

IDENTIFICATION OF THE FIRST LEVEL MANAGERS' RELEVANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT CHAIN: CASE STUDY OF WEST LITHUANIA COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

Assessment of the first level managers only in respect of their compliance with the requirements set for a particular job position is not sufficient. A tool facilitating identification of the relevance of the first level managers in certain management chain is required as it would ensure effectiveness of their performance and harmony in the management chain. The present article aims at emphasising the feasibility of identification of the relevance of the first level managers in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) through personality traits. The research analysed the following members (links) of the management chain: first level managers (*FLM*), their direct supervisors – mid-level managers (*MLM*) and subordinates (*SUB*) – working in five furniture manufacturing companies of the West Lithuania Region. “The Big Five” method was applied as research instrument to assess personality traits of the first level managers. Quantitative analysis enabled modelling of a graph, which represents a derived mean value of the assessment of the first level managers’ personality traits, designated to identify disharmonious chains in companies. When identifying the first level managers’ relevance in the management chain, only individual evaluations performed by the members /links of the chains were referred to and used as a basis for evaluation of personal traits of particular first level manager only. The obtained data supplements direct indicators of FLM performance assessment.

KEYWORDS: *first level managers, evaluation, personality traits, hierarchy, management chain, harmony, regional problems.*

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Introduction

Striving for higher economic efficiency, implementation of innovations and sustainable economic development in the Western Lithuania Region, the focus should be made on higher cohesion and integration of the labour market. Specific, clearly perceived actions are required to facilitate coping with the problems encountered by the region.

Obviously, nobody acting alone is able to ensure all necessary actions. Promotion of competitiveness requires joint efforts that would make a basis for further development of the Western Lithuania Region in order to enable maximum use of opportunities being opened for this region. Action programme should provide for investment into human resources development under all priority areas thereby ensuring favourable conditions for development of professional competences and learning of new knowledge and skills. Adequate

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management of human resources stimulates generation of more added value in organizations, ensures development and continuity of production and services, attracts young qualified specialists and is likely to facilitate development of new products and services through implementation of innovative management methods. And implementation of advanced technologies serves as a tool for ensuring better conditions for creation of new jobs, improvement of quality of work environment, allows for reciprocal *compatibility* and additional assessment of applied measures.

Practical experience shows that many organizations experience problems related with human resources management; such problems arise due to lack of professional managers at various organisational levels. Managers of various levels should comply with professional requirements based on education, knowledge and competences; however personality traits affecting performance and results of specific tasks are no less important. Therefore, in the context of *sustainable development* of organizations (for better quality of living of present and future generations) the requirements established for the first level managers are also changing. Identification of the first-level managers' relevance, as a managerial action, is necessary in any organization striving for effective performance.

The criteria and methods of employees evaluation were analysed by S. Brutus, M. London, J. Martineu, (1999), P. Carrick, R. Williams (1999), S. P. Robbins (2003), A. Sakalas (2003), P. Zakarevičius (2003), N. Chmiel (2005), P. D. Schultz and S. E. Schultz (2006), L. P. Martins (2007; 2009). Although evaluation of employees was widely analysed and discussed in research literature, it's still difficult to define what criteria should be applied particularly for evaluation of the first level managers.

The problems of evaluation of employees in organizations were analysed by D. Renwick (2003), H. Larsen Holt, C. Brewster (2003), S. Whittaker, M. Marchington (2003), Ch. M. MacNeil (2003), I. Cunningham, P. James, P. Dibben (2004), M. Armstrong (2009), L. Lobanova (2009). When evaluating the first level managers, eventual mistakes can result from insufficient competence of evaluating person, biased opinions, incorrectly defined criteria of evaluation (when requirements are too high or too low, when some criteria are given „priority“ over other ones), insufficient information. It is difficult to achieve absolute objectivity when identifying and evaluating relevance of the first level managers. The problem of identification of the first level managers' relevance in the management chain is as complex as a human being himself. Therefore, in order to evaluate the first level managers' relevance in the management chain, he (FLM) should be well understood.

It can be stated that there are certain problems related with the process of evaluation of the first level managers' relevance and such process requires further adjustments. Therefore, evaluation of the first level managers' relevance in organizations needs further improvement: their assessment only in respect of compliance with the requirements set for a particular job position is not sufficient; a tool facilitating identification of the relevance of the first level managers in certain management chain is required, as it would ensure effectiveness of their performance.

The problem: Insufficient attention to identification of first-level managers' relevance in the management chain has been paid in research publications and practical work of companies. This issue is important as relevance of each member (employee) in the management chain determines the final outcomes of the company performance.

The object of the research – the first-level managers' relevance in the management chain.

The goal (aim) of the research: to substantiate the necessity for identification of the first level managers' relevance in the management chain: middle level manager (*MLM*) – first level manager (*FLM*) – subordinators (*SUB*) (*MLM–FLM–SUB*), to make research in manufacturing companies and to generalise the obtained results.

The objectives set to achieve the aim of the research: to substantiate the necessity for identification of the first level managers' relevance in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) on the basis of their personality traits; to describe the research methodology and to identify relevance of the first level managers of manufacturing companies in the management chain.

The applied methods: comparative analysis of research literature; quantitative analysis and data processing methods; the data gathered in the course of quantitative analysis was processed by SPSS 15.0 programme.

1. Identification of the first level manager's relevance in the management chain

Performance of managers, functioning on various hierarchical management levels in the organisation, is assessed not against the scope of work performed by them individually, i.e. not regarding how much and in what way they did themselves, but considering the fact how well they had organised work process in order other performers managed by them to produce more and better results. Position of managers in the management system is described by consolidation of efforts of others, subordinate employees in order each subordinate to be able to perform revealing his/her abilities to the maximum extent. Managers able to organize the work of subordinate groups create friendly environment and lead by example demonstrating respect, support to others and collaboration skills. *Harmony* should be increased by encouraging a group, promoting competition, striving for acceptance of the group objectives by all its members, encouraging the group members to spend more time together. Managers encourage others to show enthusiasm, to join the group and to contribute to building of its identity and harmony. Beside to their direct duties, managers spend much time to establish and maintain close relations with colleagues (Seilius, 2001; Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2007; Šimanskienė, Seilius, 2009; Buožiūtė-Rafanavičienė, Pundžienė, Turauskas, 2009).

Many authors (Seilius, 2001; Беляцкий, 2002; Seilius et al., 2004; Šimanskienė and Seilius, 2009) making research on impact of manager's traits on performance results of the organization, concluded that manager's traits determine the quality of management, which is reflected by performance results of the organization. Each manager's trait enabling him to consolidate employees into groups and to manage them striving for the highest effectiveness of their performance was analysed in research papers by various authors (Seilius, 2001; Robbins, 2003; Alonderienė, Bakanauskienė, 2004; Zakarevičius, Župerkienė, 2008). The above authors note that personality traits help managers to make decisions in stressful situations, when performing complex tasks and implementing difficult objectives; they facilitate more flexible problem-solving and thereby affect results of performance in terms of profitability, growth of sales and other objective criteria; contribute to striving for progress and improvement; promote higher loyalty and collaboration of employees; ensure higher level of trust in a manager; stimulate faster reconciliation of disagreements, drafting of realistic plans, estimation of actions of the plan, setting of deadlines, removal of obstacles, arranging of effective performance of organization; they also ensure adequate attention both to communication and a task, without giving priority for either.

As the researchers E. Poškienė (2002) and L. Šimanskienė and A. Seilius (2009) maintain, the research aimed at identifying of the factors that determine success of a manager resulted in mixed findings. Some authors attribute managerial success to personality qualities, others – to certain particular aspects of behaviour, while another ones claim that such success is determined not only by personality traits or behaviour of a manager but also by situational factors. Good managers have such personality traits that distinguish them from others (Seilius, et al., 2004).

It was thought “that the power of personality of an individual can be explicitly defined by the level of influence over others” (Yukl, 2006). Employees working on various hierarchical levels of organization emphasise that success in managerial performance is achieved by those who have extraordinary personality traits (Seilius, 2001). It also applies to the first level managers. Identification of the first level managers' relevance in the organization requires good understanding and attention to them (*FLM*), knowing their weaknesses and strengths.

Phenomenon of performance of the first level manager – is an aspect of *FLM* assessment, which is particularly related with practical aspects of performance. Classificatory system of performance results comprises of parameters that reflect functional, physiological, psychosocial health condition, data on appropriate behaviour, perception of performance.

First level manager (*FLM*) is an *intermediate link* in the management chain among a mid-level manager (*MLM*) and subordinates (*SUB*) (workers). Here each party to the interaction: *manager – employee* performs a specific role. The first level managers should not only perform instructions of a mid-level manager, but also themselves distribute work tasks to subordinated workers, inspire them for work for the benefit of the company, foster harmony in mutual relations. Therefore, it's important that the first level manager would be able to adequately convert sophisticated tasks received from the mid-level manager (*MLM*) and to communicate them to subordinated workers (*SUB*) in explicit and understandable technical language in order to ensure high quality and timely performance of the delegated tasks according to the established standards. The first level managers communicate necessary information to subordinated performers, whilst by various means communicating information about the processes that take place in subdivisions of the company to their direct supervisors, whose performance, behaviour and managerial skills applied under various circumstances, in turn, affect the first level manager's performance and work efficiency of the sub-division. The first level manager, being aware of his characteristic qualities and therefore feeling his superiority in regard of both direct supervisors (mid-level managers) and subordinates, can both alienate from them psychologically, or identify with them.

Conducted empiric research (Giedraitis, Petkevičiūtė, 2011) showed that sense of duty, honesty, responsibility and energetic approach are the personality traits most often emphasised by the first level managers. Optimism and self-confidence are among the least valued features. Whereas, their direct supervisors (mid-level managers (*MLM*)) attribute professional competence, responsibility, self-confidence and strive for improvement to the key personal traits of their subordinates (first level managers); loyalty (allegiance) and support to colleagues they mentioned as the least valuable traits. For newly hired first level managers the most important factor is *compatibility* with managers, a team and work environment, all other factors are attributed to secondary ones.

Assessment of employees in companies allows to identify their relevance for certain position, work pay, to reveal existing weaknesses and to promote further professional development, to plan career of the staff (Zakarevičius, 2003; Sakalas, 2003; Alonderienė, Bakanauskienė, 2004; Stankevičienė, Lobanova, 2006; Chen, Chu, 2007; Bivainis, Morkvėnas, 2008; Andrew, 2010). Therefore, when conducting an assessment, an attitude of assessor and assessed persons to the assessment system itself has to be defined, that requires adequate feedback (Gul, Dolu, Dogutas, 2010). Therefore, evaluation of the first level managers' relevance in organizations needs further improvement: their assessment only in respect of compliance with the requirements set for a particular job position is not sufficient; a tool facilitating identification of the relevance of the first level managers in certain management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*), is required, as it would ensure effectiveness of their performance.

Such situation in organizations determine the need for understanding and methodical analysis of the first level manager as an interim link in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*), as well as for elaboration of an assessment tool (or to use the already existing one) enabling identification of the first level managers' relevance in particular management chain in practical terms.

2. The methodology of the research on identification of the first level managers' relevance in the management chain

The methodology of the research. To address the problem and to achieve the aim of the research, a survey on evaluation of *FLM* relevance in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) *through personality traits* was conducted in five large furniture manufacturing companies of the Western Lithuania region over the period from 1 February to 30 April, 2012. The survey involved furniture manufacturing companies (<http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/>) that correspond to criteria of large enterprises. Names of the companies are not disclosed due to request of the heads of the companies.

The key objective of identification of *FLM* relevance in the management chain is to provide information on requirements set for *FLM* personality traits and to facilitate identification of *FLM* relevance for particular job in certain management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*).

The type of research – *quantitative, descriptive*. Quantitative analysis aims at statistical description of the key attributes of an object, i.e. to evaluate the first level managers' relevance in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) and to identify disharmonious management chains in companies.

Sample of the research – *non-probability sampling, quota sampling of groups*. In small-scale research the groups of survey participants are rather often formed partially applying the accidental sampling method (Kardelis, 2007). In such case, a researcher includes such persons into a sample group, who, in his opinion, are typical in terms of analysed attribute (Vaitkevičius, Merkys, 2008). In this survey, the researcher included such persons into the formed chain (group), who, in his opinion are typical in terms of analysed attribute. In other words, in each manufacturing company a researcher forms chains (groups) comprising of: mid-level manager; first level manager; 3 subordinates of *FLM*.

85 selected respondents can be characterised as following:

- 5 – *direct supervisors (mid-level managers) (MLM)* of the first level managers – these are managers on the middle level of organizational hierarchy. They are responsible for other managers (in this case – for the first level managers) and accountable for their own performance and results to the top level manager;
- 20 – *first level managers (FLM)* – these are managers directly managing employees (workers), who perform specific tasks of implementation of decisions (heads of work group, heads of production sector, foremen, shop floor managers, etc.); they solve operating tasks and should perfectly well understand the technology and organization of production process, have knowledge in psychology. They are accountable for their own performance and results to the mid-level manager (*MLM*);
- 60 – *subordinates (SUB)* – these are employees (workers – performers), whose freedom of action in certain areas are regulated by the first level managers. Task-performers or workers of any category can be subordinates of the first level managers.

It should be stated that the respondents – employees (performers) working in a production division – do not represent a highly motivated community in terms of participation in research. They are people who are always in hurry, are coping with several problems simultaneously, value their time and do not tend to spare it for things, which, in their opinion, do not bring direct benefit to their performance and its results. These factors should be taken into account, when planning and conducting managerial research.

The method of the research – *a questionnaire survey*. Research publications present a wide range of various-type questionnaires available for assessment of *personal traits*. Most of them are designated for employee education and training programmes, self-assessment of managerial skills; e.g., M. D. Mumford (2000) uses open-ended questions and very sophisticated systems of score calculation. P. G. Northouse (2009) gave closed-ended questions on Likert rating scale. R. M. S. Wilson (2004) used both open and closed-ended questions. A. Seilius (1998) used open-ended questions in the research of traits characteristic to a manager. A questionnaire of employee assessment should be coherent, however should not be over elaborate with information or unnecessary data (Moura, Kanji, 2003).

„The Big Five“ method is the most popular one in modern management used to analyse personality traits (McCrane, Terracciano, 2005; Erdheim et al., 2006; Silva, 2006; Morrison, 2007; Kairys, 2008; Zimmerman, 2008; Zhao, Du, 2011). The *Big Five* term was offered by American psychologist L. R. Goldberg in 1981 who having generalised gathered research material in this field formulated the hypothesis that the most distinct and the most important in social terms personal differences are encoded in words of every-day speech, used to describe oneself and others (John, Srivastava, 1999). The concept of personality traits discerns personality

traits of a manager and their impact on managing (Judge, Bono, Iliesas and Gerhard, 2002). This method, based on empiric research, is universal and is widely applied in practice (Kairys, 2008).

„The Big Five“ personality dimensions were adapted and verified in Lithuania (Bunevičius, 2005; Bunevičius, Katkutė, Bunevičius, 2008):

- *extraversion* (characteristic to friendly, active, persistent persons);
- *conscientiousness* (characteristic to well-organized, reliable, responsible persons);
- *agreeableness* (characteristic to complaisant, forgiving, credulous persons);
- *neuroticism* (characteristic to irritable, grumpy, impulsive persons);
- *openness to experience* (characteristic to intellectually curious, imaginative and intellectually flexible persons).

Rating scale comprises of 25 pairs of adjectives (Bunevičius, 2005). Although shorter questionnaires are poorer in psychometric terms than longer ones, they are more advantageous, when research protocol provides for rather limited time for assessment of personality of a respondent (Bunevičius, Katkutė, Birbilaitė, 2008). In this questionnaire, the respondents (*mid-level managers, first level managers and subordinates*) were asked to indicate how much they agreed with each statement about the person in question (*first level manager*): for each pair of adjectives they had to encircle one the most matching figure in “1” to “5” scale, e.g.: if they consider the first level manager as a very original person, they encircle “1 or 2”, if as not very original person – “4 or 5”; if originality of the above managers depends on circumstances, the respondent encircles “3”.

Evaluation depends on what the respondent thinks to be more suitable (Fig. 1).

(A) Sociable	1	2	3	4	5	Loner
(B) Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	Worried
(C) Original	1	2	3	4	5	Ordinary

Figure 1. A fragment of Likert scale designated to identify personality traits of the first level managers

3. The findings of the research on identification of the *FLM* relevance in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) on the basis of personality traits

The performed assessment of the first level managers' relevance in five analysed furniture manufacturing companies allowed to evaluate the first level managers' relevance in the management chains (*MLM–FLM–SUB*).

A total mean graph (*red dashed graph*) derived from the data of all five manufacturing companies shows how an assessment graph should look like in a harmonious production company. Although all production companies operate in the same market sector (furniture manufacturing companies), evaluations and interaction among the links differ (Fig. 2).

The applied comparison method allows identifying certain similarities among the management chains in manufacturing companies [ADE] and [BD] and the total mean graph (Fig. 2). It shows the presence of relation and compatibility among the links – mid-level manager, first level managers and subordinates. Therefore, the first level managers are suitable in these management chains.

In [BC] manufacturing company a mid-level manager evaluate the first level managers better, than the first level managers themselves and subordinates of the latter, whose evaluations almost match (Fig. 2). In these management chains, a mid-level manager evaluating the first level managers shows exceptional and adequate attention to the latter. Therefore, it can be maintained that the management links function *harmoniously* and the first level managers in these chains are suitable.

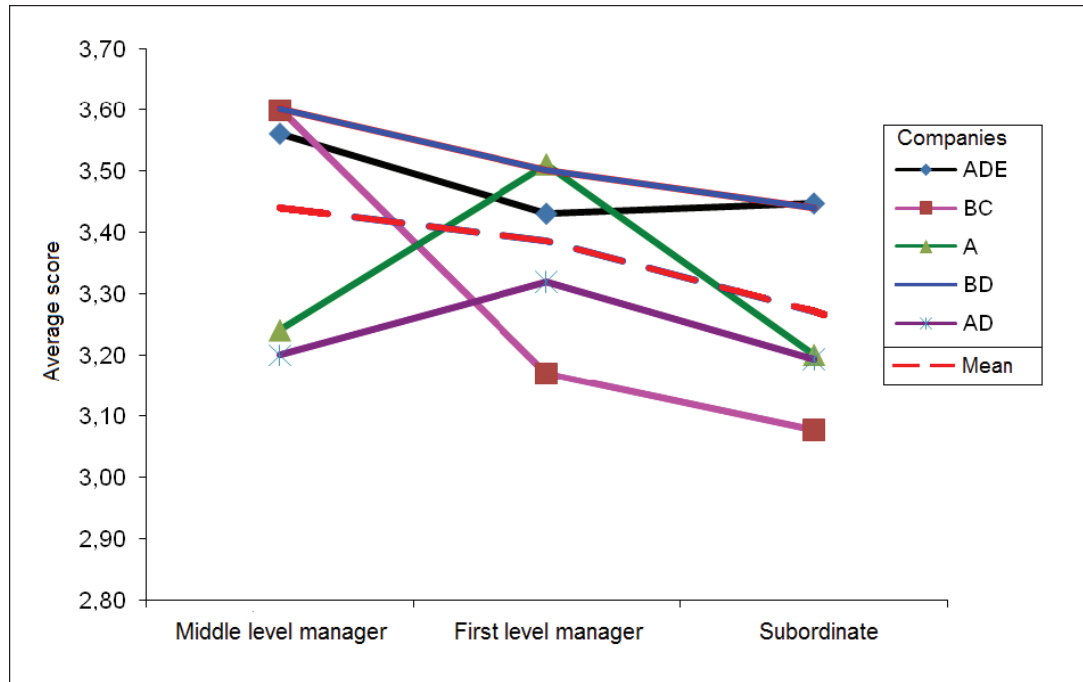


Figure 2. The findings of evaluation of relevance in the management chains in manufacturing companies ($N = 85$)

In manufacturing companies [A] and [AD], the first level managers evaluate themselves better, than are evaluated by their direct supervisors and subordinates (Fig. 2). Supposedly, the first level managers overestimate their own importance and there is a lack of compatibility among the links of the chain. Therefore, the management chains in these companies are the most *disharmonious* and there is no compatibility among the links due to unsuitable first level managers.

The survey showed that the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) often lacks compatibility and interaction required for productive performance among the links – mid-level manager, first level manager and subordinates – due to personality traits of the involved parties. The survey revealed that the first level managers' performance is based on interaction and compatibility among the first level manager (*FLM*), mid-level manager (*MLM*) and subordinates (*SUB*) in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*).

This experience allowed to detect deficiencies occurring in the first level manager's practical performance due to incompatibility of performance of the links.

Speaking about the *FLM* personality traits, it's evident that standard deviation presented in table 1 confirms reliability of mean values of all factors and represents the analysed sample.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations in evaluation of the FLM personality traits ($N = 85$)

	Number	Mean	Standard deviation
(B) Calm (1) – Worried (5)	85	3.00	1.10
(L) Relaxed (1) – Stressed (5)		3.18	1.01
(Q) Secure (1) – Insecure (5)		2.36	0.99
ATV_G_Nervous		2.57	1.05
ATV_V_Self-pity		2.23	0.76

Table 1 shows that the highest evaluation of personality traits – 3.18 scores shows that the first level managers are more stressed than relaxed. Statistical mean value 3.00 shows that the first level managers are more worried than calm. While the lowest evaluation – 2.23 scores shows that the first level managers are affected by self-pity.

The obtained findings reveal that a tool applied in the research allows to evaluate the first level managers' traits in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) and to identify the first level managers unsuitable in terms of incompatibility of the links of the chain. The research also evaluates and identifies manifestation of discrepancies in evaluations in particular management chain as well as the companies where such discrepancies most often occur.

Such evaluation of the first level managers should be performed on annual basis, along with consideration and analysis of annual performance results.

Conclusions

Striving for effective managerial performance the first level managers cannot rely on their extraordinary personal traits only. A close interrelation between the links – mid-level manager (*MLM*), first level manager (*FLM*) and subordinates (*SUB*) – in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) and relevance of all links is required in order to have objectives of the organisation and methods of their implementation understood by everyone in the organisation. To achieve maximum performance results, actions of each employee (link) in the management chain should be *coordinated with* actions of other ones.

The developed research methodology features a variety of approaches (cross-check questioning of *mid-level manager*, first level manager (*FLM*) and subordinates of *FLM* (*SUB*) – in particular management chain was conducted). “The Big Five” test was applied as a tool to achieve the objective of the research and to perform quantitative analysis. When identifying the first level managers' relevance in the management chain, only individual evaluations performed by the members /links of the chains were referred to and used as a basis for evaluation of personal traits of particular first level manager only.

The research methodology enables identification of the first level managers' relevance for work with employees (links) in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) both within an organisation and among organisations, despite the type of organisation. Equalisation of mutual understanding and compatibility of actions of mid-level manager (*MLM*), first level manager (*FLM*) and subordinates (*SUB*) in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) can be achieved.

Application of the proposed research methodology is not possible if members (links) of the management chain had not worked together in the management chain for at least one year.

The performed evaluation of the first level managers in five manufacturing companies and the obtained findings of the research and their analysis showed that *disharmony* in the management chains (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) was identified in two surveyed manufacturing companies. Disharmony in particular management chain resulted from different evaluations of *FLM* personal traits by direct supervisor of *FLM* (mid-level manager), the first level manager himself and his subordinates. Appropriate choice of *FLM* would ensure effectiveness of performance and harmony in the management chain.

The obtained findings reveal novelty of this research in terms of scientific approach. A tool applied in the research allows to evaluate the first level managers' traits in the management chain (*MLM–FLM–SUB*) and to identify the first level managers unsuitable in terms of incompatibility of the links of the chain. The research also evaluates and identifies manifestation of discrepancies in evaluations in particular management chain as well as the companies where such discrepancies most often occur.

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ŽEMIAUSIOJO LYGMENS VADOVŲ TINKAMUMO VALDYMO GRANDINĖJE TV–ŽLV–PAV NUSTATYMAS: VAKARŲ LIETUVOS BALDŲ ĮMONIŲ ATVEJIS

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Santrauka

Siekiant pakelti ūkio našumą Vakarų Lietuvos regione, sparčiau diegti naujoves ir užtikrinti tvarų ekonomikos augimą, reikia siekti didesnės darbo rinkos įtraukties ir integracijos. Reikia konkrečių, aiškiai matomų veiksmų, kurie padėtų išspręsti regione kylančias problemas.

Praktinė patirtis rodo, kad daugelis organizacijų patiria žmogiškųjų išteklių valdymo problemų, kurios kyla dėl profesionalių įvairių lygmens vadovų stygiaus. Įvairių lygių vadovams keliami išsilavinimu, žiniomis ir gebėjimais pagrįsti dalykiniai reikalavimai, svarbios ir asmeninės savybės, turinčios įtakos konkrečių darbų vykdymui bei rezultatams. Todėl organizacijų darnaus vystymosi kontekste (siekiant nūdienos ir ateities kartų geresnės gyvenimo kokybės) keičiasi ir reikalavimai, keliami žemiausiojo lygmens vadovams. Kiekvieno darbuotojo (grandies) valdymo grandinėje veiksmai turi būti suderinti.

Visiškai objektyviai nustatyti ir įvertinti žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumą sudėtinga. Nepakanka vertinti tik pagal jiems keliamus reikalavimus užimti atitinkamas pareigas, būtina padėti nustatyti žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumą darbui tam tikroje valdymo grandinėje, nes tai užtikrintų gerus jų veiklos rezultatus.

Problema: mokslinėse publikacijose ir praktinėje organizacijų veikloje žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumui dirbti valdymo grandinėje nustatyti skiriama nepakankamai dėmesio, nes nuo kiekvieno darbuotojo (grandies) veiklos suderinamumo valdymo grandinėje priklauso galutiniai įmonės rezultatai.

Tyrimo objektas – žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumas valdymo grandinėje.

Tyrimo tikslas: pagrįsti žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumo dirbti valdymo grandinėje *TV-ŽLV-PAV* nustatymo būtinumą, atlikti tyrimą gamybos įmonėse ir apibendrinti rezultatus.

Keliami šie uždaviniai: pagrįsti žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumo dirbti valdymo grandinėje *TV-ŽLV-PAV* nustatymo pagal asmenines jų savybes būtinumą; aptarti tyrimo metodologiją ir nustatyti gamybos įmonių žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumą valdymo grandinėje.

Metodai: mokslinės literatūros lyginamoji analizė; kiekybiniai tyrimo ir duomenų apdorojimo metodai; tyrimo rezultatai apdoroti programa *SPSS-15*.

2012 m. vasario 1 – balandžio 30 dienomis vykdytas tyrimas penkiose didelėse baldų gamybos įmonėse Vakarų Lietuvos regione: respondentai (*ŽLV* tiesioginiam vadovui, žemiausiojo lygmens vadovui ir *ŽLV* pavaldiems darbuotojams) vertino *ŽLV* asmenybės bruožus, pagal kuriuos siekta nustatyti *ŽLV* tinkamumą darbui valdymo grandinėje *TV-ŽLV-PAV*. Į tyrimą įtrauktos baldų gamybos įmonės (<http://www.stat.gov.lt/>), kurios atitiko didelių įmonių kriterijus.

Mokslinės literatūros ir tyrimo rezultatų analizė leidžia formuluoti tokias išvadas:

- Siekiant veiksmingai vadovauti, žemiausiojo lygmens vadovams neužtenka tik išskirtinių savybių. Būtinas glaudus tiesioginio vadovo (*TV*), žemiausiojo lygmens vadovo (*ŽLV*) ir *ŽLV* pavaldžių darbuotojų (*PAV*) ryšys bei visų šių darbuotojų (grandžių) tinkamumas darbui valdymo grandinėje *TV-ŽLV-PAV*. Organizacijos tikslai ir jų siekimo būdai turi būti aiškūs visiems darbuotojams (visoms grandims). Siekiant geriausio rezultato, būtina suderinti visų darbuotojų veiksmus valdymo grandinėje.
- Parengta tyrimo metodologija pasižymi prieigų įvairove (atliekama kryžminė tiesioginio *ŽLV* vadovo (*TV*) ir žemiausiojo lygmens vadovo (*ŽLV*) bei pavaldžių *ŽLV* darbuotojų (*PAV*) apklausa konkrečioje valdymo grandinėje). Tikslui pasiekti ir kiekybiniam tyrimui atlikti taikytas „Didžiojo penketo“ metodas. Nustatant žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumą valdymo grandinėje remiamasi tik individualistinių grandžių vertinimu, pagal kurį vertinamos tik konkretaus žemiausiojo lygmens vadovo asmeninės savybės, kurios papildė tiesioginius *ŽLV* veiklos vertinimo rodiklius.
- Tyrimo metodologija leidžia nustatyti esamų žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų tinkamumą valdymo grandinėje *TV-ŽLV-PAV* organizacijos viduje ir tarp organizacijų, nepaisant organizacijos tipo. Galima suvienodinti tiesioginių *ŽLV* vadovų, *ŽLV* ir *ŽLV* pavaldžių darbuotojų tarpusavio supratimą bei suderinti veiksmus valdymo grandinėje *TV-ŽLV-PAV*.
- Siūlomos tyrimo metodologijos negalima pritaikyti, jeigu valdymo grandinės dalyviai (grandys) kartu nedirbo valdymo grandinėje bent vienerius metus.

- Atliktas žemiausiojo lygmens vadovų vertinimas penkiose tiriamosiose gamybos įmonėse ir gauti tyrimo rezultatai bei jų analizė parodė, kad dviejose tirtose gamybos įmonių valdymo grandinėse (*TV–ŽLV–PAV*) nustatyta nedarna konkrečioje valdymo grandinėje: dėl tiesioginio *ŽLV* vadovo, žemiausiojo lygmens vadovo bei pavaldžių *ŽLV* darbuotojų, skirtingo *ŽLV* asmeninių savybių vertinimo. Tinkamai parinktas *ŽLV* užtikrintų veiklos veiksmingumą ir darną valdymo grandinėje.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *žemiausiojo lygmens vadovai, vertinimas, asmeninės savybės, hierarchija, valdymo grandinė, darna, regiono problemos.*

JEL KLASIFIKACIJA: M12, R11