

THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL COMPETENCES

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to indicate the importance of the role of the professional environment in shaping social competences. Thus, the research problem refers to the question: what is the role of the professional environment in shaping the social competences of the commanding staff of officers of the Polish Armed Forces? The publication is a continuation of the article Fri "Social competence of the commanding staff of officers of the Polish Armed Forces in the military security system of Poland". In the dynamically changing reality, due to the continuous development of science and technology, the process of professional improvement and updating knowledge is the basis for the effective performance of duties by employees. The level of social competence has a decisive impact on the level of human specialisation, its responsibility to perform various social roles and, therefore, is important in the professional life of every human being.

Keywords: professional environment, social competences, human resources.

Admission

The popularity of social competences over time is becoming increasingly important not only in scientific environments. So far, the main interest in social competences has taken place in the world of economics, sociology, management, pedagogy or psychology. Today, the phenomenon of exceptionally high interest in social competences can be observed in professional environments among management practitioners. The shaping of social competences is also very popular in the military environment. Specialists in management, in particular management related to human resources, often appearing in the role of personal or professional consultants, initiate research on the role of social competences in the professional life of employees. Professional environments in the training industry in the HR environment

(human resources) deal with extensive personal training or career counselling. In this matter, it is not possible to omit pedagogical, psychotherapeutic, socio-therapeutic and therapeutic environments, which play an important role in the area of personality research in terms of social competences.

Social competences include understanding the needs and feelings of others, expressing their own ideas and needs, solving problems, cooperating and negotiating, expressing emotions, assessing social situations, adapting behaviours to the needs of social situations, as well as initiating and maintaining friendships (Odom, Zercher, Marquart, Sandall, Wolfberg, 2002).

1. Impact of the professional environment on the development of employee social skills

Among the most frequently mentioned components of social competence in literature are the following, listed as key social skills: assertiveness, cooperation and cooperation skills, negotiation, exerting influence, proper application of openness, rewarding and strengthening, motivating, building relationships, adapting to a new environment and new ones Situation, communication skills, i.e. non-verbal and verbal communication (listening skills, starting, running and ending a conversation, asking questions, expressing requests, gathering information, giving feedback, issuing orders, conducting discussions, negotiating and convincing others), the ability to deal with conflict situations and conflict resolution, empathy, self-presentation and shaping your own image, leadership, resistance to stress, etc. (Bandach).

An employee's professional effectiveness is affected not so much by his persistent personality traits, but by his competences, the level of which changes under the influence of various types of interactions. Through training, workshops and coaching programs, we can influence the improvement of the employee's qualifications to the level expected at a given position. Through the use of various forms of further education and stimulation of development, the employee achieves the level of competence required in higher positions, which opens him to further career advancement (Bandach).

According to the theory of the organisation's strive for strategic human resources management, individual professional development plans should be created in such a way as to best diagnose the potential and aspirations of the employee and support his/her individual development through adequate and diverse forms of activities in accordance with the objectives of this institution. This means that the role of the professional environment in shaping the competences of employees is a leading role. The professional environment undoubtedly directly and indirectly influences the shape of the employee's social training. It affects its intensity and effectiveness, depending on the motivational instructions of the individual. As a child, we acquire social skills through family relationships and in the environment in which we live.

The crucial elements in the development of employee competences play a key role from the professional environment, entities managing employees' competences. In general, we can say that this is the organisation, management and the employees themselves. In a wider and much more detailed approach to T. Oleksyn, this will be the chief executives, managers, personal specialists and the remaining managers in the role of direct superiors and the employees themselves. For more on the subject of competency management in an organisation, I will refer to the second subsection of this chapter.

The most important environment in improving employees' competences is their place of work. The development of social competences is mainly done through participation in the social work process. Work creates conditions in which the work process itself and the environment in which this work takes place affect the development of the features and views and attitudes of employees. The workplace also shapes interpersonal relationships and the attitude of identification with the profession.

A workplace is defined as a professional environment relating to the practice, or professional experience, that is brought by the self-improvement of man as self-employment. This means that the more developed and rich the human personality is, the more self-educating processes take part in the process of upbringing, hence in upbringing self-education processes play an important role in the enterprise through active participation in professional and social work (Jeruszka, 2006).

Human work is a social process carried out in a work environment. One can not overlook the impact that the professional environment has on the shaping of social competences and the level of competence. An organisation in which we employ individuals from the social point of view is a collective of people who are connected in a different way and feel as though they belong to this community.

According to J. Szczepański, the professional environment as an organisation is not only a technical and economic system, but also a social system, i.e. a team of interpersonal relations, the arrangement of individual groups and organisations and a system of positions and social positions (Szczepański, 1970).

The impact of the professional environment refers to people starting their career and continuing it. It refers to the period of professional development of an employee preparing for professional work, their performance and changes in professional life. Thus, the issue of the influence of the work environment on the development of competences applies to both youth and adults.

In the case of young people, it covers the area of practical vocational training in the working environment, the process of implementation to work and current professional work. In reference to adults, it includes previous professional work, including adaptation to a new profession or professional environment and a new scope of work, to tasks and functions, as well as adaptation to new conditions and a new character of work. The professional environment includes,

therefore, a part of the issues related to education and shaping the personality of adolescents and adults (Jeruszka, 2006).

The professional environment affects the shape of the social training, and the entities appearing in the organisation affect the social unit, which is the employee. Literature emphasises the multifaceted impact of the professional environment. It shapes the needs of employees of higher order and value, it enables acquiring knowledge in real conditions, including those concerning the social environment and the rules applicable in the professional environment. In addition, the professional environment decisively influences the quality of knowledge acquired by employees. The importance of the professional experience resource is particularly valuable due to entering roles and establishing satisfying interpersonal relationships and decides upon the type of attachment style to other social groups.

In conclusion, it should be underscored that the employee's professional development through social training is in the interest of the employee himself. It should, however, be profitable for the organisation itself, in which the employee is professionally active. The economic result suggests that the influence of the organisation, and thus the professional environment, has a very large impact and plays a leading role in shaping the social competences of each employee in a given organisation.

2. Competence management entities in the organisation

Effective implementation of professional careers is conditioned by active participation of three entities: the employee, superior and organisation. The need to manage career development is increasingly seen by most enterprises. It is connected with benefits for the company. Costs associated with recruitment are lower, because the opportunity to achieve a career goal in the company increases the motivation to work, which results in low personnel fluctuation. There is also the ability to attract the best employees and specialists from the external labor market. Skilful use of the knowledge acquired by the supervisor regarding career planning allows for the setting of realistic career goals by the employee and assigning him such work by the superior, which will best satisfy the employee's perceived needs and bring benefits to the company (Szałkowski, 2002).

Organisations have a very large influence on shaping the professional careers of their employees by managing their competences. This is in their structures, and with the help of clearly defined norms and procedures, career data is implemented through the use of appropriate tools. We can meet with a different approach to shaping the careers of employees, that is (Szałkowski, 2002):

- **approach of the "invisible hand"** – managers believe that ambitious, talented people and confidently sooner or later they will succeed, and people with opposite traits do not want to make a career, so they will not reach the top of the organisational structure;
- **the "pearl seekers" approach** – the company focuses on a selected group of people who exhibit the greatest predispositions for rapid learning and high-level positions in the future;
- **career planning approach** – modern when the organisation strives to reconcile its goals;
- needs and opportunities with the employees' professional plans.

The third assumption is believed to be the most beneficial. Clearly defined are the requirements and regulations for promotion to subsequent levels, which positively affects the motivation of employees, and related to this – the implementation of the company's goals. T. Oleksyn presents a more detailed perspective on competency management in an organisation. He believes that competences in an organisation are managed by the same entities that manage the human resources (Oleksyn, 2010).

The role of the immediate superior in competence management in the process of shaping the careers of employees is very important and complex. This mainly applies to organisations of highly-developed and career-planning employees. In a majority of cases, the supervisor has direct contact with his subordinates, provides help, opinions and knowledge and assesses the level of tasks performed and decides upon their promotion (Oleksyn, 2010).

The top management in medium and large organisations is responsible for the strategy and the shape of the competency management system. Top-level managers of a given organisation have a decisive influence on the policy of the competency management system, the general shape of the mentioned system and its level of financing. The responsibility and decisions of the top management also include engaging external partners to participate in the competency management of the organisation.

Trade unions are often active in medium and large organisations. If this situation takes place in the organisation and then the trade unions, and if there is a desire by both parties that the competency management system should be part of the collective labor agreement, the top management conducts collective bargaining with the union in a working mode (Oleksyn, 2010).

The manager and personal specialists are actively involved in developing the policy of the competency management system and come to agreements with the management, lower level management and trade unions, if they function in a given organisation. The personal manager and his closest collaborators are responsible for the operationalisation of the competence management system, its ongoing service and improvement (Oleksyn, 2010).

Their work also involves developing and coordinating professional development plans for employees and managers. In addition, all activities are related to periodic reviews of employees and linking these results to professional development, and they also belong to managers and personnel specialists. It should be emphasised that the activities of managers and personnel

specialists should result from close cooperation with other managers and specialists from other organisational units.

The ability to cooperate, especially in large organisations, is particularly important from the point of view of the organisational good and final outcome. In turn, the final results of the work of managers and personnel specialists depend on the ability to cooperate with other entities, as well as efficiency and patience in communicating, seeking mutual understanding, the ability to resolve disputable issues and achieving a consensus (Oleksyn, 2010).

All other managers are also a very important part of the competence management system. The direct manager knows best what employees, and with what competences and skills, need for a specific position. It is the direct manager who knows the employees and their professional abilities best. He knows which employees have strengths and weaknesses and knows how to motivate them to work.

According to T. Oleksyna, if managers at the lower and upper level obtain the necessary autonomy and freedom of action, showing the appropriate skills, they can significantly develop the competence management system and ensure high efficiency (Oleksyn, 2010).

Lack of autonomy and limiting the activities of lower and senior managers may result from the activities of the chief management and personnel specialists. Shows it is most often a centralized decision-making process and thus a range of powers for individual organisational units.

The last entity of the competence management system is employees in the organisation. Employees who do not have any managerial role act as a subject in the competency management system in the organisation. Undoubtedly, we wonder to what extent employees play a role in managing competences in the organisation. However, we may assume in our considerations that this is the most credible subject, considering the knowledge of oneself or knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses. It should be emphasised that, ultimately, the employees know what their knowledge, skills or lack of skills are. It should also be emphasised that employees need control in terms of their self-esteem, which may be, for example, inflated or underestimated. There is no doubt that employees are also worth encouraging to develop through, for example, showing them the benefits of expanding knowledge and qualifications.

In bureaucratic organisations, the scope of activities imposed on employees in the process of performing tasks is in force. Employees with no function in the organisation are usually not expected to participate in determining the content of sentences, nor is it possible to do so. However, in organisations where employees actually play the role of a competency management body, space is created not only for self-organisation, but also for co-defining the goals and tasks and the content of the work (Oleksyn, 2010).

The subjectivity of employees in the management and shaping of social competences should be expressed in taking over the initiative of shaping their own career paths in the scope of development or promotion. This also means that employees must take greater responsibility for

developing their own competences. They can not hold the responsibility for the shape of their career only in management or organisation. The inner motivation for self-development is the leading one. It also means that employees, in their professional and development plans, often consider more than one organisation.

Summarising the above considerations in the area of competence management entities in an organisation, it should be undoubtedly emphasised that the division of roles played by individual entities is very important here. Each entity is responsible for shaping the professional competences in a given organisation. Cooperation between these entities should be based on strengths, such as the assumption of far-reaching decentralisation and developing and strengthening the mutual trust of individual competence management entities. This, in turn, does not mean that you can completely deprive the controls in question.

It should also be remembered that it is not possible to introduce the same competency management system in every department. Each organisation has its own specificity, and this means that the competency management system in each organisation should be different, i.e. tailor made. This, in turn, implies that each organisation is unique and unique. The organisations owe this uniqueness to the individuals employed within it.

3. Harmonisation of expectations anticipated and possessed

Competences have become the subject of special attention in modern management. We have entered the era of knowledge and information. The leading companies try to gain a competitive advantage by identifying and developing key competences of the company. These competences consist of the competence sets of all the employees of the company. Nowadays, from employees, apart from qualifications and education, more professional experience is expected. Namely, competences are expected that can generally be understood as a total of knowledge, skills and attitudes that provide the opportunity to overtake the competition (Rakowska, Sitko-Lutek, 2000).

In practice, this usually means that the competences that the organisation has at its disposal are expected to exceed today's needs. Harmonisation of competences should take place not only on the scale of the organisation, but also in its individual areas. This is often dictated by the expectations of the external environment, e.g. customers or contractors. A turbulent environment characterised by continuous change is most often the reason for the change of competences in the organisation. It should be emphasised that the difference in the form of a competency gap between the profile of competences held and the profile of expected competences can carry high costs. The costs arise, e.g. from the employment of employees with higher qualifications.

As mentioned above, the organisation must adapt to the expectations of customers who expect, for example, comprehensive service, and this, in turn, requires a broader competence. Harmonisation of competences can be illustrated in more detail, referring to the analysis of the demand for employees, which focus on the areas of the economy that will develop in the near future. In such assumptions, we are guided by the fact that the demand for employees with specific qualifications will grow wherever the "professions of the future" are sought. Unfortunately, the labor market is highly unstable, and for some time, the range of professions has been changing constantly over a fairly short time. In this situation, the competence gap still exists, and it is difficult to predict what competences will be sought by the employer in the future. For this reason, the employee must be flexible and be prepared to have to be retrained several times. This is why it is worth looking at the competences increasingly expected by employers towards employees, both now and in the future.

Both groups of competences held and expected should be harmonised. In literature on the subject, the traditional approach assumes that the competences of employees should be adapted to the changing conditions of requirements at workplaces. However, this does not mean that harmonisation can not take place in the opposite direction. Harmonisation in the case when the specific competences of employees result in the re-profiling of content at the workplace, they may give up one job in favor of taking another. The determinants of the sets of expected competences and at the same time the starting point is the mission, vision and strategy of the organization and demand.

The sets of expected competences have, therefore, a quantitative and qualitative character. However, it should be remembered that there are organisations on the market already, and that means that they have, and have at their disposal, a certain set of real competences held by employees (Oleksyn, 2010).

4. Assessment of employee competences in the human resource management policy

Nowadays, the importance of human resource management is growing. Human resource management has a central place in all organisations, regardless of their type and size. This is due to recognition of the fact that human capital is a valuable means of improving the efficiency and awareness of the values associated with improper management of people. It is people who provide the organisation with their work, talents, creativity and energy. It is people who create and develop technology, create a company and participate in its life. A company's durability and profits depend on who they are, what they do and how they work. The human resource management process is a systematic procedure to ensure the organisation has the right people in the right positions at the right time. The main goal of human resources management is to find

the right people who will fulfill the functions and tasks of the organisation, which should be implemented in an integrated manner. Many modern organisations take this issue very seriously.

Human capital includes all the attributes and properties embodied in people that have a certain value and are a source of future benefits, both for the employee – the owner of human capital, and for the organisation benefiting from this capital under certain conditions (Pocztowski, 1998).

Human capital is a pool of knowledge and skills developed in the course of education and professional experience, as well as health and vital energy (Ciekanowski, 2013). Thanks to this, the organisation's goals can be realised. People are the key to success, and the expenses allocated to their selection, training and maintenance in the company are returned, because they bring additional value to the entrepreneur. Nowadays, despite the growing availability of modern technologies and financial resources, companies with the most competent, ripped and effort-able employees acquire the largest competitive advantage. The theory of human capital focuses on practical issues related to the recruitment of employees, their development and rewarding, measuring their values, the assessment of human resources management processes, learning in the organisation and knowledge management.

Human capital is a key element of a company's market value, which is why its value should be recognised in the books as an indicator of the total value of the company and its intangible and tangible assets. This is important information for investors, as well as entities considering mergers or acquisitions (Armstrong, 1996). The process of setting measurement indicators and collecting and analysing related information will direct the organisation's attention to the actions to be taken to find, retain, develop and make the best use of human capital.

Measuring the value of human capital can form the basis of a resource-based human resources strategy to develop the key competences of an organisation. Human capital value measurements can be used to monitor progress in achieving the strategic goals of human resources management and, in general, to assess the effectiveness of human resources management practices (Armstrong, 1996).

One of the key elements of the HR management process in each company is the assessment of employees. Assessment is the process of long-term manifestation the behaviour of the employee and the valuation of elements of his relation to the assigned tasks, company, superiors and colleagues (Maniak, 2001). The results of the evaluation may contain, in practice, the management of employees' multilateral use, but the condition enabling their correct use is to organise the assessment process into a certain system.

The concept of an employee evaluation system should be understood as a deliberately chosen set of elements and relations occurring between them, aimed at improving the efficiency of human resources management in the context of achieving the assumed goals and mission of the organisation (Maniak, 2001). The assessment usually includes the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the organisational functioning of individual people and answers the

question: if and to what extent the employee fits a specific job. The results of the assessment are used to plan individual careers, education and development paths. They are also the basis for the decision on remuneration, promotion, degradation or shifting. The evaluation system is linked to the remuneration system in force in the organisation. When talking about employee evaluation, its two basic forms should be distinguished: current assessment and periodic assessment.

Taking into account personality traits in assessment systems is apparent from the conviction that there is a relationship between the psychological abilities of the employee and their adjustment to the requirements of a particular job and the effectiveness of their work (Smyk, Juchnowicz, 2000). These criteria include relatively constant features of the human psyche that are relevant to the requirements of the workplace. Among these personality criteria are, among others: responsibility, energy, assertiveness, resistance to stress, self-confidence, accuracy, honesty, balance, loyalty, imagination, creativity. Assessment procedures using personality traits are related to the expression of opinions supported by the observed situations in the workplace rather than using specific tests prepared by specialists.

The assessment method is another element of the employee evaluation system.

In the practice of human resource management, there are many methods of employee evaluation that differ in terms of achieved results, the ability to avoid the most common mistakes, the costs of their implementation and the time-consuming nature of their implementation. All the methods used to assess employees can be divided into relative methods (Golnau, Kalinowski, Litwin, 2007), which consist in comparing employees with each other, and absolute methods (Golnau, Kalinowski, Litwin, 2007), which consist in comparing employees with established standards, standards, and models.

An important role in the employee evaluation system is exercised by the assessment entities. The evaluator assesses employees (Pawlak, 2003). In the traditional evaluation, the employee appraisal entity is the direct superior who knows the employee best, because he/she has the ability to constantly monitor him/her in the course of work. However, limiting yourself only to the supervisor's assessment is unreliable. The supervisor's assessment may be biased for various reasons and reasons. Therefore, it is recommended that as many entities as possible be included in the assessment.

All employees of the company should be assessed. What is important here is the division into groups, which will be assessed according to other criteria specific to them. In each company, this division will be slightly different. Functioning plays an important role in this process in the company, as well as an appropriate communication system. It should be used to inform employees about the objectives of the evaluation, the manner and timing of its assessment and the proposed assessment criteria. It should be shown to employees that this evaluation process is neither a punishment nor a reward, but it is a routine activity that is part of the personnel management system.

The process of informing employees about periodic evaluations should take into account the stage of presenting the intention to introduce a system of assessments, combined with the presentation of evaluation objectives and the adopted criteria and methods of assessment; creating opportunities for employees to submit critical remarks about the system being designed and to include employees in the preparation of the assessment system, especially when developing assessment criteria (Golnau, Kalinowski, Litwin, 2007).

The rated entity, i.e. those who are subject to assessment, may be a single employee or a group of employees (Pawlak, 2003). The assessment of the individual is more important, as most of the personnel decisions refer to this person. However, there are situations when the assessment covers organised teams of people and even categories of employees. An individual assessment may refer to the employee's qualifications, personal qualities, behaviour and work effects. A category of employees is assessed in connection with the analysis of human resources in the company. Various indicators are then examined and compared, e.g. work efficiency, use of working time, tardiness, absenteeism in particular professions, age groups or internship groups.

The frequency of assessing employees is also important. Depending on the adopted objectives, periodic evaluations are carried out every three months, every six months or every year. This can not be carried out too often, as it is a very expensive process. In addition, too short a period between successive assessments makes it impossible to achieve the adopted goals, e.g. supplementing the qualifications by an employee. In addition, it would be cumbersome and time-consuming for both sides of the assessment process. On the other hand, periodic assessments carried out less frequently than every year make it impossible to track the development of employees and introduce appropriate corrections in due time.

The last element of the employee appraisal system is the principles of employee appraisal (Ludwicyński, 2002). Assessment is one of the most important tools for human resources management; however, inexpertly carried out, it can do more harm than bring benefits. Therefore, it is worth remembering the typical risks associated with assessing people in an organisation (Pocztowski, 1998). This allows one to reduce the probability of errors that negatively affect the quality of the assessment and the state of employee relations in the company (Golnau, Kalinowski, Litwin, 2007).

The employee evaluation system is a very useful tool used by a vast majority of modern companies. The use of methods of conducting evaluations and applying their results in the practice of human resources management raises some controversies. It happens that the information obtained from the employee evaluation is not used as a whole to perform a personnel function, but to select employees in the restructuring process, which is obviously perceived negatively by employees and makes them object against assessments (Kawka, Listwan, 2004).

The assessment system should be used to plan and coordinate the process of managing people so that they can do their work productively in relation to the expectations of their

superiors. At the same time, the assessment system should serve employees so that they can achieve their goals and expectations towards the organisation.

Employee evaluation is a special element of personnel policy due to the fact that it is a starting point for many activities in the field of personnel policy. The assessment is the basis for determining staffing needs, employees' achievements, developing the remuneration system, staffing (promotions and redundancies), as well as creating the concept of employee improvement (training programmes) and career paths (Janowska, 2002).

Regular employee evaluation is an instrument of a motivational policy, and it also enables the diagnosis of the employee's development potential. This allows for the optimal use of their skills and qualifications, as well as planning of the development path. An important factor of periodic assessment is also feedback to employees concerning how their work is perceived (Znańska-Kozłowska).

The employees' evaluation in an organisation consists in comparing the results of their work, behaviour and personality traits with the assumed models of these assessment criteria. Employee evaluations play the role of one of the basic elements of the approach to managing people resulting from the human resources management policy. They are an important factor in the implementation of a company's personnel strategy.

Summary

Consideration of social competence issues from the perspective of human resources management is an equally fascinating and problematic issue. Social competences are, by their logical essence, names (notions) of indistinct meaning (Ajdukiewicz, 1956), i.e. it is not easy to define the characteristics of the team for the content of these concepts. An analysis of literature on the subject indicated a significant number of contextual definitions defining the notion of interpersonal, social, communication, language and cultural competences (Goleman, 1998, 2007), all of which are related to the management of the impression, i.e. the acquisition of linguistic, cognitive and social factors, and their use in the process of individual development.

The essence of the full managerial function is the continuity on the entity and involvement in the education process of these skills and continuous improvement of their qualifications in the discussed area. Literature on the subject, despite the rich collection of texts, has a modest description of the interactions of individuals in the social environment. Giving this category a role could contribute to increasing the transfer of knowledge to practice. As a result of the conducted research, it can be stated that the professional environment has a huge impact on the development and shaping of an employee's social competences. In addition, the development of social competences is influenced by the actions of the management staff motivating and

supporting the activities of the staff. It is not possible to omit the interested person, i.e. the employee, when it comes to shaping social competences. The extent to which social competences are shaped depends on the internal and external motivation of the employees of a given organisation. Social competences are strongly rooted in the learning process, which provides the opportunity for systematic deepening of their qualifications. In this way, a feature called self-control is developed, which describes a person that is aware of his social reactions while being sensitising to the behaviour of others. Self-control activities have a pragmatic impact on created relationships, as the way we are treated usually depends on what others think about us (Miller, 2000). The opportunity to participate in the process of acquiring skills and knowledge provides, among others, institutional education, to which a given individual is subject.

The authors of this publication presented the theoretical content, introducing to the issue the role of the professional environment in shaping social competences, treating it as a complement to the article entitled "Social competence of the commanding staff of officers of the Polish Armed Forces in the military security system of Poland" and, at the same time, as a contribution to the presentation of research carried out in the context of the cited article and this publication. The authors of this article are aware that the presented study is not an exhaustive description of the complexity of the phenomenon of social competence. Therefore, it is justified to continue exploring the subject matter and to publish it in subsequent cyclical publications.

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