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## **QUALITY OF INFORMATION AND MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES VERSUS DECISION MAKING PROCESS BY THE MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION OFFICES**

**Summary.** The article presents the quality of information and managerial competencies' issues in the decision-making aspect. We have claimed that there is a need for employing a new managerial (and not only administrative or political) paradigm in managing local government administration institutions. We have also discussed the quantity and quality of information as well as competencies in decision-making. In the study part we have posed the following questions: What significance does the quality of information has in decision-making process as well as what competencies should the managers in local government administration have to make appropriate decisions? The study includes 208 managers from 75 local government administration. The whole article ends in conclusion.

**Keywords:** decisions, quality information, administration, New Public Management

## **JAKOŚĆ INFORMACJI I KOMPETENCJE MENEDŻERSKIE A PODEJMOWANIE DECYZJI PRZEZ KADRĘ KIEROWNICZĄ W ADMINISTRACJI SAMORZĄDOWEJ**

**Streszczenie.** W artykule zaprezentowano zagadnienie, jakości informacji oraz kompetencji menedżerskich w aspekcie podejmowania decyzji w administracji

samorządowej. Wskazano na potrzebę zastosowania nowego, menedżerskiego, a nie tylko administracyjno-politycznego paradygmatu w zarządzaniu w urzędach administracji samorządowej. Omówiono wpływ ilości i jakości informacji oraz kompetencji na podejmowanie decyzji. W część badawczej postawiono pytania: Jakie znaczenie ma jakość informacji oraz system informacyjny w podejmowaniu decyzji, oraz jakie kompetencje powinni mieć kierownicy administracji samorządowej aby podejmować właściwe decyzje? Badaniem objęto 208 kierowników z 75 urzędów administracji samorządowej Górnego Śląska. Całość podsumowano wnioskami.

**Słowa kluczowe:** jakość informacji, kompetencje menedżerskie, podejmowanie decyzji, administracja samorządowa

## 1. Introduction

Decisions made by managers constitute a key issue of the managerial work in any organization. However, if the managers are to make good decisions, they need to be equipped with suitably developed competencies, and they also need to have access to information which meets specific quality requirements. Although in certain situations, when access to information is difficult or the problem is non-structural, and it is possible to overcome problems creatively, it must be remembered that in local government administration the majority of decisions must be made on the basis of the available knowledge and current regulations. This issue is vital as decision-making process has a serious impact on a substantial number of citizens. As the different studies have shown the quality of decision-making in Polish local government institutions leaves much to be desired.<sup>1</sup> Although there are numerous studies researching the work of managers and managerial decisions, it is more difficult to find studies pertaining to managers in local government administration. At the same time, due to political changes and the growing popularity of the New Public Management idea, it seems plausible to scrutinize these issues. The aim of this article is to make a synthesized presentation of the conclusions from the relevant literature and the results of our own studies conducted among the managerial personnel in the institutions of local government administration.

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<sup>1</sup> Urbaniak B., Bohdziewicz P.: Zdiagnozowanie potencjału administracji samorządowej, ocena potrzeb szkoleniowych kadr urzędów administracji samorządowej oraz przygotowanie profili kompetencyjnych kadr urzędów administracji samorządowej. ASM Centrum Badan i Analiz Rynku, Kutno 2009, s. 98-176.

## 2. Managerial approach in local government administration

With the political and system changes in Poland as well as re-establishing of the local government, there has also been a change in the role of public administration. Delegating to these local government units the tasks, powers and obligations from the area of public administration enforced the change of organizational structures and their methods of functioning. In turn, the membership in the European Union imposed on self-governments a certain operational mode in the area of dealing with the results of crisis, technological development or environment protection. At the same time, the ever growing and more sophisticated expectations from society towards the local government constantly create the necessity to manage the public finances in a moderate way. Thus, there are new challenges looming ahead for the local governments and the need for constant development on their part.

In the world literature pertaining to the subject of functioning of the public administration, both in the traditional management as well as the New Public Management a big significance for the managerial approach (not only legal or political) is being emphasized.<sup>2</sup> In the traditional approach competencies seem to be the focal point,<sup>3</sup> as well as efficiency and in the new approach, besides competencies, the importance of managerial roles – goal orientation and more flexible and pro-market approach is emphasized.<sup>4</sup> Both concepts clearly indicate that managers have a very important role to play in local government administration. They need to have appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies allowing them to efficiently fulfill these roles and make the right decisions.

### 2.1. Competencies

The term competencies has been defined in various ways and it is difficult to classify it. It results from the fact that this issue is interdisciplinary and appears in Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy, Economics, Law, Management. Therefore, there is a methodological confusion, which sometimes leads to contradictory opinions (even arguments) of the scientists as to the ways of explaining this term and the methods of investigation and mastering the managerial competencies.<sup>5</sup> Frequently the authors quote the terms of skills,<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Supernat J.: *Administracja publiczna w świetle koncepcji New Public Management*, [w:] *Administracja publiczna. Studia Krajowe i Międzynarodowe*, WSAP, Białystok 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Weber M.: *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo: zarys socjologii rozumiejącej*. PWN, Warszawa 2002, s. 164.

<sup>4</sup> Catlaw T., Chapman J.: *What's New about the New Public Management*, A comment Stephen Page's. "Public Administration Review", 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Rakowska A.: *Kompetencje menadżerskie kadry kierowniczej we współczesnych organizacjach*. UMCS, Lublin 2007, s. 47.

<sup>6</sup> Thierry D., Sauret C.: *Zatrudnienie i kompetencje w przedsiębiorstwie w procesie zmian*. Poltex, Warszawa 1994, s. 6.

abilities<sup>7</sup> or qualifications<sup>8</sup> as synonymous to competencies. Among numerous definitions of competencies it has been assumed that they are: skills, knowledge, attitudes and personal qualities, which lead to achieving positive results at work. They are additionally boosted by personal predispositions, general life and professional experience as well as suitable attitude and behavior.

In the relevant literature of the subject there are a lot of studies on the managerial competencies,<sup>9</sup> but only a few of them pertain to the competencies of the managerial personnel of public administration.<sup>10</sup> Although local government administration uses tools borrowed from the private sector, which include managing of the finances (efficiency), using benchmarking solutions,<sup>11</sup> outsourcing solutions,<sup>12</sup> reengineering solutions,<sup>13</sup> quality management<sup>14</sup> (Total Quality Management), appropriate goal orientation and monitoring of the results, and modern human resources management<sup>15</sup> (empowerment). However, as different studies suggest (not very numerous so far) there are certain discrepancies between the competencies of managers in business organizations and those working in local government institutions.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Bratnicki M.: *Kompetencje przedsiębiorstwa, od określenia kompetencji do zbudowania strategii*. Placet, Warszawa 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Chęłpa S.: *Kwalifikacje kadr kierowniczych przedsiębiorstw przemysłowych. Kierunki i dynamika zmian*. AE, Wrocław 2003, s. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Listwan T.: *Zarządzanie kadrami*. C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2010; Chęłpa S.: op.cit.; Rakowska A.: op.cit.; Penc J.: *Role i umiejętności menadżerskie*. Difin, Warszawa 2005; Rakowska A., Sitko-Lutek A.: *Doskonalenie kompetencji menadżerskich*. PWN, Warszawa 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Walkowiak R.: *Model kompetencji menadżerów organizacji samorządowych*. Wyd. Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie, Olsztyn 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Rogala P.: *Zastosowanie benchmarkingu w administracji publicznej. Doświadczenia urzędu miejskiego w Gliwicach*. „Problemy Jakości”, nr 5, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Oleński J.: *Nowoczesna infrastruktura informacyjna podstawą taniego i przyjaznego państwa polskiego. Program reformy infrastruktury informacyjnej państwa i strategii informatyzacji sektora publicznego*. MSWiA, Warszawa 2005, [www.mswia.gov.pl/download.php?s=1&id=2419](http://www.mswia.gov.pl/download.php?s=1&id=2419) (dostęp 2011.08.15).

<sup>13</sup> Wolniak R., Słaba S.: *Procesy reorganizacji w administracji publicznej na przykładzie Wydziału Finansowo-księgowego Wydziału Edukacji UM w Rybniku cz. 1 – prezentacja procesu restrukturyzacji w badanej instytucji*. Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej, s: *Organizacja i Zarządzanie*, Gliwice, 2005, s. 71.

<sup>14</sup> Lisiecka K., Papaj T.: *System zarządzania jakością w urzędach terytorialnej administracji publicznej*. „Problemy Jakości”, nr 10, 2006, s. 39-40; Furterer S., Elshennawy A.K.: *Implementaion of TQM and lean Six Sigma tools in local government: a framework and a case study*. “Total Quality Management & Business Excellence”, No. 16, Vol. 10, 2005, p. 1179-1191; Rago W.V.: *Adapting Total Quality Management to government: Another point of view*. “Public Administration Review”, No. 54, Vol. 1, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Kappelaman L., Prybutok V.: *Empowerment Motivation, Training and TQM Program Implementation Success*. “Total Quality Management”, No. 3, Vol. 37, 2001, p. 15; Tulgan B.: *Empowerment Myth. “Leadership Excellence”*, No. 4, Vol. 24, 2007; Bugdol M.: *Zarządzanie jakością w urzędach administracji publicznej*. Difin, Warszawa 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Walkowiak R.: op.cit.

## **2.2. Barriers and decision-making conditions in local government administration**

Meeting the growing needs of the residents with budget limitations of the communes (gminas) forces the local government institutions to make more and more difficult decisions. It is thus important to have the necessary information, competencies and knowledge on the conditioning of the decision-making processes. They differ however, from the ones operating in business organizations. The difference stems from its public character (political responsibility) and legal character (regulations). Nevertheless, both business and public sector managers encounter both subjective barriers (related to the personal qualities of the decision-making people) and objective factors (resulting from the conditions in which a given entity functions). The objective barriers are foremost: organizational, legal (crucial in administration), economic, cultural, resource-related, technological, and informational. It is the legal barriers that create a situation where decisions made by managers can be divided into two categories: administrative and managerial. Administrative decisions stem from the legal regulations imposed by the law. On the other hand, managerial decisions are related to personnel management (motivating, assessing, control over subordinates), managing shifts or organizing current work in a given unit.

## **3. Role of quantity and quality of information in the decision-making process**

In order to make decisions it is essential to have suitable information. Omnipresence of the Internet and access to modern communication technologies in the local government administration increases the ease and speed of accessing information but the problem is both the quantity and quality of this information.

### **3.1. Quantity of information**

The decision makers cannot make correct decisions without sufficient information load. On the other hand, they are often inundated with bulk of useless data, which make lead them to overlook information which is vital for them. Organizations may have more data but at the same time less information,<sup>17</sup> because the problem of data selection and processing them into information appears. The data overload slows the decision-making process down and in the extreme situation it may inhibit appropriate functioning of the organization altogether. On the other hand, it is known that increasing the amount and quality of information leads to

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<sup>17</sup> Drucker P.: Zarządzanie w XXI wieku. Muza, Warszawa. 2000, s. 140.

increasing the quality of the decision-making process. Due to the limitations on the effective usage of information, there is a certain level which, when reached, leads to the decrease of the decision-making quality. The dependence between the amount of information and decision quality has the shape of the reversed<sup>18</sup>. People using information systems are not able to process and analyze all the data and information. As a result, they make their decisions on the basis of incomplete information or too late to make good use of it. The issue of abundance of information and informational overload is mentioned in numerous publications.<sup>19</sup> Apart from the sufficient amount of information it is necessary for the decision makers to have good quality of information.

### 3.2. Quality of information

The quality of information can be viewed both subjectively – from the side of information users as well as objectively, resulting from the functions which the information is supposed to perform. The majority of the definitions of the quality of information used in the relevant literature are based on exemplifying these features that information is supposed to have<sup>20</sup>. There is not, however, a homogenous catalogue of features which would specify good quality information.

As the reports and analyses regarding the functioning of local government administration, the quality of the decisions made is not satisfactory<sup>21</sup>. Thus, there is a need to conduct studies in this area as the quality of information topic in public administration entities does not come too often.<sup>22</sup> It is usually discussed when doing information infrastructure analysis,<sup>23</sup> or is limited to studying particular applications<sup>24</sup>. There is a lack, however, of studies or attempts at generalizations, which would account for the issues of quality of information with regard to the decisions made in local government administration.

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<sup>18</sup> Marcinkowska M.: Wykorzystanie informacji controllingu – spojrzenie behawioralne. „Przegląd Organizacji”, nr 1, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Lesca H., Lesca E.: Gestion de l'information. Litec, Paris 1995; Melgoza P., Mennel P.A.: Information overload. “Collection Building”, Vol. 21, Issue 1, 2002, p. 32-42.

<sup>20</sup> Abdallah H.M.: A quality assurance model for an information system development life cycle. “International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management”, Vol. 13, Issue 7, 1996; English L.: The Essentials of Information Quality Management. “DM Review Magazine”, September, 2002, p. 70-78. Knight S., Burn J.: Developing a Framework for Assessing Information Quality on the World Wide Web. “Informing Science Journal”, Vol. 8, 2005, p. 160-169.

<sup>21</sup> Urbaniak B., Bohdziewicz P.: op. cit., Raport końcowy opracowany na zlecenie MSWiA w ramach projektu pt. „Badanie ewaluacyjne wsparcia udzielonego administracji samorządowej w ramach Działania 5.2” ASM Centrum Badan i Analiz Rynku Sp. z o.o., Kutno, 2010, s. 83.

<sup>22</sup> Gryniewicz W.: Doskonalenie jakości informacji w jednostkach administracji skarbowej. Podejście indologiczne. Praca doktorska, AE, Wrocław 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Oleński J.: Infrastruktura informacyjna państwa w globalnej gospodarce. WNE UW, Warszawa 2006.

<sup>24</sup> Chmielarz W.: Ocena serwisów internetowych urzędów miejskich przy pomocy metody konwersji. SHG, Warszawa 2010; Dziuba T.: Metody ekonomiki sektora informacyjnego. Difin, Warszawa 2007.

The literature overview formed the basis for the following conclusions: there is a growing interest in the role of managers in local government institutions as well as scarcity of studies regarding their competencies, and, most of all, those pertaining to the decision-making competencies (skills, knowledge, personality, decision-making style), which can be regarded as critical for achieving good results, as well as conditioning of these decision (such as the quality of information). Thus, the following study questions have been posed: what is the significance of quality of information and the information system itself in the decision-making process? What competencies should managers from the local government institutions have in order to make the right decisions? What factors, apart from competencies, influence the process of their decision making? Do the decisions made by local government managers require possessing specific competencies other than in the case of the classical manager?

## 4. Study Results

In order to find the answer to the afore mentioned questions, the study among the managerial personnel of the middle management of the local government institutions in the Silesian Voivodeship has been conducted. 208 respondents participated in the research: rural communes (gminas) (8%), urban (20%) and counties (urban and rural poviats 72%). Women constituted the majority of the respondents (61%, whilst 39% were men). Half of the respondents (50,5%) were people between 46 and 60 years old. A third were the people between 36 and 45 years old (32,2%). About half of the respondents (52,9%) have had between 2 to 10 years of managerial experience and a thirds (32,3 %) between 11 and 25 years. Every tenth manager (11%) has been in the management for over 26 years.

Non-parametric tests of significance have been employed in the analysis. These tests do not require standard distribution of measurable indicators. We have used: independence test  $\chi^2$ , U Mann-Whitney Test, Kruskal – Wallis H Test, Sign Test, Wilcoxon Test. For the purposes of correlation analysis the following coefficients have been employed: Q-Kendall's, C-Pearson's, Spearman's rank R correlation. The calculations were performed by means of Statistics 10 version of the application.

### 4.1. Information system and the quality of information

As mentioned before, it has been assumed for the purposes of the study that the managerial personnel in the local government institutions make two types of decisions: administrative ones, which stem from its administrative and public nature and managerial ones, where they have more flexibility i.e. connected to managing employees (motivating,

evaluating, controlling subordinates), introducing changes pertaining to certain areas of functioning of the organization, as well as managing current tasks in a unit.

One of the significant elements in the decision-making process is the information channel and the tools supporting data processing which the personnel in this study uses to the formal circulation of the information. A half of the managers claims that they devote the majority of the daily workload to managerial decisions as defined here i.e. connected to the managerial role. As can be expected we have observed a correlation between the circulation of information and the types of the decisions made. Along with the growth of formal circulation share in processing information, we also observe the growth of administrative decisions share in decision making (significance level  $p = 0,000$ , correlation  $r = 0,32$ ).

Moreover, 69% of managers conceded that there are standstills or breaks in the information processing. The most commonly mentioned reasons for breaks were the necessity to obtain additional information and verifying information with other units. It is probably due to the necessity of cooperation between different organizational units while making administrative decisions. For example, obtaining permission to build a house depends on the previous arrangements and requirements in many areas. Another reason could be bad organization of work or badly specified organizational structure.

Work overload is another factor causing standstills in processing information according to respondents. Especially in the rural communes (gminas) over 40% of the managerial personnel pointed it out as the frequent reason for standstills in processing information. It has probably a lot to do with a greater variety and broader scope of tasks imposed on the managers from the units in rural communes (gminas).

Apart from the information system efficiency, an important element in the decision-making process is the quality of information. The people in the study have been requested to specify what significance each feature has when making decisions. The results have been presented in the ascending order. The greatest significance has: timeliness of the information (average – 3,83), and then explicitness (average – 3,74), completeness (average – 3,70), credibility (3,68), reliability (3,65), precision (3,56), punctuality (3,55), accessibility (3,5), security (3,37). The smallest priority got usefulness of information (average – 3,34). This order pertains to the total results obtained in the process. However, it can be observed that depending on the type of decisions made by the managerial personnel, there are differences as to the quality requirements of information. It means that when making administrative decisions, precision and completeness of information turned out to be important factors. It is probably related to the necessity to receive documents where completeness and precision of information form conditions for appropriate circulation and help avoid delays in the administrative process. On the other hand, when making managerial decisions (for

instance evaluating the subordinates) more emphasis is laid on reliability and explicitness than on completeness and precision.

In local government institutions there are many rules, regulations or procedures which constitute collections of information for the decisions made. Unfortunately, these collections are of average quality. This answer was given by the respondents most frequently when asked about the quality of documents. These problems may stem from the lack of explicit regulations and as a consequence, it may be difficult to interpret them. The respondents put great emphasis on the explicitness of information. The greatest number of responses pointing to the good quality of documents received internal collections i.e. resolutions, ordinances, office orders. On the other hand, the greatest number of negative feedbacks got the procedures of the Quality Management System or Environmental Management System.

In the study we have identified factors, which, according to the respondents are important for appropriate decision making. They have been to assess the role of each of the ten factors (presented below in table 1) as an essential element of the administrative and managerial decision making process.

Table 1

#### Factors conditioning decision-making process

<b>Factors which are relevant for appropriate decision making in offices</b>	
1	Additional financial means to develop competencies and knowledge of the officials
2	Regular training courses on using modern information technologies
3	A change in the organizational structure, which will facilitate circulation/reaching the necessary information/knowledge
4	Greater open-mindedness of officials for new developments and constant training and improving
5	A clearly specified system of motivation, assessment, rewards and remunerations of officials
6	Quick access to the current legal regulations, bills, resolutions, procedures etc.
7	Better cooperation with external institutions, authorities
8	Access to good practice database, solutions from other offices (e.g. on the base of benchamrking)
9	Making use of the analytical tools (data warehouses, decision support systems)
10	Better system of selection and recruitment of the new officials

Source: Author's own study.

The most frequently mentioned factor which conditions appropriate decision making in the administrative decision group was quick access to the current legal regulations, bills, regulation procedures (72%) as well as the need to cooperate more efficiently with external institutions and authorities (56%). On the other hand, in the managerial decisions group the most frequently mentioned factors were: clearly specified system of motivation, assessment, rewards and remunerations of officials (57%). By comparing individual factors (figure 1 below) in various decision-making groups we can observe the biggest difference when it comes to the choice of the fifth factor (clearly specified system of motivation,

assessment, rewards and remunerations of officials) and the seventh (better cooperation with external institutions, authorities).

It can testify to the fact that one of the weak sides of the public institutions is managing human resources, but foremost it pertains to the motivational areas, assessment, trainings and the development of employees.

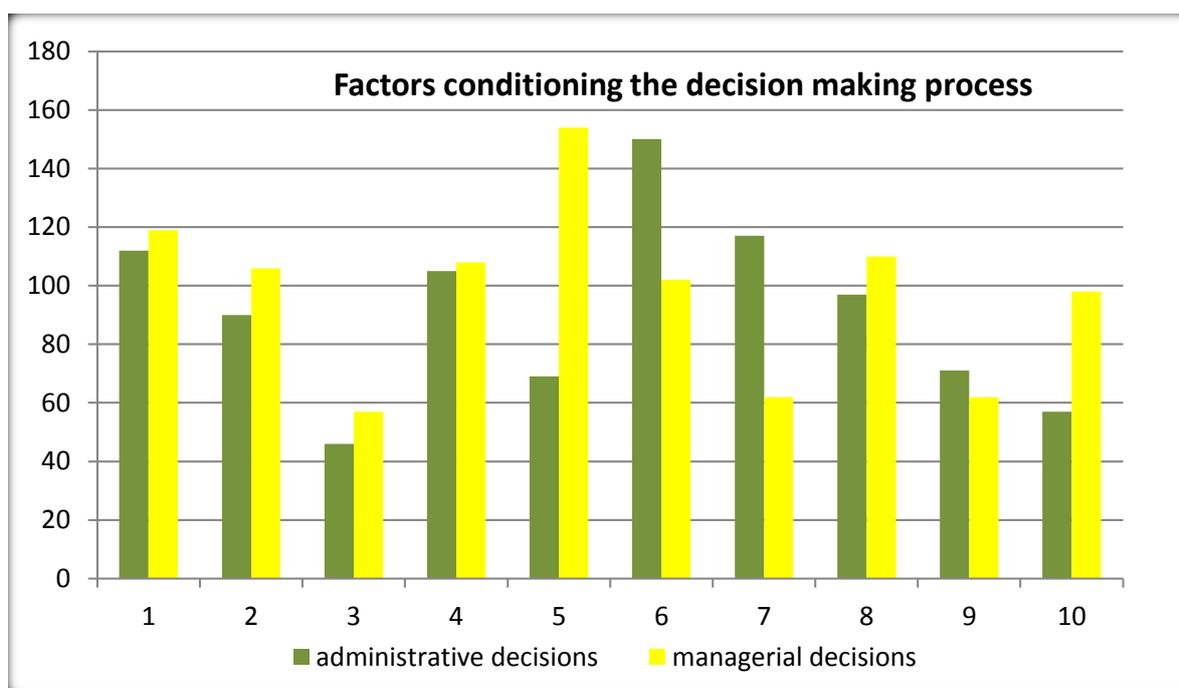


Fig. 1. Factors conditioning the decision making process

Rys. 1. Czynniki warunkujące podejmowanie decyzji

Source: Author's own study based on research analysis.

The manager also specified what problems they have to face when making efficient decisions. The most significant barriers were: too little time to analyze certain issues (24%), lack/shortage of the good quality information (15%) as well as fossilized procedures and too much bureaucracy (12,8%). It is surprising though that a lot of respondents did not comment on the issue of insufficient skills to make difficult decisions (24,16%), i.e. every fourth manager cannot or does not want to assess herself or himself.

#### 4.2. Decision-making competencies

The success in the decision-making process is heavily dependent on the decision-making potential of the manager i.e. her or his personality, knowledge, experience, ability to organize her or his work, leadership style, competences as well as attitude and motivation. Thus, the managers assessed twenty four elements of decision-making competences which included knowledge, skills, attitudes, personality traits as: essential, of average importance or non-

essential in the decision making. The linear order of the priorities according to the ranks ascribed to them is presented in table 2.

Table 2

## Decision-making competencies

Competencies	Ranks
K1 – Specialist Knowledge	24
K2 – Considerable management knowledge	23
K6 – Strict observance of procedures, rules and legal norms	21,5
K20 – Self-improvement, willingness to improve qualifications and acquire knowledge	21,5
K4 – Significant work experience	19
K7 – Ability to resolve conflicts	19
K8 – Ability to predict and analyse facts	19
K13 – Ability to delegate powers	16
K14 – Ease in creating appropriate culture and friendly atmosphere among co-workers	16
K22 – Resistance to stress	16
K15 – Ability to motivate others	14
K18 – Ability to lead a group, leadership	13
K5 – Making use of modern information and communication technology	11
K12 – High level of professional ethics (integrity, justice)	11
K21 – Strong personal motivation	11
K11 – Involvement in the work and realisation of goals of an organisation	9
K17 – Ability to solve problems conceptually and creatively	8
K9 – Courage and ability to make decisions quickly	6
K23 – Sensitivity and empathy	6
K24 – Self-confidence	6
K19 – Ability to communicate and work in groups	4
K16 – Ability to use intuition in the decision making process	3
K3 – Knowledge of foreign languages	2
K10 – Propensity to risk taking	1

Source: Author's own study.

As can be observed, apart from the specialist knowledge, in this case referring to administrative character of work, the second area that has been pointed to was management knowledge and then development of other competencies. It can mean that managerial attitude to management is growing. Propensity to risk taking is most often selected as unnecessary (or of average importance), knowledge of foreign languages or using intuition in decision making process, which certainly is caused by the way these organizations function. However, low importance ascribed to communication and teamwork has to be assessed critically.

It has also been noted that sex of the respondents differentiates the results in competencies such as: propensity to risk taking ( $p = 0,022416$ ), ability to communicate and work in a team. Women are less likely to take risks but exhibit greater ability to communicate and work in a team.

It has also been noted that there is a significant dependency between the age of a manager and the following competencies: vast knowledge on management ( $p = 0,023861$ ), significant job experience ( $p = 0,007522$ ), propensity to risk-taking ( $p = 0,032767$ ), high level of work

ethics (integrity, justice) ( $p = 0,015649$ ), conceptual skills, ability to deal creatively with problems ( $p = 0,013041$ ). The managers in the age group between 46 and 60 year old more willingly make decisions in the risky conditions. It is probably connected to greater management knowledge and experience. 25% of all the managers pointed to conceptual skills, creative problem solving, where a big group is constituted by managers between 46 and 60 years old (46%) and managers between 35-45 (36%).

## 5. Conclusion

In the study part, the following questions have been posed: what significance does the quality of information as well as information system have in decision-making process and what competences should the managers of local government institutions have to make the right decisions. The studies have shown that decision-making needs of the respondents are not fully met due to the quality of information. One of the problems is also the waiting time for essential information as well ambiguity of the regulations and tasks overload (fast pace of work), especially in smaller offices. Work overload has been mentioned as the most frequent reason for standstills in processing information. It is especially true for units in small rural communes (gminas) where managers complain about work overload (40% of all choices).

In the studied organizations we have not observed shortage of information problems, but on the contrary, its abundance. Every fourth of the respondents avoided answering questions pertaining to making difficult decisions.

In the studies that we have conducted among the managerial personnel of the local government institutions the most frequently chosen competencies of an ideal manager were the ones related to the specificity of their jobs. They, most of all, pertained to expert knowledge, strict observance of procedures, regulations and legal norms and also knowledge on management. On the other hand, lower marks were given to competencies such as: ability to solve problems in a conceptual and creative way, ability to make use of intuition in decision making process, involvement in work and attaining goals of an organization, but it can also be explained by a special character of these two prevalent problems.

The presented results can testify to the fact that a weaker point of the offices is managing human resources, and this refers to areas such as motivation, evaluation, training courses and workers' development. However, the managers exhibit high motivation to increase their skills, to improve themselves and acquire knowledge. Unfortunately, there are unfavourable circumstances for the improvement to take place.

Decision making in local government institutions is still heavily influenced by administrative and political perspective, but more and more frequently a need for a managerial approach can be observed.

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