - business units budgeting abilities - flexible approach to changes - care of work quality - seniority in administration - ability to demand from subordinates - initiative - creativity - managerial experience - attitude towards results - leader skills - ability to diagnose organizational problems - ability to estimate the efficiency of the company - need for achievements - negotiation skills - sense of responsibility - ability to use information technology | - creative attitude towards work - supporting to act - integrity and honesty - self - assurance - personal culture - showing confidence towards subordinates - team working ability - ability to solve conflicts - work and personal life integrity - ability to mould company culture - stress resistance - social maturity (sensitivity and responsibility) - ability to convince - self - esteem - understanding human behavior - keeping one's emotion under control - communicativeness - ambition - tactful behavior |

Source: Proper study.

The division of competence into different subsets is always conventional. It was introduced in this scientific description with an objective to study the internal structure of competence. The following circumstances are the reasons of this division:

- commune councils through their own organization units realize services and economic activities. A commune officer has to supervise and control if those units are functioning correctly. Therefore he should have professional knowledge and skills in a field of economic organization management,
- communes organizations realize mostly social functions. Therefore the
 portfolio of competence should include competence manifesting sensibility
 in the area of local community needs and public responsibility for the
 taken decisions.
- self governmental units are organizations not profit oriented. None
 the less managers of these entities should know how to attract investors
 and additional financial means (out of budget). Business attitudes (initiative) should increase their competence potential.

Table 2

The competence model according to commune officers

| Professional competences (P) | Social competences (S) | Business competences (B) |
|---|--|---|
| management knowledge acts and regulations knowledge, also concerning the EU commune problems knowledge comprehensive thinking analytical thinking attitude towards self and co workers development flexible approach to changes care of work quality planning and work organizing skills decision making skills attitude towards risk seniority in administration managerial experience ability to demand from subordinates | - integrity and honesty - personal culture - self - assurance - showing confidence towards subordinates - team working ability - ability to solve conflicts - stress resistance - social maturity (sensitivity and responsibility) - ability to convince - self- esteem - understanding human behavior - keeping one's emotion under control - communicativeness - ambition - tactful behavior - supporting to act | initiative creativity attitude towards results leader skills need for achievements sense of responsibility |

Source: Proper study.

The empirical verification of the theoretical model

The register of competence verified by commune officers was transmitted into the new construction of the questionnaire. The results were subject to statistical analysis (tab. 3).

The data in the table show the quantitative and qualitative structure of competence in each subset. The subset A (key competence) constitutes 21,6% of all competence. Professional competence constitute the highest percentage in the empirical structure of key competence (62,5%). Social competence constitute 25% and business 12,5%. The second most important set were competence of the B subset in which social competence dominated (54,5%). Business competences constitute 27,3% and professional 18,2%. The subset C, in which professional and social competence constitute 44,4% and business only 11,2%, was the supplement of the competence portfolio of commune officers.

The result received differs from the theoretical model in which dependence is 20/80. In the investigation the relation was from 21,6% (cumulative percentage of competence number) to 24,1% (cumulative percentage of points

number). The obtained differential of 55,9% shows a competence gap in the key competence subset. This unfavourable, from the paraxeological point of view, situation was also diagnosed in the competence structure of other subsets. For example in the subset B, the second – rate, such important competence were localized like attitude towards changes, towards results and care of work quality. However, management knowledge, acts and regulations knowledge, also concerning the EU were localized among other in the C subset, the third – rate. Surprisingly, communicativeness was also localized in the C subset. It is hard to imagine how one could absorb other social competence mentioned in the A and B subsets without communication abilities.

Competence hierarchy according to commune officers

Table 3

| Competences | Cumulative percentage of number of competences | Number of points* | Cumulative number of points | Cumulative percentage of number of points | Subset of compe- tences |
|--|--|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| creativity (B) | 2.70 | 4.86 | 4.86 | 3.13 | A |
| comprehensive thinking (P) | 5.40 | 4.79 | 9.64 | 6.22 | |
| work organizing skills (P) | 8.1 | 4.71 | 14.36 | 9.26 | |
| commune problems knowledge (P) | 10.80 | 4.71 | 19.07 | 12.30 | |
| attitude towards development (P) | 13.50 | 4.57 | 23.64 | 15.25 | |
| decision making ability (P) | 16.20 | 4.57 | 28.21 | 18.20 | |
| supporting to act (S) | 18.90 | 4.57 | 32.79 | 21.15 | |
| showing confidence towards subordinates (S) | 21.60 | 4.57 | 37.36 | 24.10 | |
| responsibility for one's obligations (B) | 24.30 | 4.50 | 41.86 | 27.00 | В |
| flexible approach to changes (P) | 27.00 | 4.43 | 46.29 | 29.86 | |
| self – assurance (S) | 29.70 | 4.43 | 50.71 | 32.72 | |
| social maturity (sensitivity and responsibility) (S) | 32.40 | 4.43 | 55.14 | 35.58 | |
| integrity and honesty (S) | 35.10 | 4.43 | 59.57 | 38.43 | |
| personal culture (S) | 37.80 | 4.43 | 64.00 | 41.29 | |
| Initiative (B) | 40.50 | 4.36 | 68.36 | 44.10 | |
| attitude towards results (B) | 43.20 | 4.29 | 72.64 | 46.87 | |
| care of work quality (P) | 45.90 | 4.29 | 76.93 | 49.63 | |
| team working ability (S) | 48.60 | 4.29 | 81.21 | 52.40 | |
| ability to solve conflicts (S) | 51.30 | 4.29 | 85.50 | 55.16 | |

cont. Table 3

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|--------|------|--------|--------|---|
| stress resistance (S) | 54.00 | 4.21 | 89.71 | 57.88 | C |
| leader skills (B) | 56.70 | 4.21 | 93.93 | 60.60 | |
| ability to convince (S) | 59.40 | 4.14 | 98.07 | 63.27 | |
| self - esteem (S) | 62.10 | 4.14 | 102.21 | 65.94 | |
| acts and regulations knowledge, also concerning the EU (P) | 64.80 | 4.14 | 106.36 | 68.62 | |
| tasks delegation skills (P) | 67.50 | 4.14 | 110.50 | 71.29 | |
| analytical skills (P) | 70.20 | 4.14 | 114.64 | 73.96 | |
| managerial experience (P) | 72.90 | 4.07 | 118.71 | 76.59 | |
| management knowledge (P) | 75.60 | 4.00 | 122.71 | 79.17 | |
| understanding human behavior (S) | 78.30 | 3.93 | 126.64 | 81.71 | |
| keeping one's emotion under control (S) | 81.00 | 3.86 | 130.50 | 84.19 | |
| ability to demand from subordinates (P) | 83.70 | 3.71 | 134.21 | 86.59 | |
| Communicativeness (S) | 86.40 | 3.71 | 137.93 | 88.99 | |
| need for achievements (B) | 89.10 | 3.64 | 141.57 | 91.34 | |
| Ambition (S) | 91.80 | 3.57 | 145.14 | 93.64 | |
| attitude towards risk (P) | 94.50 | 3.43 | 148.57 | 95.85 | |
| Seniority in administration (P) | 97.20 | 3.29 | 151.86 | 97.97 | |
| tactful behavior (S) | 100.00 | 3.14 | 155.00 | 100.00 | |

^{*} the number of points was given as a weighted average of the desirable level of absorbing competence

Source: Own studies.

The results of the proper research were compared with empirical results of other researchers in order to find the answer to the question concerning the degree of consistency of key competence of Polish self – governmental managers with key competence of business managers and self – governmental managers from the USA and Western Europe.

In the light of presented results it can be stated that only three competence i.e. comprehensive thinking, creativity and ability to motivate that are key competence in the proper research can be also found in the results of R. Boyatzis (adequately conceptional thinking – creativity, attitude towards effectiveness through motivating achievements) and D. A. Cameron (adequately conceptional thinking, motivating others).

Table 4
Managerial key competence – the balance of empirical research results

| | Authors | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| R. Boyatzis (1992) | D. A. Whetten i K. S. Cameron (1984) | Proper results | |
| attitude towards effectiveness attitude towards acting proactivity self - confidence verbal communication ability conceptional thinking ability methodical thinking ability ability to take advantage of social authority ability to manage team work | self - consciousness (knowledge about oneself) coping with stress creative solving problems ability communication ability ability to exert influence ability to motivate others ability to delegate managerial entitlements ability to manage conflicts | - creativity - comprehensive thinking - commune problems knowledge - work planning and organizing ability - supporting to act - showing confidence towards subordinates - attitude towards development - making decisions skills | |

Source: Chepa 2001 and proper research.

The diagnosed situation shows a clear discrepancy between the set of key competence of people managing Polish, American and Western European self – governmental organizations as well as business managers competence. Those discrepancies are the reason of Polish self – governmental administration malfunctioning.

Key competence profile - present and desirable situation

The efficiency of each manager as well as a self – governmental one depends mainly on the level of absorbing key competence. The competence profile of this subset was based on desirable and present measurement of their absorbtion. A five – rank scale was used, self – valuation was the method of measurement. The results are presented in the table nr 5.

Levels of absorbtion received in an empiric way show a highly unfavourable competence potential of Polish self – governmental managers. All of the eight key competence need improving. The low level of self – valuation concerning comprehensive thinking and motivating to act is a result of management knowledge scarcity. Self – governmental managers lack of high managerial education and according to them during their studies contents concerning managing an organization were not presented or in a very small degree.

People managing commune councils should have the ability to pay less attention to operational operations and know how to look ahead. Comprehensive thinking and the ability to define strategic objectives should be essential competence. They explained the difference in the level of absorbing the comprehensive thinking competence (-1,19 pts.) by the fact that their work is mainly concentrated on present matters. This explanation is

not consistent with the unfavourable discrepancy (-0,71 pts.) recorded for the commune problems knowledge competence. The lack of in – depth knowledge of problems to solve and mean the lack of commitment or falling behind fast changes.

Key competence profile of a commune officer

Table 5

| Competence | Level of c | 0 | |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | Desirable condition | Present condition | /pts/ (3-2) |
| creativity | 4.86 | 4.26 | -0.60 |
| comprehensive thinking | 4.79 | 3.60 | -1.19 |
| commune problems knowledge | 4.71 | 4.00 | -0.71 |
| work planning and organizing ability | 4.71 | 3.66 | -1.05 |
| supporting to act | 4.57 | 3.80 | -0.77 |
| showing confidence towards subordinates | 4.57 | 4.50 | -0.07 |
| attitude towards self and co – workers development | 4.57 | 3.90 | -0.67 |
| fast and right decision making | 4.57 | 3.60 | -0.97 |

Source: Proper research.

The creativity competence also needs correction because it is not conducive to building new perspectives and acting strategies. Without those abilities characterizing people managing self – governmental units, those organizations will withdraw into o. s. and will not be able to take advantage of their strong points, chances and opportunities. This will mean stagnation and lack of developmental perspective.

The competence portfolio of each manager and his subordinates has to be constantly improved and developed. Commune officers are aware of that necessity and have a positive approach towards it. However commune budgets do not allow to satisfy it on a level expected by them. They explain the negative discrepancy (-0,67 pts.) between the desired and present level by the state of commune finances.

Conclusions

The methodology used in the research enabled the quantitative and qualitative diagnosis of the competence condition of self – governmental managers and enabled the creation of a model of anticipated competence of those managers. The main and partial objectives were accomplished through theoretical considerations and considerations based on empirical

research. The data gathered during the research process enabled the hypothesis verification and the formulation of the following general and cognitive conclusions:

General conclusions

- Competence are a multidimensional and interdisciplinary structure. Knowledge, skills, experience, personal features, attitudes and behaviour are their basic components. Since each component is also multidimensional, there are extremely many relations that can not be entirely predicted. Hence, all definitive classifications and orders of competence are very difficult and always debatable.
- 2. The uncritical application of competence model worked out for other organizations (domestic and foreign ones) is groundless because each model is a simplification and does not take into consideration all real variables (political, economical and cultural conditions) and changes in time.
- 3. Although all the anticipated competence models are probable, they have to be worked out. The hypothetical conditions of organizations behaviour are the base to those models. This fundamental benefit that results from having them is manifested by the ability to shape and develop competence of managers and candidates for managerial posts in a right way.
- 4. A universal model of competence can not be created because all professional situations, organization's and its environment's behaviour, all humane relations (to which those competence are related) are impossible to predict.

Cognitive conclusions

- 1. In the self valuation of self governmental commune officers the most important competence are comprehensive thinking, work organization skills, commune problems knowledge, attitude towards self and co workers development, making decisions ability, supporting to act and showing confidence towards subordinates. All of them make up a key competence portfolio.
- 2. The quantitative comparison of self governmental manager's key competence with theoretical models of successful business manager's key competence, managers of American and Western European self governmental administration went moderately favourably. From among eight competence characterizing commune officers five were mentioned in the successful business manager's model. But the quantitative comparative analysis of empirical models works out unsatisfactory because only three competence of self governmental's i.e. creativity, comprehensive thinking and supporting to act meet with competence of other researcher's models.
- Significant discrepancies between the desired and present level of competence were recorded in as much as seven from among eight key compe-

- tence of self governmental managers. Five of them concern knowledge and abilities in the field of management. In the self valuation of commune officers the biggest lack of competence exist in comprehensive thinking and making decisions ability.
- 4. The bureaucratic style was the management style that dominated. The most desired leader style characterized only six of all respondents. Superiority in the scope of location of control was not identified among self governmental managers. Similar decomposition was noticed between external and internal location of control.
- 5. Independence at work turned out to be the most significant and most deprived need. Next, according to the level of deprivation, was the need for self improving. Although this need was the sixth (between seven) in the hierarchy of needs related with work it is very important because a high level of its dissatisfaction lowers the support to act.
- Self governmental managers prefer company culture based on fixed rules. Team work, interpersonal relations and care for personal development require an urgent correction of cultural norms.
- 7. The key competence theoretical model of people managing self governmental organizations of the future is made up by: attitude towards constant education, comprehensive thinking, positive attitude towards changes, cultural sensitivity, entrepreneurship, communicativeness, attitude towards cooperation, pro market and pro quality attitudes.
- 8. The system of managerial education requires changes towards internationalization of education programs according to European standards, introducing organization and management units to all majors, educating 'generalizational' managers whose competence would be based on wide economic, psycho sociological and law knowledge, integrating academic education with professional training and development in organizations.

Most of the cognitive conclusions mentioned above are also appliqué. The key competence profile based on empirical knowledge and the theoretic register of anticipated competence are a base to improving the process of managing people. In the context of the subject of research, the worked out models can be also applied during the recruitment for managerial posts and the selection of those already acting as managers. The competence models can be also useful while working out criteria of periodical notes and assessment process. The knowledge of differences between the model level of competence applied in an organization according to its standards and its present condition can be used in planning the development of managerial staff and working out the payment system for managers.

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^{*} The comprehensive report published in the monograph Competence Model of People Managing Self – governmental Organizations, UWM Olsztyn 2004 presents in the bibliography about 400 positions. This article consists of only those that exist in the text.