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The role of a leader in the new quality of human resource management

Zarządzanie. Teoria i Praktyka nr 4 (22), 43-52

2017

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

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Zarządzanie. Teoria i Praktyka 22 (4) 2018

ISSN 2081-1586

e-ISSN 2449-9730

str. 43-52

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ZNACZENIE LIDERA W NOWEJ JAKOŚCI ZARZĄDZANIA ZASOBAMI LUDZKIMI

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STRESZCZENIE

Współczesne zarządzanie oparte o wszechstronne spojrzenie na problemy gospodarcze, społeczne, ekologiczne a także zmienne oczekiwania i wymagania interesariuszy, poszukuje sposobów na zwiększanie konkurencyjności i rozwój organizacji. Integracja zarządzania jakością z zasobami ludzkimi kreuje wiedzę, doświadczenie i umiejętności, które w odpowiedni sposób kształtowane przez lidera stanowią nową jakość zarządzania pracownikami w organizacji. Kapitał intelektualny drzemący w liderach determinuje efektywność i skuteczność pracy podległych mu pracowników i stanowi istotne źródło sukcesu organizacji. Celem niniejszego opracowania jest próba ukazania współczesnego lidera (w badanej organizacji), który dzięki posiadanym odpowiednim cechom oraz narzędziom oddziaływania może determinować oraz w znaczącym stopniu wpływać na rozwój organizacji, a w szczególności efektywność i skuteczność zasobów ludzkich. Postawioną hipotezę badawczą: *kompetencje współczesnego lidera, jego cechy i stosowane przez niego formy oddziaływania znacząco wpływają na efektywność pracy świadczonej przez pracowników oraz doskonalenie jakości w organizacji*, poddano weryfikacji w ramach autorskiego badania ankietowego (obejmującego 15 pytań oraz metryczki) przeprowadzonego w 2017r., w średnim przedsiębiorstwie z regionu śródkopomorskiego (z branży przemysłu elektromaszynowego), zatrudniającego 60 pracowników. W opracowaniu wykazano, że sposób działania lidera, osiąganie i kształtowanie form oddziaływania na kapitał pracowniczy wymaga strategicznego i indywidualnego podejścia.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: LIDER; JAKOŚĆ; ZARZĄDZANIE; KOMPETENCJE; DOSKONALENIE; AKTYWIZACJA PRACOWNIKÓW; ZASOBY LUDZKIE.

ABSTRACT

Modern management, based on a comprehensive view of economic, social and ecological problems as well as changing expectations and requirements of stakeholders, is seeking for ways to increase competitiveness and development of the organization. Integration of quality management with human resources creates knowledge, experience and skills that, when adequately shaped by the leader, constitute a new quality of personnel management in the organization. Intellectual capital dormant in leaders determines the effectiveness and efficiency of work of subordinate employees and is an important source of the organization's success. The objective of this paper is to show that appropriate characteristics and influence of the leader (in the surveyed organization) can have a major impact on the development of an organization, and specifically on the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources. The research hypothesis: *the competences of a modern leader, his qualities and forms of influence have a significant impact on the effectiveness of workers' efforts and improvement of quality in the organization*, was verified as a part of author's questionnaire survey (15 questions and a data sheet) conducted in 2017 on a group of 60 employees working in a medium-sized enterprise from the branch of electromechanical industry located in the Central Pomeranian region of Poland. Efforts were also made to show that the manner in which a leader operates, achieving and shaping forms of impact on the employee capital, requires a strategic and individual approach.

KEY WORDS: LEADER; QUALITY; MANAGEMENT; COMPETENCES; IMPROVEMENT; EMPLOYEE ACTIVATION; HUMAN RESOURCES.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern organizations operate in conditions of rapid market development. Technological progress, competition, growing pro-quality requirements of stakeholders result in a situation, where organizations are forced to have the ability to constantly acquire new ideas, technologies and create new products or services. This means that companies must be capable of continuous development under responsible management, using relevant quality of knowledge (Shan, Zhao & Hua, 2013: 211-223), skills and experience of stakeholders as well as their own. Implementation of changes, which adapts the organization to the changing conditions in which they are to operate, requires, among other things, improvement of the management process. In a new economic environment, organizations become more flexible, among others, due to the use of modern management tools (methods, techniques, concept) as well as by focusing on the development of human potential, as a part of improving the quality. Quality has become a factor of success because it closely correlates between the social and business sphere. Expectations, requirements, shaping appropriate habits and attitudes among workers (Zamorski, 2018; Czernecka, 2018) are the main activities/objectives of pro-quality determinants often leading to the necessity of implementing changes by an organization in all areas of its operation, in particular human resources.

Organizations see their future in focusing their attention on employees, their relationships, behaviours, building organizational culture, etc. This trend can also be noticed among theoreticians, which is confirmed by publications in both worldwide and Polish literature (Landells & Albrecht, 2017:41-58; Tinti et.al., 2017:636-653). This means that the present, as well as the future of this area will be shaped by *new personnel management*. The new staff management will be based on continuous acquisition, shaping - designing, improving the intellectual potential (Wiśniewska, 2018) of the staff as well as optimizing the method of its use by an organization. The ability to be organized as well as the ability to strategically approach the initiation of personal development, as part of the *new personnel management*, on one hand, will help the organization to achieve goals (Ployhart, 2015:342-356) and, on the other hand, create a “modern employee” (Hermawati & Nasharuddin, 2017:1143-1158).

A modern employee is a highly qualified person who takes responsibility for the implementation of his work - its quality, and also minimizing the risk of failure, thereby increasing the efficiency and stakeholders' as

well as own satisfaction (Olkiewicz, 2017a: 99-107). Achieving an appropriate correlation between personal interests and business interests of the organization is possible with proper supervision and support of the human factor, usually carried out by the leader (Prat et al., 2018). Therefore, for an effective leader, quick response and leadership in conditions of uncertainty and increasing risk (i.e. social, economic, environmental, etc.), makes it necessary for him to have appropriate competencies - capabilities allowing to undertake flexible actions, embrace changes, the ability to effectively act in business priorities while simultaneously stabilize social factors (Wiśniewska, 2018). This means that the leader, using knowledge, experience and skills will be able to plan, implement and improve the new personnel management, to create the organization opportunities for development (including quality development). Therefore, organizations in order to achieve market success must, on the one hand, look for leaders with appropriate qualifications and, on the other hand, create conditions favourable to the development of employees' potential, inter alia by changing the manner of management, organizational culture and competence development programs that support the development of leadership at all levels of management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Modern organization management is an “art” of using new knowledge from various fields of economic and social development, i.e. in the field of new technologies, environmental protection, society's quality of life, possibilities of financing investments or cooperation between the sphere of science and economy. Globalization, permeating of the Internet into all spheres of life lead to a situation, where creativity and knowledge of employees determine the organization's innovation and possibilities of adaptation to the planned changes.

P. F. Drucker defines human resource management as a work to be done with the use of appropriate personnel characterized by specific, individual physical features, abilities as well as limitations (Drucker, 2012: 25). *Contemporary creation* of the increase in the quality of work with a diversified personal capital (regarding knowledge, experience, skills, creativity, etc.) makes it necessary to change the ways the organization used to operate. It should be mentioned that network organizations are increasingly being created which, by their specific functioning are focused on the maximum use of intellectual potential, in particular, the external one as part of minimizing the costs of creating new

jobs. As a result, traditionally operating enterprises need highly skilled personnel with appropriate qualifications, knowledge and skills that are needed to effectively and efficiently perform their duties while contributing to the increase of the quality of work (Olkiewicz, 2013:261-268). Improvement of management as a process activity, enables to improve procedures, implement innovative solutions, apply new methods and techniques or management styles, etc. (Amin et. al., 2017:1256-1278) in all fields of the organization. In particular, developing elements of the human resources area, i.e. creativity, the ability to make quick decisions, organize own work or setting attainable goals, self-control, etc.), makes it the basic factor (driving force) (Bednarska-Wnuk, 2017:17-31) for shaping the effectiveness and efficiency of work and its quality (Rogelberg et.al., 2010:149-172). The leader plays a significant role in identification, improvement and managing teams of workers. Leader shaped, among other things, by his competences, knowledge, experience (Kuc, 2008:312), skills (Roszyk-Kowalska, 2014:269-276) to exert influence (Mrówka, 2010:19) to achieve specific behaviour, actions, decisions, etc., must be recognized by employees. That is why a leader in a team or organization is associated with four dimensions (Webber, 2005:179):

- support,
- facilitating cooperation,
- arousing enthusiasm,
- facilitation of activities.

According to Koźmiński, the main task of the leader is to set attainable, farsighted and ambitious goals for the team of employees, or the whole organization, and then motivate and mobilize them to pursue these goals. This means that the role of a leader comes down to managing all processes that are related to employees' activities (Koźmiński & Piotrowski, 2002), including quality (Ilieş, Sălăgean & Bâlc, 2015:7-10).

However, it should be stressed out that proper, modern management and responsible improvement of human resources shaped by the leader must be in a strict compliance with the adopted strategy, as well as with the intellectual potential of the employees. Therefore, proper setting of goals must cause a number of favourable changes in the staff management, i.e. (Wencel, 2018):

- the better understanding of these goals or indicators, mechanisms that govern them (through the analysis of constituent elements as well as positive and negative impacts),
- launching an entire existing platform of creativity, knowledge and skills in order to come up with

activities that will support the implementation of said goals,

- implementation of only those activities that support the implementation of goals,
- current interest in results within these goals or indicators, talking about them, thinking about what else can be done or how to modify own actions in order to achieve a goal.

This implies a need for the leader to develop a flexible approach towards an employee, the process of his work, etc., which, on the one hand, are focused solely on the result (effect), and on the other hand on the "staff personality" supported by a "soft approach". This means that leaders need to learn (Heslin, Keating & Ashford, 2017) to improve their skills in dealing with the rapidly changing environment, seeking and using opportunities and minimizing existing threats. Therefore, the role of the leader, who has *the ability to create a system in which the ability to coordinate activities and integrate interests of stakeholders as well as the largest possible number of organization members* (Wegge, Shemla & Haslam, 2014: 6-23) necessary to increase credibility, reliability of the adopted solutions (Wu & Lee, 2017:474-491), which motivates the crew, is growing significantly (Zigarmi, Roberts & Randolph, 2015:359-384). This suggests that an effective leader should be characterized by strong, among others, determination, entrepreneurship but also credibility, respect to other people, humbleness, civil courage, self-confidence, stalwartness, openness to changes and goal orientation. However, it should be borne in mind that relevant qualities/competences of leaders in an organization will vary depending on the company, its requirements, type of business or strategy (Głowacka-Stewart, Lenkiewicz, 2018; Su, 2017). Nevertheless, the leaders' compliance with accepted norms, values, attitudes and behaviors significantly contributes to the pro-quality management (Sălăgean, 2014:164-169) of new personnel management, i.e.:

- teamwork, active work,
- creative system thinking (supporting the implementation of ideas),
- providing the necessary labour resources,
- establishing a system of recognition and rewarding,
- continuous training of employees,
- establishing an appropriate system of work that increases the satisfaction of stakeholders.

It is worth mentioning that the management staff, shaping the quality and personal policy as well as the way the work is being performed, have a big influence

on the quality of work. However, it is the leader who must effectively influence workers to achieve and go in the indicated direction. It is the leaders who need to seek new, effective and efficient solutions, methods, styles of management or conflict resolution, so that employees achieve organization's objectives as well as their own.

The set standards, including qualitative and strategic directions of activities, are to strengthen the leader's position, who by building up trust in the employees and stakeholders in the organization, will increase its competitiveness and value.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The methodological assumptions and goals of the study resulted from the author's interest in the subject of improving the management of an organization, in particular the quality management. For the study purpose author put research problems in the form of the following questions:

Q1: Do the qualities held by the leader give him the ability to effectively influence employees?

Q2: Is there a universal methodology of the leader's influence on the employees to stimulate their creativity and effectiveness?

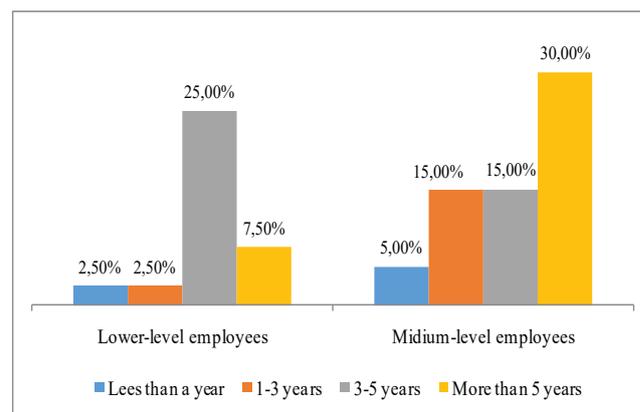
Stated research problems as well as the respective literature on the subject were the base for conducting a multi-faceted analysis including the identification and assessment of the leader's competences in the surveyed organization and forms of impact.

The subject of the research was a medium-sized enterprise employing 60 workers from the branch of electromechanical industry from the Central Pomeranian region of Poland. The multi-faceted nature and multidimensionality of the issue allowed to recognize the covered research areas and to acquire full knowledge on the basis of the carried-out survey among all the workers of the organization in 2017. The study used author's self-designed questionnaire comprising 15 questions. The aim of this study is to prove that a modern leader (in the surveyed organization) having appropriate qualities and exerting tools can significantly determine the development of the organization. In particular the effectiveness and efficiency of human resources. In the paper a hypothesis was formulated: *the competences of a modern leader, his qualities and forms of influence have a significant impact on the effectiveness of workers' efforts and improvement of quality in the organization*, which

was verified. In the study, efforts were also made to presents differences in the identification and assessment of variables evaluated on the basis of two groups of respondents: lower and mid-level employees as a part of the comparative analysis.

It should be noted that 1/3 of the staff is made up of top management. In the organization, men constitute 80% of the entire employee staff. Differentiation occurs in the identification of respondents regarding seniority, as shown in figure 1.

Fig. 1. Seniority



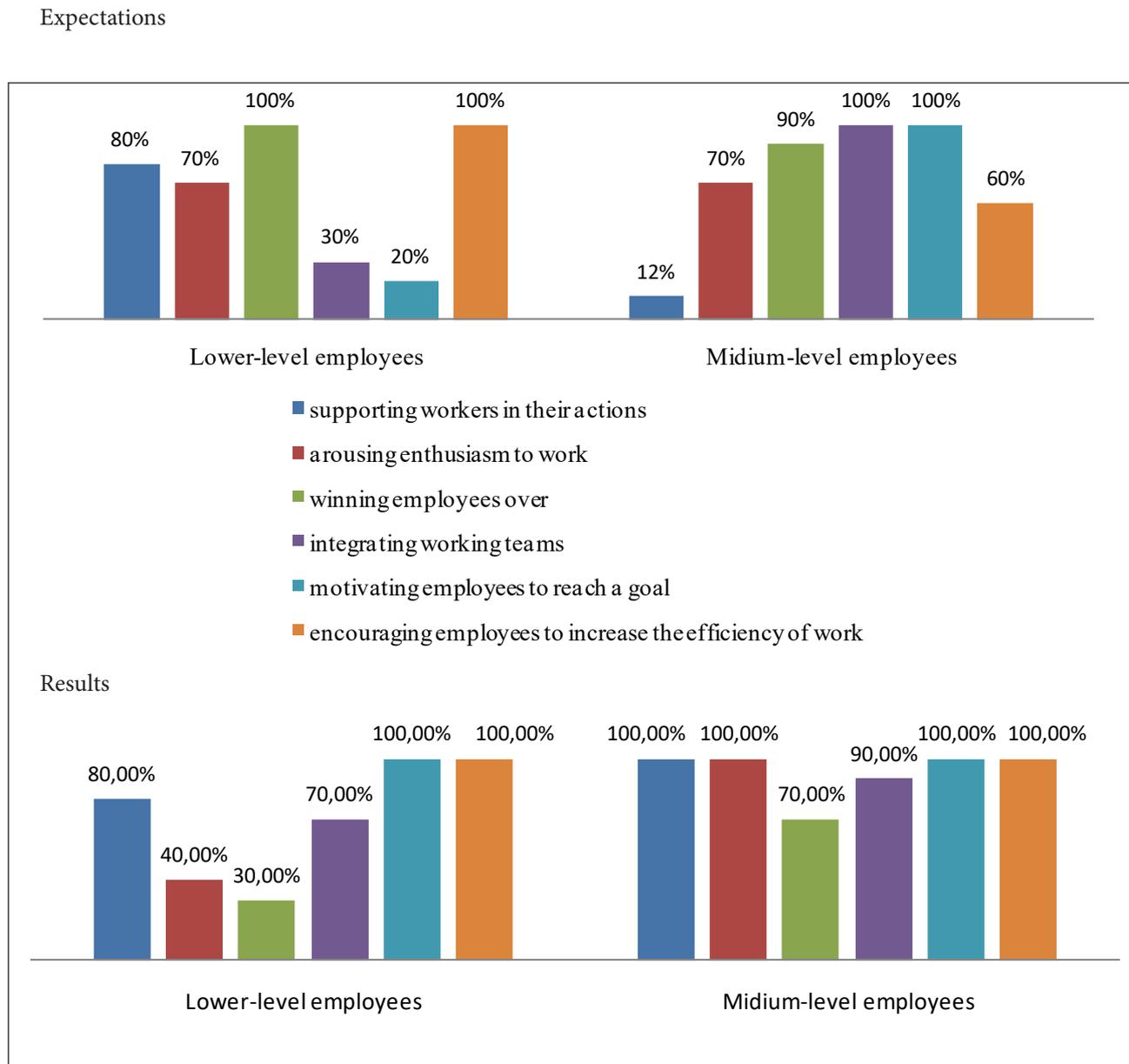
Source: own study.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A modern leader in modern management, working flexibly must be focused on a quickly changing needs and expectations of a customer, socio-economic changes, etc. Readiness to set new challenges and implementation of new solutions, i.e. in the field of quality improvement, production optimisation, an increase of work efficiency, etc., is to result from a wide area of activity and the possibility to influence employees. The analysis of the leader's field of activity in the given organization, according to the respondents, appropriately inscribes Webber's four-dimensionality. Figure 2 presents a comparative analysis of respondents' expectations for the leader's activity (in particular fields) to assess the real impact.

Research results (Fig. 2) indicate that depending on the structural all location of workers in the organization, there are differences in identifying the importance of the leadership role in specific areas of activity. This is

Fig. 2. Areas of the leader's activity in the organisation



Source: own study.

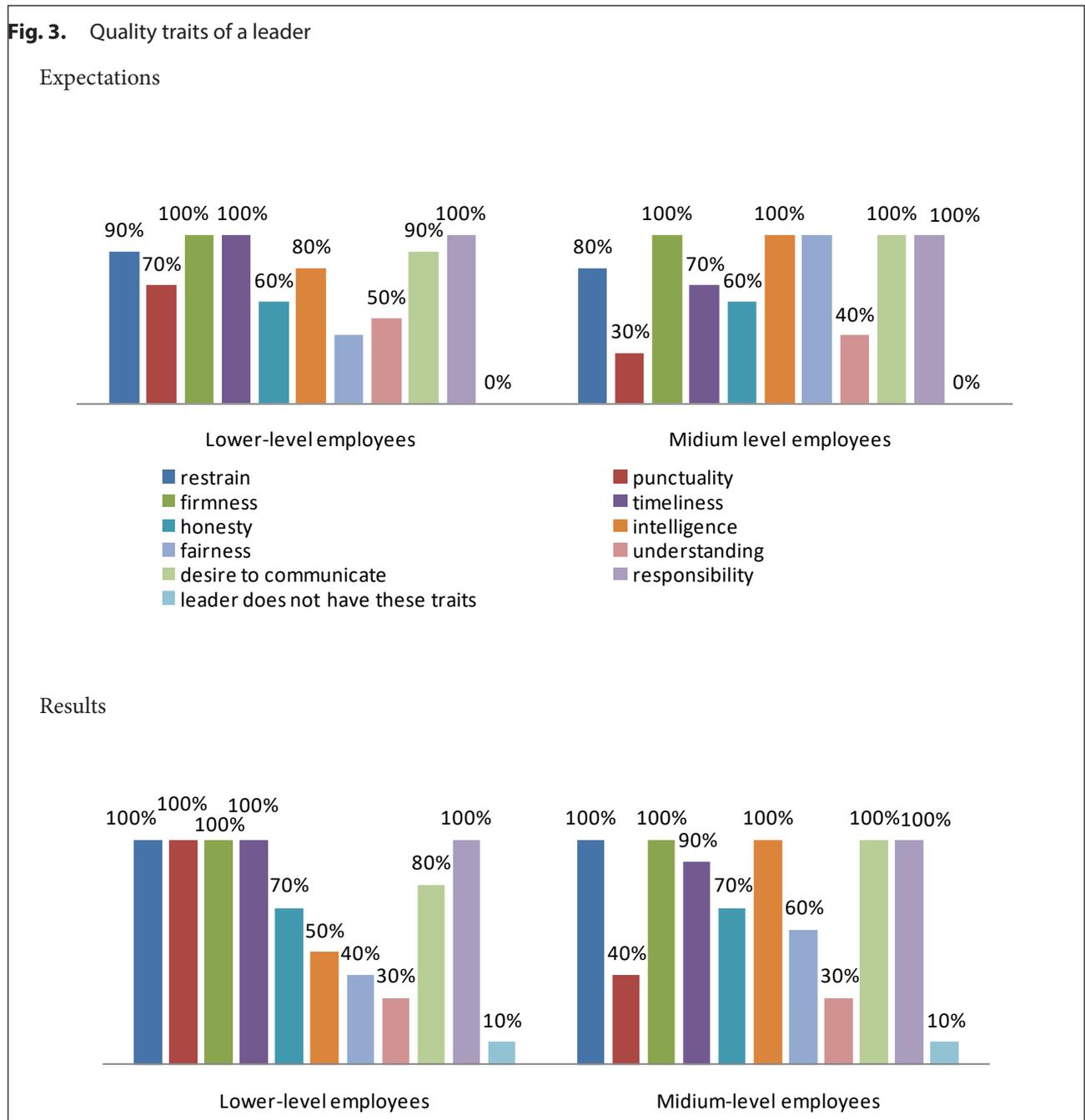
particularly important when choosing the strength and ways to influence employees as well as in developing his competencies. The diversity of the leader's influence (results) indicates the focus of efforts on mid-level employees, which may be related to, i.e., an easier form of communication, interaction, mutual understanding as well as the possibility or desire to partially decentralize power and responsibility of mid-level employees.

It is ultimately the mid-level workers who will monitor the

progress of employees work efficiency and organization's goal achievement. It is essential for the leader to make the best of his potential. That is why a lot of importance is attached to the characteristics of a leader, confirmed in Figure 3.

Comparative analysis of expectations and achieved results indicate the existence of discrepancies. The term "flexibility" – both among lower and mid-level workers,

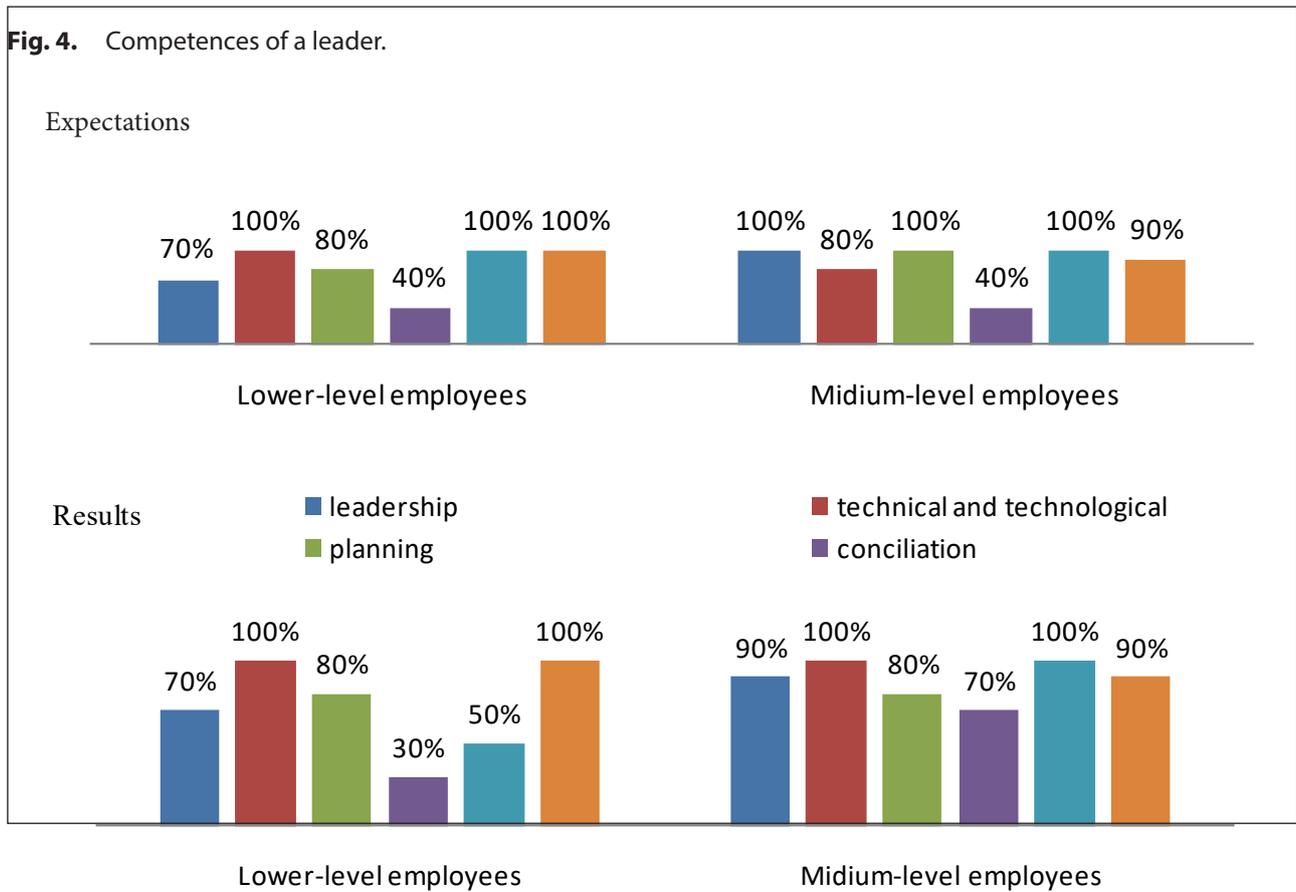
Fig. 3. Quality traits of a leader



Source: own study.

which was expected to occur was not present and as a result, it turned out to be an important parameter, albeit to a non-dominant extent. While analysing the expectations and results of mid-level employees, no significant changes in the importance of individual qualities can be noted, in contrast to lower-level employees. In the assessment of qualities by lower-level

responders, only firmness, timeliness and responsibility did not change as they achieved the 100% parameter (both in expectations as well as in results). The rest of the parameters, however, have changed considerably. The parameters “intelligence” and “understanding”, for example, dropped in relation about expectations, which indicates a significant empathy index for the leader.



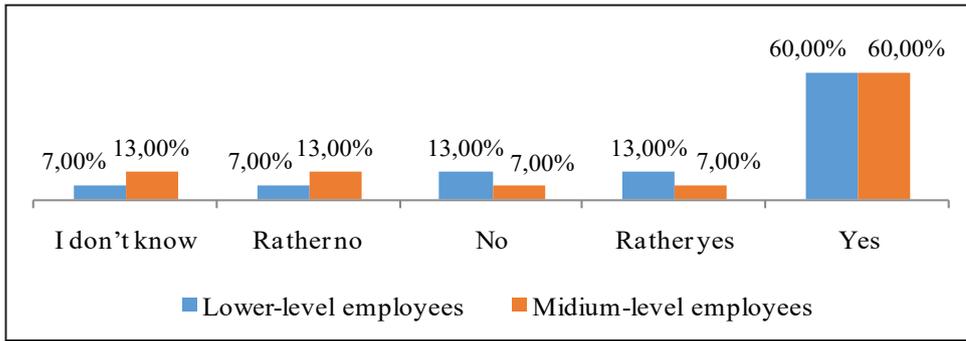
Source: own study.

In the case of mid-level employees, the percentage distribution was different, although 5 traits reached maximum values: self-control, firmness, intelligence, ease of communication and responsibility. Bearing in mind the fact that improving management of human resources is a multi-faceted and a multi-stage process, the leader should emphasize the support of employees in their actions. That is why leadership competencies are such an important element/parameter of the leader's assessment, as shown in Figure 4.

From a strategic point of view, in particular, the new management of personnel shaping quality management, the competencies of the leader identified and highly rated by the mid-level respondents give hope for the opportunity of organization development. Modern organizations are focused on i.e.: optimization of production, costs, reduction of the risk of investing activities, faster and better adaptation to expectations and requirements of stakeholders, initiating the creation of new products or services and quality improvement (i.e. by implementing standardised management systems, increasing pro-

quality awareness, optimizing procedures proceedings, etc.). Realization of the purposes in the organization requires from the leader to face a number of challenges, to be more determined to act and to maintain proper employee relations, because dissatisfied staff minimizes the realization of the accepted parameterization of set objectives and might have a negative impact on company's image. Survey among mid-level employees indicates that the leader (in the surveyed organization) has a high level of conciliation competences (70%). Among lower-level employees this trend can also be notice, as the value of this ratio has decreased from the expected 40% to 30%. Unfortunately, when analysing the group of lower-level employees, one can observe a decline in individual variables (competences of a leader), which would indicate that the leader mainly focuses his attention on achieving results not always adequately caring for the good of the workers.

Fig. 5. Leader's influence on the effectiveness of employees.



Source: own study.

However, despite the varied impacts of skills and competencies, as many as 73% (60% “yes” and 13% “rather yes”) of mid-level employees stated that the leader by his actions increases the efficiency of work. Among lower-level employees this has been confirmed by 67%. The survey revealed that, on average, approximately 10% of all respondents stated that leader’s actions did not improve efficiency.

The presented data (Figure 5) indicate that the leader’s characteristics give the ability to have an impact on the efficiency of workers. It follows that the leader of the surveyed organization skilfully conducts his own policy of influencing employees, thus increasing the efficiency of work and indirectly improving the quality of the production process. The carried out detailed research also showed that the leader:

- fulfils his role (74% of mid-level employees and 70% of lower-level employees stated “yes”, only 7% have an opposite opinion),
- meets the expectations of the respondents (62% of mid-level and 58% of lower-level employees stated “yes” and only 7% have an opposite opinion).

All these high parameters of the leader’s assessment in the surveyed organization indicate the possibility to accept a statement that *leader’s individual characteristics give the ability to effectively influence workers.*

However, it should be noted that a leader limited

only by mentioned qualities would not be able to achieve the hopes placed in him. This means that a leader significantly determines the possibility of using direct and indirect influences, which are presented in Figures 6 and 7.

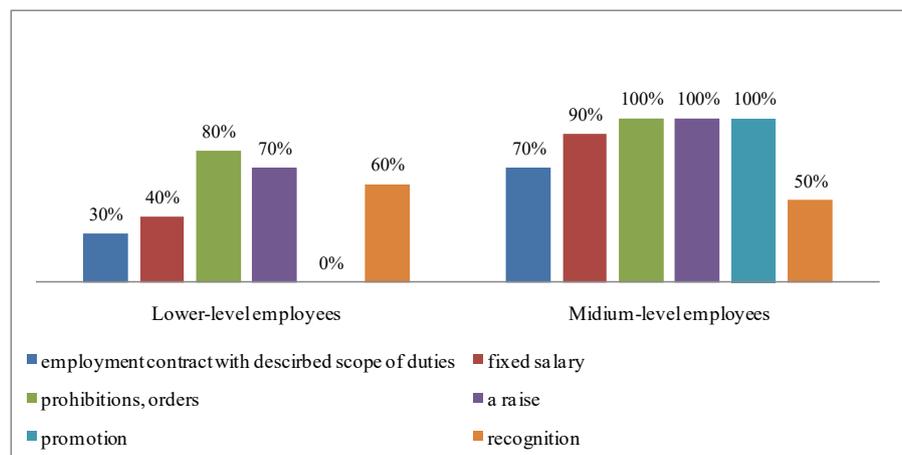
The analysis of the direct possibility of the leader’s influence on employees indicates different possibilities in the use of management tools. According to lower-level respondents,

however, the leader cannot influence the promotion of employees. Additionally, the most frequently used form of direct influence on a lower-level employee is orders and prohibitions. The top-level management indicated differently, because despite the low recognition rate they can count on the favour of the leader in terms of salary increase, fixed remuneration and individualised work scope (employment contract). In this group of employees, orders and prohibitions seem to also be one of the basic impacts of influence. All respondents stated that the leader in the organisation effectively uses the “pressure” instruments to increase work efficiency.

Another important aspect in the development of an organization, in particular human resources, is the skilful and effective impact of the leader, through indirect forms of influence, on workers.

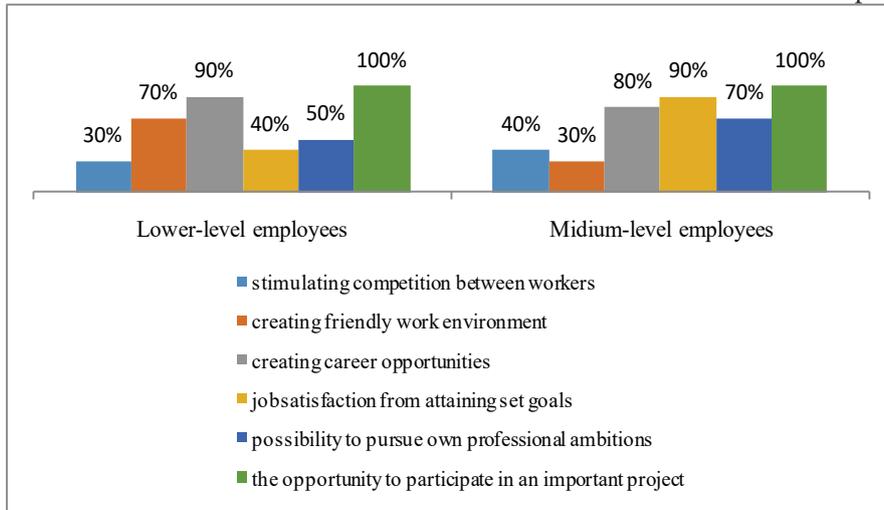
The data indicate that in both surveyed groups of respondents the most frequently used form of integration with goals, tasks, stimulation of creativity and efficiency

Fig. 6. Forms of direct influence



Source: own study.

Fig. 7. Forms of indirect influence



Source: own study.

of the employee’s actions is active participation in the implementation of the project. In other words, it means: “what you design - you will have to accomplish”. Active participation in the development of an organisation provides employees with a sense of value, and the leader with a possibility of more effective strategic management. The shaping of new indirect forms of influence on employees allows to create New Personnel Management and improve the production process with the current use of the intellectual capital of the employees. Such an innovative form of activating employees, also using direct forms, allows the leader to react immediately to changes in the business environment as well as inside the organisation. This means that there is no *universal methodology for the leader to influence employees in order to stimulate their creativity and efficiency of operation.*

5. SUMMARY/ CONCLUSIONS

The discussed considerations supported by research-based content indicate that the leader is essential in shaping the *new personnel management*. Through the ongoing leader’s actions, a new, constantly improved, quality of work is being developed. The leader is identified as a person with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience in managing employees, which allows achieving high efficiency and effectiveness. In other

words, the appropriate composition of characteristics and leader’s competence contribute to the realization of objectives set for the workers, which can directly contribute to the organization’s success. The new way of personnel management, by the global trends, indicates the need to focus attention on people. The leader, his potential, relations with the environment, etc. If properly developed can constitute the foundations of the organization’s success. A modern leader has to continually improve himself and also look for new ways to develop human resources using knowledge,

experience and “premonition”. The carried-out research demonstrated the adopted assumptions in the hypothesis stating that *the competences of a modern leader, his qualities and forms of influence have a significant impact on the effectiveness of workers’ efforts and improvement of quality in the organization.* The proof of this statement was confirmed by the employees of the organization in particular groups. The analysis showed differences in the observed value of particular respondents’ groups: 73% of mid-level employees and 67% of lower-level employees stated that the leader by his actions improved the efficiency of work and as many as 10% of all respondents had a different opinion. On the one hand, the different hierarchy of meaning of individual variables could be the reason, and on the other hand, classification in the organizational structure. This means that further research in this area is necessary, as knowledge of all determinants and their impact should influence the creation of the new personnel management.

Shaping the future of the organization must be directed at all forms of activity, cooperation, employment, etc., often exceeding the traditional framework of operations (i.e. functioning in a virtual cloud) increasing the chances of market leadership, guaranteeing adequate quality, including management quality (Olkiewicz, 2017b: 10-398).

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