Contents

Adam Bednarek 5
Multilingual Families: A Sociolinguistic Model for Retaining Language Ability and Cultural Heritage

Iryna Stavytska 21
Modern Tendencies in Foreign Language Teaching

Iryna Lytovchenko, Olena Terenko, Olena Ogienko 31
Use of Project-Based Learning of Adults at Corporate Universities in The US and Canada

Oksana Chugai 47
Intercultural Competence Formation of ESL Teachers in a Global Educational Environment

Maciej Dębski, Adriana Krawczyk 59
Competitiveness of Family Tourist Micro-Enterprises as an Element of Tourist Destination Product

Łukasz Haromszeki, Piotr Jarco 77
Educational Leaders and Their Qualities from the Followers’ Perspective
Yuliana Lavrysh
Transformations in Ukrainian Culture of Learning

Beatriz Pérez Sánchez, Marcela Rebeca Contreras Loera
Strategies and Structure of the Family Economic Group
Casa Ley

Mohamed Mousa, Andrew Adjah Sai, Gehad Salhin
An Exploration for the Motives behind Enhancing Senior Banker’s Level of Organizational Resilience: A Holistic Case Study

Magdalena Wysocka, Roman Lewandowski
Key Competences of a Health Care Manager
ABSTRACT

Objective: To propose a model for the creation of selected language practice games that will allow for multilingual families to engage in common activities in order to retain the multiculturalism factor amongst parents and their children.

Methodology: Ontological considerations based on sociolinguistic models in accordance with TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) and SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) Models.

Findings: The preservation of this heritage among both children and adults can be achieved by allowing them to engage in various activities, allowing them to acquire multiple languages simultaneously and thus create a sense of national identity.

Value Added: The presented methodological considerations are to be used as the basis for the creation of output results in an Erasmus+ financed project carried out at the University
of Social Sciences (along with other European partners) entitled Multilingual Families Clubs: Promoting Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of Europe.

**Recommendations:** activities for Polish multilingual speakers need to include those in the following languages: German, Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian.

**Key words:** Cultural Heritage, Multilingualism, National Identity, 21st Century Skills, Linguistic Identity

**JEL codes:** Z000, Z130

The question of what is meant by culture was once explored by Berry and Laponce (1994). According to them, the term was first used by Tylor (1871) to refer to “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as a member of society” (Berry & Laponce, 1994, p. 5). The authors claim that further research carried out by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) identified approximately two hundred definitions of the term at hand. Hudson (1980) writes that “culture is something that everybody has” and involves some “property of a community, especially that which might distinguish it from other communities” (Hudson 1980, p. 73). Furthermore, it may be defined as “the kind of knowledge which we learn from other people, either by direct instruction or by watching their behavior” (Hudson, 1980, p. 81). When outlining the basic assumptions of modern discourse, Schiffrin (1987) states that language always occurs and is context sensitive. She implies that one's world knowledge background is a key factor to understanding linguistic elements and assumes that:

...language always occurs in some kind of context, including cognitive contexts, in which in which past experience and knowledge is stored and drawn upon, cultural contexts consisting of shared meanings and world views, and social contexts through which both self and others draw upon institutional and interactional orders to construct definitions of situation and action" (Schiffrin, 1987, pp. 3–4).
A crucial element to mention here is the concept of emotions, which fall under the general cultural scheme. Linguists have argued for conceptual categories of cognition, emphasizing that meaning emerges from socially and culturally shared practice and norms, implicating that interpretation has social origin. Recent investigations suggest, that within the cross-cultural framework, processing emotions remains the same (Schrauf & Sanchez, 2004). Lutz’s (1986) study demonstrated the cultural component in emotion manifestation, with the phenomena being grounded in socio-cultural contexts and representative of our own cognitive typologies. Consequently, interpretation, or perception of events is conditioned by emotions and other affective phenomena, along with a set of culturally and socially interpretative schemas, which arise due to a set of manipulative patterns. As a result, in a relatively closed social system in which communication among members is unrestricted, the system as a whole will tend to converge over time toward a state of greater cultural uniformity.

The Question of Identity

Researchers across disciplines have often pointed to a link between language and the sense of belonging to a national group. In many cases there is just one spoken national standard, which allows speakers to come together under the same national identity. This may not be as simple as it sounds, due to various social and regional aspects culminating in various degrees of speech communities. However, there exists a quite powerful two way relation between language and social organization; thus linguistic resources are a means which allow the establishment of social and national identity. According to Machin and Thornborrow (2003) the notion of identity on all its levels could be described as something that we are constantly building and negotiating via our interaction with other members of society. Kroskrity (2000) puts emphasis on identities not as given but produced. In other words, either conscious – through strategic manipulation, or through lack of awareness practices. There may also be
various political and economic influences on the process of identity making as these are part of our daily lives (Kroskrity, 2000, pp. 111–114).

In linguistics, the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, also known as the linguistic relativity hypothesis, puts forward the idea that there exists a systematic relationship between the grammatical categories of a spoken language and the perception of the world. In simpler words, it is our thinking that is determined by language and that in turn shapes our reality. According to Schlesinger (1991), Whorf’s basic assumption was that “grammar is more resistant to change than culture”, therefore “the influence from language to culture is predominant” (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 17). As an axiom, it is assumed that the language user, if bilingual, will therefore be bicultural. Of course, this is a relative term, as there is no such thing as absolute bicultural competence. Knowledge about the target culture is acquired slowly and gradually. The hypothesis has never been proven nor disproved, however, it has had influence on the understanding of the subsequent stages of linguistics development.

This has lead researchers in the field of sociolinguistics to propose the concept of speech communities and having national and linguistic identity as not opposing, but complimentary aspects. Classic theorists have argued over time concerning their defining concepts; Fishman (1972) claims that “any reasonably complex speech community contains various speech networks that vary with respect to the nature and ranges of their speech repertoires” (Fishman, 1972, p. 288). Lyons (1970) sees that it involves “all the people who use a given language (or dialect)” (Lyons, 1970, p. 326), thus he does not take into account the necessity for “cultural and social unity” (Hudson, 1980, p. 27). Hockett (1958) talks of “the whole set of people who communicate with each other, either directly or indirectly, via the common language (Hockett, 1958, p. 8), while Labov (1972) claims that it “is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms” (Labov, 1972, p. 120).

Currently, following Blommaert (2013), “language is one of the most immediate and sensitive indexes of diversity. Small differences in accent and
speaking betray someone’s regional, social class, ethnic, and/or gender backgrounds”. Nicholas (2011) postulates that there exists a direct link between linguistic competence and cultural identity, while Perez-Milans (2015) concludes that:

Linguistic and cultural practices are no longer examined against the background of abstract standard languages, uniform views of speakers and stable group identities. Rather, such practices are investigated with reference to the fragmented repertoires that people acquire, construct and mobilize by positioning themselves and others in ways that have consequences for their distinct degrees of control over access to different social spaces (Perez-Milans, 2015, p. 132).

The author thus concludes that a passport does not determine who an individual is. One needs to realize that language reinforces cultural patterns and, therefore, meaning does not reside in a text but arises in its interpretation, and interpretation is shaped by socio-cultural contexts. The author of this paper follows Hofstede’s (1994) assumptions of collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another. This will allow the speaker to consciously choose one’s identity through the linguistic code and its cognitive perception of self identity and culture. Expanding Hofstede’s model for dimensions of culture and programming the mind, one discovers ever increasing layers that go beyond classic understanding of social, regional, organizational or gender distinction (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 24–29). Having observed the evolution of human social construction, now spanning towards digital and cross cultural (as opposed to intercultural) relations, each marked layer then undergoes further sub-categorization.
The Model

The entire purpose of the *Multilingual Families Clubs* project is to preserve languages and culture of immigrants living in the EU and promote multilingualism; to make them aware of their heritage and allow them to continue with their mixed parentage. Yet the very concept of bilingualism is a difficult one to grasp under one clear definition. In general, *bilingualism* is the ability to use two different languages as mother tongues, which most often results from the ethnic diversity of the area in which it occurs. Yet there are different types of bilinguals and they are systematically divided on the basis of several factors including temporal and cognitive. Thus we have sequential or simultaneous bilingualism and balanced or dominating, among others. Much of this phenomena is grounded in Lennenberg’s *Critical Period Hypothesis*. Lenneberg claimed that if language acquisition does not take place before puberty it will never be possible to acquire; as a result one will never make use of the language in a fully functional form. The Lenneberg hypothesis is referred to by Noam Chomsky, who claims that language acquisition is possible thanks to the *Language Acquisition Device* (LAD) – an active lobe in the critical period, containing the principles of universal grammar. According to the scholar, the principles of universal grammar are present in all the languages of the world and because they are innate, children acquiring a language do not have to learn them. However, after the critical period, the mechanism of language acquisition disappears and it is virtually impossible to acquire a language without its help.

A concept close to the one at hand is that of biculturalism, or accepting elements of a foreign culture as a result of linguistic and cultural contacts. The author’s main methodological goal is to go along with the premise that *multiple language families should aim for retaining bilingualism and multilingualism among their children so as to foster the retention of their parents*

---
1. “Multilingual Families Clubs – Promoting Linguistic & Cultural Treasure of Europe” is a project co-funded by the European Commission, within the Erasmus+ programme, http://www.multilingualclubs.eu/.
culture through language. This, the author believes, will give them an advantage in a globalized world.

‘Executive functions’ is a collective term that refers to a set of skills which allow individuals to select an action that is proper in a particular situation, inhibit improper behavior and concentrate or maintain attention in the presence of distractions. This includes solving novel problems, modifying behavior in the light of new information, generating strategies or sequencing complex actions, planning and self-monitoring. Executive processes and problem solving skills are largely improved in the middle childhood. Several research studies (Costa et al., 2008; Soveri et al., 2011; Parr-Modrzejewska, 2015) have shown bilingual advantage in executive functions, especially in the area of inhibiting irrelevant information. Additionally, bilinguals proved to excel monolinguals in working memory performance.

Bialystok (1999, 2001) has suggested that bilingual children might develop improved cognitive control systems compared to monolingual children as a result of switching and attentional control demands from early age. Bilingual children have the capacity to become exceptionally proficient at “switching”, not only between languages but between different cognitive tasks. The bilingual advantage seems to be related to the attention control while information processing. Since users of two language codes need to constantly monitor their performance as to its appropriateness in terms of the choice of language items available in the bilingual mental lexicon, their executive control is constantly in use. The activities will thus be designed for parents and children at different ages, meant to develop and support multilingualism, and provide families with tools to work with language and cultural patterns. However on must first consider methods for subcategorization of the proposed activities.

Taking all presented above into consideration, the main category for choosing activities should be age based. Separate categories should be created for the (0–6) and the (6–10) group. The idea behind this is that the younger group will be focused on the development of their cognitive skills, while the
older age group will focus on the development of soft skills. The choice for choosing activities should also be based on their culture supporting effectiveness. This approach should consider the development of sensorimotor reactions and preoperational reasoning. In this case, roleplaying has always been an excellent method for exercising critical thinking. It involves inhabiting another persona and its characteristics, as well as navigating various cultural contexts and critical engagement with their cultural heritage. Furthermore, activities need to focus on an individual’s awareness of the sound structure and involve real-time interaction and instructions proposed to the user, or via experience sharing or group gaming.

A further element for the proposed model will be to focus on the development of so-called 21st century skills. This requires an innovative approach centering on the increase of the previously mentioned soft skills through a methodology that makes it possible to use available tools used in everyday life (internet, portable devices) and create an environment for teaching skills that will be necessary in the future. It is somehow, acquiring knowledge and not learning pure facts. In the words of Markham (2011), this approach:

…integrates knowing and doing. Students learn knowledge and elements of the core curriculum, but also apply what they know to solve authentic problems and produce results that matter. PBL students take advantage of digital tools to produce high quality, collaborative products. PBL refocuses education on the student, not the curriculum (Markham, 2011, p. 40).

We therefore considered this approach as equally important in the construction of activities proposed to multilingual families with focus on the use of technology in accordance with the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) and SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) Models. These incorporate game-based learning, learning with mobile and handheld devices, created media like podcasts, videos, or slideshows; yet when choosing activities one needs to consider differences in age and ability. These activities need to focus on building character qualities, devel-
oping competencies and increasing literacy. The presented methodological considerations are presented in the image below. Please refer to the following:

Figure 1. Subcategorization for choosing activities for Multilingual Families Clubs.

Source: as proposed by the Author and presented during the meeting with strategic partners in Brno, Czech Republic, 2017.

Template Proposal

The information provided in this part of the paper presents the proposed template for activity preparation. It is critical that it should present the parent/child with the overall themes of the exercise, present recommendations and clearly determine to whom the exercise is directed towards. For the purpose of this paper, the proposed template is then followed by and real-time example activity. The author suggests the following:

- **ACTIVITY TITLE**
- **TARGET GROUP**: Provide an age group: 0–6/6–10/both
- **THEME**: main focus of the activity
- **SKILLS**: List the type of skills that are to be developed
· **LANGUAGES**: Please describe whether the exercise can be carried out in multiple languages

· **TO DO LIST**: list of all materials needed for the activity

· **RECOMMENDATIONS**: Provide additional instructions that will help the participants correctly carry out the exercise.

The following is thus an example activity directed towards both parents and children:

· **ACTIVITY TITLE**: Let’s cook something up! Recipe writing

· **TARGET GROUP**: 6–10

· **THEME**: Food as cultural heritage

· **SKILLS**: Listening, speaking, writing

· **LANGUAGES**: Multilingual

· **TO DO LIST**: Computer with Internet access, Youtube videos, pen and paper

· **RECOMMENDATIONS**: Talk to your child first and make him/her aware of how much food is a part of national heritage.

Each activity needs to have a precise description in order to guide the participants through each stage of the activity. Please note the following:

· **PURPOSE**
  State all the aims of the activity. Focus on identity and the cultural heritage aspect.

· **PREPARATION FOR THE ACTIVITY**
  Describe what needs to be done before the start of the activity.

· **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANT**
  Describe the procedure of the activity step by step. Make sure to provide key details.

· **BENEFIT**
  State the benefits of the activity in terms of multilingualism with special focus on cultural heritage and linguistic/national identity.

As before, presented below is a sample activity. Please refer to the following:
· PURPOSE
The purpose of the exercise is to use two languages in reference to preparing a recipe for a dish that belongs to the cultural heritage of one of the parents.

· PREPARATION FOR THE ACTIVITY
Make sure you have proper internet connection. First talk to your child about what type of food you ate as a child. Make him/her aware of how food is a part of a culture. Show him a cooking book so they know how a recipe looks like.

· INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANT
1) Watch a Youtube video on how to cook the dish
2) Watch it with subtitles in the language spoken (if necessary)
3) Ask your child to write up the recipe of the food he/she saw cooking on Youtube

· BENEFIT
Your child will begin to understand that not only language but also the food you eat is part of a culture. He/she will find out new words for various ingredients.

The final decisions concerning the template had been made during a partner meeting scheduled for late December 2017.

Final Remarks

The Multilingual Families Clubs project aims at focusing on the preparation of activities that will be addressed on the basis of the needs of the two predominant minorities in the country of their residence (this will be done by all partners), based on the most recent national census data. The data needs to cross-referenced between the overall percentage of individuals listed. As an example the Polish National Census shows 97,09% of Polish nationals; 2,26% declare two national identities, while 1,55% are classified as foreign. The following criteria need to be taken into account:
1) The overall number of individuals declaring their nationality as foreign, yet residing with the nationality of the partner country in question (Polish 2.6% declaring mixed heritage)
2) The overall number of individuals declaring their nationality as foreign (Polish 1.55% foreign population).
3) Recent immigration data including work relocation and refugees.

Based on data obtained from udsc.gov.pl the language minority situation in Poland needs to include the following:

- **Mixed heritage** (individuals): German (147,814), Ukrainian (51,001), Belarussian (46,787),
- **Foreign born residing as foreign in Poland**: German (44,549), Ukrainian (27,630), Belarussian (30,195),
- **Immigrant data**: Residents of the former Soviet Union represent the largest migrant group (Ukrainian – 513,000, Belarussian 28,000).

As a result, the activities for Poland need to include those in the following languages: German, Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian. Whereas both Belarusians and Ukrainians speak Russian, one may conclude that Poland needs German and Russian versions of the project output.
References


Modern Tendencies in Foreign Language Teaching

ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of the article is to study current trends in the field of language policy.
Methodology: Analysis of normative documents concerning the teaching of foreign languages in the European Union
Findings: The main trends of language policy are life-long learning, students’ mobility, multilingualism, using English as lingua franca, the use of information and communication technologies for the formation of foreign language competence.
Value Added: Analysis of the current trends in the development of foreign language competence in higher education.
Recommendations: The study of world trends in the training of specialists in general and language policy in particular.
Key words: competence, distance learning, mobility, multilingualism, blended learning, foreign language, mobility
JEL codes: I23, Z13, D83
Introduction

Modern conditions of the development of society change the requirements for the professional training of future specialists. A huge attention should be paid to the study of world trends in the training of specialists in general and language policy in particular.

Learning a foreign language is a key aspect of training future professionals who can be competitive in achieving their professional goals. That is why the foreign experience of teaching foreign languages is very important.

On the basis of analysis of the concept and structure of foreign language competence of professionals in different areas, it is established that in modern pedagogical literature there is no common understanding of the essence of foreign language competence, which is a complex and multifaceted scientific concept. Moreover, foreign language competence is also a dynamic combination of knowledge and practical skills. It determines the ability of individuals to successfully use a foreign language in professional, scientific activities and in social communication (Stavytska, 2017).

European countries pay more attention to developing foreign language skills. There are currently 24 official languages in the European Union (Foreign language learning statistics, 2017). In high school, 59% of students study two or more foreign languages. In Luxembourg, France, the Czech Republic, Romania, Finland and Slovakia, two foreign languages are taught in schools. In European countries, students learn English (96%), French (23%), Spanish (22%), German (19%), Italian (3%) and Russian (2%).

Luxembourg has three official languages: Luxembourg, German and French. Students learn them in elementary school, and English is studied in high school.

In the countries of Eastern and Northern Europe, which joined the European Union in 2004 or 2007, the Russian was previously the main foreign language. The percentage of English learners increased significantly: more than 50% were studying English in 2015. In Estonia, Lithuania, the Czech
Republic, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Romania, and Latvia, it ranged from 69% to 86% in 2015 and more than 90% in Poland and Croatia.

In Sweden, in 2003, the government allowed municipalities to launch pilot projects, where English is used as a language of instruction in elementary and secondary schools. Half of all subjects are taught in a foreign language. The results of the experiment in 2010 showed a better command of the foreign language, and even higher students’ satisfaction. Starting in 2011, any school may apply to the School Inspectorate for the use of English as a language of instruction. In Sweden, a system of additional points is introduced for learning a foreign language that influences entry into higher education. Learning of a second foreign language is encouraged.

The purpose of the article is to study current trends in the field of language policy, to conduct the analysis of normative documents concerning the teaching of foreign languages in the European Union.

Internationalization of universities has been developing rapidly. Universities expand programmes for foreign entrants, build a team who can teach a foreign language, develop international programmes for cooperation with other universities.

*English language as lingua franca.* One of the most important aspects of the process of modern globalization is the role of English as a universal language. English language becomes the language of international communication, its knowledge is a prerequisite for the qualitative performance of professional duties. The number of people studying English around the world increases every year. English becomes a universal communication tool as a second foreign language, as its conversance gives economic, social and political advantages.

*The mobility of students.* According to European standards, students’ mobility is now playing an important role. There are many international programmes that enable students to gain foreign experience and increase their foreign language proficiency. Among the most famous programmes are Fulbright Graduate Student Program, DAAD, Erasmus Mundus Program, and others. More and more students are studying abroad. Almost 5 mil-
lion of them studied in another country in 2014, while in 2000 this number was 2.1 million students.

Political and demographic changes continue to formulate state policy towards foreign students. For example, in Asia, there is a special programme to encourage students to study in their own countries, and not to join western universities, that is why “Common Space of Higher Education” has been created to encourage student trans-border mobility and academic integration throughout Southeast Asia.

Studying abroad, international experience is valued by employers around the world. Students expand their outlook, learn how to communicate in the international community, develop their decision-making skills. The report of the European Commission “Effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalization of higher education institutions” (Brandenburg, 2014) has shown that there is a quantitative evidence illustrating the positive impact of mobility on further employment, autonomy, and career development.

The geography of international campuses is also expanding. In recent decades, numerous universities have opened their branches abroad. The most famous is Nottingham’s campus in Ningbo, a branch of the University of China and a branch of the New York University in Abu Dhabi. In total, there are almost 220 affiliates around the world. Branches are created for foreign students who are not able to travel to Europe or the United States.

Over the past six years, a significant number of well-known American, Australian and British international campuses have ceased their activities. In most cases, closure has been linked to economic and political changes, or to the reduction in the number of entrants.

Using technologies for studying. Technologies are essential for the process of teaching in higher education. Information technology is becoming a key factor both in economic competitiveness and social development. Opened Online Courses (MOOCs) have become one of the most professional aspects of technology use in recent years. More than 142 universities offer free courses for all participants through Coursera and edX. Nevertheless,
there are certain disadvantages of learning with the use of online courses. A study conducted in 2013 explained that only about 5% of students completed coursework at Coursera online. The study covered seventeen courses.

Distributed learning systems such as ATutor, ILIAS, Dokeos, LON-CAPA, OpenUSS, Sakai, Spaghettilearnin, dotLRN have become widespread. Based on the comparative analysis of e-learning systems, it is concluded that the Moodle system has many advantages, which is why it has become the most popular in the world. It is expedient to use the Moodle system for the formation of students’ foreign language competence, since there are many available tools: wiki, glossary, blogs, forums, chats, etc. The use of video and audio materials, graphic information or drawings greatly increases the effectiveness of teaching and the interest of students in the acquisition of new material. Webinars, which enable the exchange of information between the teacher and the students through the virtual class, also started to be more common.

Virtual learning environments, flipped classrooms and blended learning are widely used. The “flipped classrooms” method offers a combination of online and offline classroom teaching. Students learn material at home, and discuss the revised information in the classroom. The application of these new methods and technologies proves the effectiveness of teaching.

The technology provides researchers with new tools for collecting, analyzing and disseminating data. Libraries were able to digitize a large number of rare books and manuscripts. For example, the British Library digitized many of its manuscript collections. The European Commission funds the new European Internet portal, which gives an access to a great deal of books, paintings, films, museum objects and archival records from European libraries and archives. Originally launched in 2010 with 4.5 million objects, the portal continues to grow and improve itself. An open access provides significant benefits to scientists, who can quickly get necessary information about the latest world achievements and developments.

Many programs for the development of linguistic diversity and in-depth study of foreign languages have been developed (Languages for Europe, 2007).
CMC – Language learning for university students
DissMark
EBAFLS – Tools for assessing foreign language skills
EU & I (European Awareness and Intercomprehension)
L’Europe ensemble
FEEL (Funny, easy and effective learning about countries, cultures and languages)
JOYFLL – Join your grandchildren in foreign language learning
Learning by moving – Language learning on public transport
Lingoland – The European platform for children on the Internet
Lingu@net Europa – Help and advice for language learners

The projects such as Erasmus+ are aimed at increasing the level of foreign language skills. The Council of Europe has established the European Day of Languages which is held annually on September 26 (it started in 2001). The purpose of the holiday is an educational campaign on the importance of learning foreign languages.

The eTwinning Internet platform allows foreign language teachers to collaborate, create collaborative projects, and so on.

**Multilingualism.** Implementation of the provisions of the Bologna Process, the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is impossible without language skills. That is why linguistic diversity and multilingualism are essential principles for ensuring the quality of education in Europe. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages states that multilingualism is the knowledge of a certain number of languages or the coexistence of different languages in a particular society. Multilingualism can be achieved through the simple diversification of languages offered for studying in a separate school or educational system, or by encouraging students to learn more than one foreign language, or, moreover, by diminishing the dominant role of English as a means of international communication. Council of Europe developed Resolution on the European Strategy for Multilingualism where the importance of multilingualism for social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and
the development of the European Community is described. Multilingualism is a factor contributing to the competitiveness of the European economy, mobility and job application (Council Resolution, 2008).

One of the key documents supporting linguistic diversity in Europe is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Charter is a convention which, on the one hand, is designed to protect and promote the development of regional languages as an aspect of Europe’s cultural heritage, and on the other hand, it aims to create conditions for the use of regional languages. For studying language policy in the field of higher education, data was collected in 69 largest educational institutions from 67 cities-participants in Europe. According to the results of the study, it is established that:

- English, French, German and Spanish take the leading place among the foreign languages.
- 62 out of 69 analyzed institutions teach foreign languages. 15 schools teach more than 4 languages. 25 institutions teach the languages of national minorities. Immigrant languages are taught only in 4 institutions.
- International mobility of students and teachers has led to the fact that English is the second language in many European universities. A large number of textbooks are written in English.
- Universities make a lot of effort to attract as many foreign students as possible.
- European universities are financially supporting student mobility, but only 10 of the surveyed universities have made mobility programmes binding on students of philology (Multilingual Europe, 2012).

Modern trends are aimed at gaining knowledge, improving skills throughout the life cycle. The main provisions of this principle are reflected in the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. The main objectives of the programme are to provide mobility for students and employees, and opportunities for lifelong learning (The European Qualifications Framework, 2008).
Conclusion

A lot of new programmes and documents are provided in Europe for the development of language learning. On the basis of these documents some conclusions can be made.

- The priority is to support higher education institutions under the Erasmus+ programme to improve the effectiveness of educational reforms.
- Multilingualism is quite important. Students should study several foreign languages.
- There is a need to develop mobility programmes for students and teachers.
- It is necessary to combine learning with the use of the information and communication technologies.
- Teachers of higher educational establishments should know how to use modern technologies, undergo advanced training, etc.
- Higher education institutions should strive for an open access to the educational resources.

Internationalization of education has benefits, among which are the strengthening of the economy, poverty reduction and increase of the investments. Internationalization of education improves the quality of higher education.

The article analyzes the current trends in the development of foreign language competence in higher education. It is determined that the main trends in language policy in the European educational space are: mobility of students, multilingualism, understanding of English language as lingua franca, the use of ICT for the formation of foreign language competence.
References


*Languages for Europe: 30 projects for promoting language learning* (2007). Luxembourg. OOPEC.


Purpose:
The article defines features of formation and development of corporate universities in the USA and Canada.

Methodology:
The article analyzes the dependence of successful functioning of the corporate universities on the choice of adequate training technologies; explores the essence and potentials of project-based learning as action learning which is focused on personnel development, business development and effective management of changes.
Findings: There is a close relationship between the performance of the functions of the corporate university and the forms, methods, learning technologies that are used in the learning process. Project-based learning is widely used in corporate universities in the United States and Canada; it provides an opportunity to gain managerial experience in real time, solves an important task of personnel development – formation of the ability to learn.

Value Added: The results of the research give ground to conclude that the corporate university in the US and Canada is a structural unit of a company, which performs certain functions that promote business efficiency.

Recommendations: The project topic should be related to current or future changes in the company. The solution of the problem should include diagnosing of the problem, analysis, recommendations, implementation phase, as also cooperation with members of the company.

Key words: project-based learning, action learning, adult learning, corporate university, employee development, business development, change management.

JEL codes: I25, F63, O19

Introduction

Globalization processes became the main challenge for the development of modern society in the 21st century. It is perceived as standardization, economic integration and cross-cultural interaction. Globalization has a significant impact on the development of education. Characteristic features of the globalization of the educational space are: the growth of the demand for high quality of education, the unification of knowledge, the desire of countries to achieve high indicators of quality of education, diversification, introduction of innovations in the educational process, the growth of educational budgets, etc. This requires rapid adaptation and significant changes in traditional higher education systems. However, higher education institutions slowly react to the demands of time in order to successfully compete in the education services market. At the same time, the growing role of intellectual capital in modern corporations leads to the need of their transformation into learning organizations (Allen, 2010, pp. 48–53). Today leading corporations spend significant resources on vocational training and staff development – from 2% to 10% of payroll (Frazee, 2002). Corporate staff training is a key to success and competitiveness of companies. A special role is played by
corporate universities – a new type of educational institutions that aims to fully and effectively meet the needs of a particular corporation in development of professional competencies of employees closely associated with the company’s development strategy. Over the past decade, there has been a trend towards a rapid increase in their number worldwide, especially in the United States, where from 1997 to 2007 the number of corporate universities doubled: from 1,000 to 2,000. In the world there were 4,000 of them and their annual budgets were large (Kolo, Torres, Bhalla, Strack & Cavat, 2013). Such growth is caused by changes in business environment, complication of technologies, changes in the demographic situation, and the growth of demand in the education market.

A study by the U.S. Department of Education with the Bureau of Census, determined how training impacted productivity. The results showed that increasing an individual’s educational level by 10% increased productivity by 8.6%; increasing an individual’s work hours by 10% increased productivity by 6.0%; and increasing capital stock by 10 percent increased productivity by 3.2% (US Department of Education, 2003). It should be noted that the organization of the learning process at corporate universities in economically developed countries is quite varied and depends on the dominant models of company management, geographical, cultural, economic conditions of a particular country, etc. In this context, of special interest is the American model of the corporate university which is used in many countries, particularly in Canada, and is based on project-based learning. In view of the importance of the problem and based on the analysis of activities of corporate universities (of such companies as General Electric, General Motors, McDonald’s, Motorola, Sun Microsystems, Xerox, Disney, Shell, BAE Systems, Caterpillar, Ford Motor Company and others) we aim to determine the features of learning at corporate universities in the United States and Canada; to reveal the essence and potentials of project-based learning as action learning that focuses on both staff development and business development, as also on effective change management.
Corporate universities of the US and Canada: preconditions and stages of development

The formation of corporate universities began in the early 20th century in the United States, when General Motors Company in 1927 first opened the General Motors Engineering and Management Institute (now Kettering University) for training and development of its employees. For a long time, the corporate university was considered an exclusively American phenomenon (Prince and Beaver, 2001, pp. 189–199). The number of corporate universities in the United States started to grow rapidly at the end of the 20th century: from 400 in 1988 to (Meister, 1998b, pp. 38–43) almost 4000 – in 2015 (Hirst, 2015). Today, almost all leading American and Canadian corporations (American Express, Apple Computer, Boeing, Dell, IBM, Hewlett Packard, General Motors, McDonald’s, Motorola, Disney and others) either already have corporate universities or are planning to have ones. According to Meister (Meister, 1998b, pp. 38–43), corporate universities are the fastest growing sector of professional training worldwide.

The rapid development of corporate universities in the US and Canada was prompted by a number of significant factors, particularly:

- changes in business environment, primarily the increased competition and the transformation of the economy into the “knowledge economy” which resulted in the rapid development of information and communication technologies (Meister, 1998a; Walton, 1999; Dealtry, 2000, pp. 171–175; Paton, Peters & Storey 2005);

- changes in the management of corporations, especially the growing number of companies which, in their work, follow the principles of experimentation, transparency and openness, autonomy and trust, adaptability, variety of viewpoints, flexibility, creativity, cooperation, natural leadership and meritocracy (the principle of management by which the leading positions must be occupied by the most capable employees, regardless of their social or any other status) (Schmitt, 2012; Meister, 1998a) increasing
role of intellectual workers and the sophistication of the knowledge base in companies (Dealtry, 2000, pp. 171–175);

- The need for operational, systemic and effective training of company personnel (Dealtry, 2000, pp. 171–175) and the emergence of innovative learning techniques and technologies (Paton et al., 2005).

J. Meister (1998a) argues that these factors contributed to the formation of corporate university as a “strategic umbrella” for training and development of personnel aimed to enhance the company’s competitiveness through the development of those competencies of employees that are consistent with the business strategy of the corporation (p. 77).

Analysis of scientific works on the problem of research (Meister, 1998a; Prince and Beaver, 2001, pp. 189–199; Paton et al., 2005; Walton, 1999) shows that scientists define three generations (stages of development) of corporate universities:

- first generation of these institutions are training centers that deal with traditional types of training and development of employees. Their main difference from training centers is that they preserve and disseminate corporate values and culture of the organization. Among examples of corporate universities of this generation are those of McDonald’s and Disney companies;

- second generation of corporate universities is characterized by the connection of their curricula with the strategy of the corporation, development of professional competences and formation of corporate values at employees of different levels. An example is the corporate university of Motorola Corporation;

- third generation of corporate universities actively uses innovative technologies to create and transfer knowledge, while expanding the range of intellectual capital management strategies of the company. To this generation belongs Xerox Document University.

Thus, corporate universities in the United States and Canada have undergone a difficult path of formation – from simple units for conducting
workshops to centers of transfer and share of knowledge and innovations, both within and among companies (Rademakers, 2005, pp. 130–136). The modern corporate university is seen as “an educational entity that is a strategic tool designed to help its parent organization in achieving its mission by conducting activities that cultivate individual and organizational learning, knowledge and wisdom” (Allen, 2002, p. 9).

Functions of corporate university in the US and Canada as structural unit of the company

The activities of corporate universities are always aimed at finding new opportunities, access to global markets and development of relationships with customers (Meister, 1998b, p. 17). Hence, the main functions of corporate universities are the implementation of strategically directed training and staff development; distribution of corporate culture and corporate values; development of the culture of organizational learning and change; introduction of corporate standards; strengthening of the brand of the corporation (Meister, 1998b, p. 19). This allows the corporate university to introduce modern management mechanisms, evaluate and certify staff, receive feedback; promote assimilation of new employees and retain valuable personnel in the company, increase the personal efficiency of each worker and the company as a whole; provide development of business skills of employees and create supporting psychological climate in the company; increase the motivation of employees, etc.

Thus, the corporate university in the US and Canada is a structural subdivision of a company, which performs certain functions that promote business efficiency, particularly: training of personnel of all levels in accordance with the strategic goals of the company’s development; knowledge management: systematic consolidation and dissemination of employees’ experience; development of corporate culture, preservation of corporate values; introduction of innovations; development of leadership, corporate competences of employees.
The fulfillment of these functions by the corporate university determines its specific features which include:

- link to the company strategy and goals which contributes to the increase of human capital of the company, enhances its competitiveness;
- meeting the educational needs of all stakeholders (corporations, suppliers, consumers) (Walton, 1999);
- continuous learning: the aims of training are constantly updated and supplemented (Chanko & Basner, 2015, pp. 79–110);
- diversification, adaptability of learning programs according to purpose, content, contingent, duration, technologies of learning etc.;
- flexibility and proactivity which ensure the adaptation of the company’s personnel to the requirements and conditions of the business environment, forecasting its needs;
- support by top managers who take an active part in the work of corporate university in order to ensure its strategic orientation (Paton et al., 2005);
- creation of a single value space in the corporation through the spread of corporate values, employees’ awareness of the mission and the goals of the company;
- creation of corporate standards that lead to improved product quality, meeting consumer expectations etc. (Meister, 1998a; Prince and Beaver, 2001, pp. 189–199).

It is important to emphasize on the close relationship between the effectiveness of corporate university functions and the forms, methods, learning technologies used in the learning process.

**Project-based learning at corporate universities: conceptual foundations**

The results of the analysis of the activities of corporate universities show their departure from the knowledge paradigm, according to which special importance in the learning process is attributed to knowledge. The modern
business environment requires not only knowledge, but also skills to use knowledge in practice. It raises the importance of the competence paradigm in corporate education which focuses on the concrete result in the learning process, necessitates the search for forms, methods and technologies of learning that involve learners to active cognitive activity, make them active participants of learning, contribute to understanding of where, when and how the knowledge gained can be used in practice. According to J. Raelin (2008), in order for managers to become creative and reflexive practitioners, it is necessary to focus the learning process on the formation of these qualities in a corporate university (Raelin, 2000).

Since learners at corporate universities are adult people, it is especially important to consider the features of adults as learners when choosing learning technologies:

- the leading role in the learning process is played by the learner;
- an adult learner seeks self-fulfillment, independence, self-improvement, self-direction;
- an adult learner has rich life experience (social, professional etc.) that can be used as an important source of learning for himself and his colleagues;
- an adult learns to solve an important life problem and achieve a certain goal;
- an adult looks to the use of skills, knowledge and qualities acquired in the learning process;
- the learning activity is to a certain extent determined by everyday, professional and social factors that restrict or facilitate the learning process;
- the learning process of an adult person is organized as his/her cooperation with the teacher at all stages of the learning: diagnosing, planning, implementation, evaluation, correction (Ogienko, 2016; Lytovchenko, 2016).

Hence, the learning technology at corporate university should be based on the methodological principles of the learner-centered and competence-based educational paradigm and also follow the andragogical principles of learning: the priority of independent learning, use of the learner’s experience, individualization, systemic nature, context-dependence, use of the results of learning,
development of educational needs. In this context, the project-based learning (PBL) technology which is widely used in corporate universities in the United States and Canada has wide educational opportunities.

The use of project-based learning at corporate universities has become possible due to predominance of active, interactive learning methods, emphasis on the need to integrate training of managers into the company’s overall business strategy.

Project-based learning as action learning at corporate universities in the United States and Canada

According to A. Mumford (1991, pp. 199–206), project-based learning provides an opportunity to gain managerial experience in real time, solves an important task of personnel development – formation of the ability to learn. Therefore, project-based learning is seen as action learning.

The concept of “action learning” was first used and grounded by R. Revans who considered it the best way to train managers. He drew attention to the discrepancy of theoretical knowledge and their practical application and came to conclusion that knowledge can only be the result of action. He put forward this assumption as basis of action learning technology. Revans also argued that learning (L) functionally depends on two types of knowledge: a) programmed knowledge, obtained in the traditional education (P); b) skills of formulating questions, critical thinking (Q). That is, the learning process was described by him through the formula: \( L = P + Q \). In his view, the depth and value of Q-knowledge lie in the fact that we learn things independently, that is, create our own knowledge, while most P-knowledge is offered as ready to us. This concept unambiguously refers the technology of action learning to methods of stimulating creative abilities of employees. Particularly important is Revans’ idea about the connection between the survival and prosperity of business and the training of personnel. He argued that neither an organiza-
tion nor an individual can succeed if their learning (L) speed is lower than the speed of changes (C) in the external environment, that is L < C (Revans, 1980).

PBL provides for the integration of andragogical methods and technologies of individual and team work (discussions, round tables, brainstorming, research methods, independent and team work), which allows learners to actively participate in learning activities, analysis and problem solving. This approach requires active involvement of each participant who has a sense of responsibility and feels that he is trusted and supported. This ensures a high level of engagement of all participants in the learning process, the formation of corporate competence, mastering of project management tools – from system engineering to the philosophy of lean manufacturing with teamwork skills based on interpersonal interaction technology, conflict management skills, communication skills etc.

The most important feature of project-based learning is that projects become a central, not a supplementary element of an educational course: they are focused on transformation of knowledge for solving real problems (Thomas, 2000).

With the introduction of projects into the educational process at corporate university, learners research into real problems of the corporation for a long time to gain a better understanding of the techniques and approaches under study. The added advantage of the PBL is that project teams usually require the development and use of soft skills and awareness of difficulties of interdisciplinary activities.

The research shows that project-based learning at corporate universities is of dual nature: on the one hand, it focuses on learners (employee development), on the other hand – on business (business development). One or the other goal can dominate at a certain time. Therefore, it is important to be very careful in selecting projects, making sure that the project topic should be related to current or future changes in the company. The solution to the problem should include diagnosing of the problem, analysis, recommendations, implementation phase, as also cooperation with members of the
company. For example, Shell Project Academy, one of the leading corporate universities in the world, is especially capable in project-based learning and even has an accredited program in project management which is a complex cross-disciplinary science, particularly important for Shell Corporation and other companies like it, as the cross-disciplinary function is crucial for getting access to new oil and gas reserves in the world. The use of the project-based learning at the corporate university provides an opportunity to attract managers to the process of strategic planning and development of their strategic thinking. It has proven effective both in terms of personnel development and business development.

Conclusion

The results of our research give ground to conclude that the corporate university in the US and Canada is a structural unit of a company, which performs certain functions that promote business efficiency, particularly: training of employees of all levels in accordance with the strategic goals of the company development; knowledge management – systemic consolidation and dissemination of employees' experience; development of corporate culture, preservation of company values; being an innovation center; development of leadership, corporate competence of employees; being a “strategic umbrella” for training and development of the company’s staff in order to increase the company’s competitiveness by development of the competencies of the staff that are in line with the corporate strategy of the company. They have gone through a difficult path of formation – from simple training units to centers of transfer, exchange of knowledge and innovations both within companies and among them. There is a close relationship between the performance of the functions of the corporate university and the forms, methods, learning technologies that are used in the learning process. The strategy of training in corporate universities is built in accordance with the company’s goals. Project-based learning is widely used in corporate universities in the United
States and Canada; it provides an opportunity to gain managerial experience in real time, solves an important task of personnel development – formation of the ability to learn. Project-based learning as action learning is aimed both at personnel development and business development, as also at the effective management of changes in the company.
References


Intercultural Competence Formation of ESL Teachers in a Global Educational Environment

ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of the paper is to explore existing and emerging opportunities for academic mobility and ESL teachers’ professional development, to present the review of theoretical assumptions about intercultural competence, to provide recommendations on using effective strategies at group and individual levels to increase the effectiveness of ESL teachers training in general and intercultural competence formation in particular.

Methodology: This paper explores existing and emerging opportunities for academic mobility and ESL teachers’ professional development, presents the review of theoretical assumptions about intercultural competence.

Findings: Effective strategies of intercultural competence formation at group and the individual level were examined.
**Value Added:** The use of theoretical and practical conclusions of this paper would enhance the effectiveness of ESL teachers’ training in general and intercultural competence formation in particular.

**Recommendations:** This paper provides recommendations on using effective strategies to achieve successful intercultural communication at group and individual levels.

**Key words:** academic mobility, ESL teachers, culture, intercultural competence (IC), professional development, reflection.

**JEL codes:** O15, M53, I21

Globalization in education is not an abstract notion anymore, with rapid advances in technology it has become a reality. It explains the fact that foreign language teaching is seen as an opportunity to open “international channels of communication” (Wallace, 2001, p. 2). One of the most important challenges teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) face is ensuring active participation in global educational processes, academic mobility in particular, and their students’ success in intercultural communication, which all require intercultural competence formation as a part of teacher professional development programs.

The issue of culture and communication between cultures has a long history and is still the object of many investigations all over the world. Hall (1959) is considered to be the founder of the theory of intercultural communication; Gudykunst (1980) developed the notion of the “stranger” as a representative of another culture, the categorization of various influences or layers connected with different cultures; Scollon (2012) investigated formal professional contexts based on the notion of discourse systems; Andersen (2012) focused on cultural differences in nonverbal communication; Samovar (2013) presented an overview of existing intercultural theories, developed definitions of basic terms providing foresight for future studies. However, the issue of intercultural competence formation of ESL teachers was not in the focus of the investigations.

The aim of the paper is to explore existing and emerging opportunities for academic mobility and ESL teachers’ professional development, to present
the review of theoretical assumptions about intercultural competence, to provide recommendations on using effective strategies at group and individual levels to increase the effectiveness of ESL teachers training in general and intercultural competence formation in particular. One should remember that the strategies suggested for ESL teachers to use in their classrooms should first of all be tried and experienced by them during professional training which may be teacher education or in-service training, staff development as well as self-development programs.

Globalization in education created favorable conditions for academic mobility which may be understood as an opportunity to study, teach, conduct research or participate in professional training abroad. Academic mobility for students, postgraduates and faculty of National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute” (NTUU “KPI”) is presented mainly by educational or research programs, double diplomas, individual grants, and may serve as the evidence of global changes in Ukrainian educational system [kpi.ua/ru/node/7139]. The participants of the programs have opportunities to compare other systems of higher education with the Ukrainian one, develop foreign language skills, get professional experience communicating with experts in different fields, learn more about the culture of another country and receive a diploma or certificate from a foreign university. Each year more and more Ukrainian students study at European universities, bringing back their experience of surviving in a new environment, sharing international educational standards and academic culture with others. At the same time more and more foreign students come to Ukraine, which means that ESL teachers should be qualified enough to manage successful intercultural communication in their classrooms. As a matter of fact, there are plenty of existing and emerging opportunities for ESL teachers’ professional development.

First of all, the ability to speak English fluently allows ESL teachers to participate in any international event where English is used as a working language. Secondly, they may get international grants designed especially for
ESL teachers aimed at mastering innovative methodology. The requirements to ESL teachers, especially those who work at universities, include doing research, taking part in international projects, publishing in foreign academic journals and doing presentations at scientific conferences abroad. In order to participate in international programs, for example, programs of academic mobility, ESL teachers should present the certificate like Aptis, CAE, IELTS and others, which prove the language proficiency to meet CEFR requirements. In addition, publishing houses such as Pearson, Oxford, Macmillan, often in cooperation with America House or British Council, organize seminars and workshops where native speakers, teacher trainers and textbook writers share their best strategies in teaching English. By communicating with guest speakers, who usually are native speakers of English, ESL teachers acquire understanding not only of the most important issues in teaching, but of the intricacies connected with verbal and non-verbal intercultural communication.

Moreover, such NGOs as TESOL-Ukraine, SOVA and UERA organize various local events like conferences, series of seminars, trainings, summer and winter schools where the participants, often chosen on a competitive basis, get intercultural experience presenting and learning from native speakers. Online courses and webinars are also the ways to join international community of those who teach and learn.

Programs like TEA Program (Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program), Fulbright Scholar Program, MELTA Teacher Development Program and others require going abroad where the participants fully merge into multicultural community which consists of educators from many countries. One of the main requirements of participation in such programs is dissemination of the experience which means sharing the ideas and training others after the program is over.

While there is no use in denying the importance of professional training, Wallace (2001, p. 2) claims that foreign language teaching professionals should take full responsibility for their own professional development which may be understood as expanding knowledge in the area of education and
developing skills necessary for effective teaching. Defining the teacher as “reflective practitioner”, Wallace (2001, p. 2) emphasizes the importance of experience which is one of the ways to connect theory and practice. The participants of Claremont Graduate University TEA Program (2012) indeed had to conduct reflection practice on daily basis, reconsidering what they had learned while attending classes at the university, completing their home assignments, observing classes of American teachers, experiencing everyday life in an international community, microteaching, solving problems together with their room mates, group mates and university trainers. Reflection may be defined as regular practice of looking back on the experience, thinking about the reasons of failures and successes, analyzing one’s own actions and reactions of other people, drawing conclusions which will be used in the future as moral lessons. One of the tasks for TEA-Fellows was to complete the so-called “Onion Project” and present the results of the investigation which allowed teachers to analyze the education system of their home countries, compare and contrast them with others through the lenses of their experience abroad, in this way developing intercultural competence.

There are many theoretical assumptions about culture and intercultural competence made by the prominent researchers from different countries. However, there is no agreement about what culture is. A culture may be defined as a system of values, beliefs and material products like music, food, clothing (Suneetha & Sundarava, 2011, p. 124). Cargile claims that it is impossible to define culture, but possible to describe its general characteristics: culture is symbolic, possible to learn and transmit; culture is ethnocentric, it is constantly changing, it is dialectical in nature (2006, p. 17). Analyzing the differences between the Hofstede’s Dimensions of Individualism on the example of the USA and Collectivism on the example of Japan, Cargile reasons that the American culture may be collectivistic to a certain degree, while the Japanese culture may be also individualistic, thus making a conclusion about contradictory nature of culture (2006, pp. 17–18).
Intercultural competence is "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Deardorff, 2004, p. 194). Intercultural experience is something which, once acquired, remains with a person up to the moment when it is needed. Holliday claims that connecting previous experience with a new one allows those, who encounter obstacles communicating with people from other cultures, overcome them (Holliday, 2011, p. 1). Instead of focusing on blocks, concentrating on similarities or threads is beneficial for intercultural communication, as far as threads are associated with small culture presenting common people and their experiences (Holliday, 2011, p. 1). According to Holliday, it is important to keep cultural threads activated and blocks inhibited by means of choice, action and responsibility: there is always a choice to take action of speaking or not, and responsibility for communication being successful (2011, p. 7). First of all, people should be interested in communicating so that it is purposeful. If there is a need to communicate, the participants of communication will definitely try to find the ways of overcoming difficulties as they arise focusing on positive and ignoring the negative.

It is possible to reach the awareness of individual variation and the dynamic nature of culture by ruining stereotypes teachers possibly have about their teaching contexts, by broadening their outlook and learning more about multinational society (Suneetha & Sundavara, 2011, p. 127). Therefore, teachers should carefully consider their students’ socio-cultural background before designing and conducting any activities in ESL classroom: knowledge of cultural differences considerably improves intercultural communication (Suneetha & Sundavara, 2011, p. 129). It is important to remember that there are several approaches for ESL teachers to improve intercultural communication in the classroom at the group level:

- information approach suggests providing information about different cultures aimed at better understanding of beliefs and values of people all over the world;
• simulation approach promotes using situations which recreate real life episodes typical for different cultures;
• group discussions are means of revealing students’ views on cultural issues and reaching agreement;
• games create a friendly atmosphere for all participants who have fun and at the same time develop such characteristics as tolerance, patience and empathy; besides, games are highly motivational breaking the routine of the lesson and engaging all the participants;
• other activities include completing questionnaires and watching videos, which may provoke further discussions (Suneetha & Sundarava, 2011, p. 130).

Let us explore some of the approaches more closely. First of all, it is necessary to mention that in practice these approaches are difficult to separate, they are usually combined. Information approach focuses on reading, listening or watching videos about different cultural aspects, intercultural communication etc. For these activities to be productive, there should be pre-reading, pre-listening or pre-watching exercises which prepare students for a better understanding of the information; during and after exercises which, finally, check the comprehension, give space for questions or discussion of the most interesting issues from the material introduced by reading, listening or watching videos. Various activities may be used in simulation approach like conducting an interview with a foreigner, inviting a guest speaker, role plays, using realia in a classroom, mobile applications, online platforms or Skype, which are also informative and interactional. Brookfield (2011) suggests using short videos as starting points for developing guidelines of discussions: students watch short excerpts of people discussing different cultural issues and make a list of dos and don’ts; it is also possible to use questions like “Which contributions to the discussion were most useful? Why?”, “Which contributions to the discussion were irrelevant? Why?” (Brookfield, 2011, p. 10). The guidelines developed by the participants of this activity are likely to be followed when they have discussions in class.
The art of discussion requires careful preparation and guidance. Some activities may be used to master the basics and overcome the difficulties which usually arise while discussing controversial cultural issues. One of them is called “The Circle of Voices”. The procedure is as follows: all participants are divided into small groups of 4-5. Students choose one of the topics or questions like “Should you give presents to your university hosts when you study abroad?” and think about the issue for 1-2 minutes. Then each participant takes turns and speaks on the topic for about 1 minute without interruptions. After that there may be an open discussion, but on one condition: each person should comment on the contribution of the previous speaker, which makes the comments more relevant and discussion more coherent. This activity gives everyone equal opportunities to participate, it teaches the participants to be tolerant, listen carefully and respect opinions of others (Brookfield, 2011, p. 11).

As we can see, information and simulation approach, discussion and watching videos are combined with the aim to engage all the participants and create the environment favorable for successful intercultural communication.

While conducting discussions and watching educational videos may be challenging for some participants, games are familiar to anyone regardless of their educational background, nationality, age or other features. Games may also be considered as combination of information, simulation, sometimes discussions or questionnaires. In fact, games have existed in all cultures accumulating human experience in all its diversity. Being meaningful, structured, purposeful and fun, games are closely connected with the future of education (Gamification and the Future of Education, 2016, pp. 3–4). It is possible to choose any popular game and adapt it to the needs of the class focusing on certain cultural issues.

A game called “When in Rome” may serve as a perfect illustration of using games to improve intercultural communication of all participants. Needless to say that the name of the game speaks for itself hinting at the proverb “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” which means to follow the
customs of the people who live in the country you visit. All players are divided into teams and given the task of choosing any country or place. Then the players should provide some advice for a visitor to this country by completing the sentences which start with “Make sure you...; you need to...; be careful...; don’t...” thinking about crime, transport, health issues, food and drink, time, etc. The focus of this game is on functional language of giving advice or warnings; the content, which is information about different countries or places in a certain country, is provided by students themselves; fun part is for each team to guess the name of the place according to the pieces of advice presented by another team. While playing this game, the participants practice using modal patterns in a foreign language, learn more about dos and don’ts in different geographical locations, as well as of each other’s background and interests, which promotes tolerance and better understanding of customs, traditions, norms of behavior in different countries (Damian, 2011, p. 174).

In addition, everything said or written in the classroom provides valuable material for reflection conducted by both teachers and students. Again, there may be questions, prompts or free writing responses, followed by discussion if necessary. Reflection practice promotes creating the atmosphere of trust and establishes friendly relationships between the participants.

At the individual level there are some strategies which may be helpful for people who use a foreign language to prevent and solve problems connected with international communication:

- being mindful means to be open to new information, ready to listen actively, to be as attentive as possible, because your response depends on what you hear;
- controlling speech rate which means adjusting the rate of the speech to that of other people you talk to in order to make yourself clear which prevents misunderstanding;
- focusing on vocabulary by choosing the words carefully, avoiding professional terms, technical words, acronyms, metaphors, idioms, slang, etc.;
• checking comprehension by rephrasing or even writing the keywords if possible, because some people are better at reading than listening when they have to use a foreign language (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel & Roy, 2013, pp. 261–262).

Besides verbal communication, one should remember about non-verbal behavior: the expression of the face, keeping eye contact, controlling gestures, the distance between interlocutors, which, harmless in one country, may be offensive in others (Samovar et al., 2013, p. 262).

Globalization has created various opportunities for academic mobility and ESL teachers’ professional development. Effective strategies of intercultural competence formation at group level include: learning more about socio-cultural background and experience of the learners, using this information to design and conduct any activities in ESL classroom; applying information approach, using simulation, group discussions, games, videos, reflection, questionnaires, which are usually combined and aimed at engaging all the students. Strategies at the individual level include mindfulness, speech rate control, vocabulary choice, checking comprehension. It is also important to keep non-verbal behavior under control, using it to increase the effectiveness of intercultural communication. The strategies are also recommended to use in teacher education, in-service training, staff development, self-development programs. Future studies may include conducting surveys among teachers and students who participated in academic mobility programs aimed at establishing problem areas in intercultural competence formation.
References

Academic mobility official site, kpi.ua/ru/node/7139, access: 14 December 2017.


ABSTRACT

Objective: Tourist regions are characterized by a very high complexity and micro-enterprises are the largest group of entities which determine the competitiveness of the destination. However, management of such businesses has a strong specificity. The goal of this paper is to identify the capabilities of managing competitiveness and marketing of this group of entities.

Methodology: Literature review, examining and discussing the current knowledge regarding the competitiveness of family tourist micro-enterprises.

Findings: On the one hand, small companies have significant limitations compared to larger companies. However, the family nature of the company allows for high flexibility of management.
Decisions can usually be made faster and easier, which means that they are able to adapt their offer to the expectations of customers faster and better than large entities. Also, an atmosphere of hospitality and friendship can be easily created. What is more, cooperation with other local entities should result in the ability to offer higher value to consumers.

**Value Added:** Authors, on the bases of literature review have proposed a model that shows relations as an element of building competitiveness of a family tourist micro-enterprises. It appears that these firms have unique opportunities to develop relationships with their customers. Cooperation, quality and communication have been described as key variables responsible for this process, that should result in generating the benefits of re-selecting the services of the company as well as giving them positive recommendations.

**Recommendations:** In the area of family businesses in tourism, there is still lack of empirical studies. That is why, the issues presented in this work should be subjected to empirical verification. Future research should concentrate on the specificity of managing a tourist family micro-enterprise and on possible sources of competitive advantage of a tourist family micro-enterprise in the eyes of customers. Especially, described model should be empirically verified.

**Key words:** competitiveness, tourism, destination product, family micro-enterprises

**JEL codes:** M31, M37

---

### Introduction

Tourism plays a very important role in modern economy; micro-enterprises serve a very significant function for the development of tourist destinations. It should be remembered that tourist regions are characterized by a very high complexity and micro-enterprises are the largest group of entities which determine the competitiveness of the destination. However, management of such businesses has a strong specificity, presenting this specificity is the primary objective of this text.

It seems that the primary source of competitiveness of these enterprises, just like in case of other bigger organizations, can be attractive product, satisfying the needs of the consumer and properly designed system of marketing communication. In contrast, however, even to medium-sized organizations, the businesses in question have significantly lower potential and possibility of developing activities. It should also be noted that there can be in sometimes hundreds of micro-enterprises providing e.g. accommodation
services in specific destinations. It is hard to stand out in such a group, and then come out with a promotional message. It should also be remembered that tourists choose destination first and it is its attractiveness that is the foundation for their decision. The choice of specific place of accommodation is of secondary nature.

One must not forget that tourism has a spatial, often international, dimension. The product of the company is sold to the customer, usually being situated in a different place, who has no possibility of its direct verification. As a result, the opinion of the company, its recommendations become especially important, the promotion has its own specifics as well. Characteristic features of management of a tourist micro-enterprise, and especially of a family tourist micro-enterprise are numerous. The aim of this study is to identify the specificity and capabilities of managing competitiveness of this group of entities. As emphasized by D. Getz, J. Carlsen, A. Morrison (2004, p. 2), there is a deficit of knowledge and studies in this area and it is certainly worthwhile to replenish these deficiencies.

1. Essence of tourist destination product

J. Kulawik-Dutkowska states in one of her studies that ‘micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of Polish and EU economy’ (2014, p. 73). It is hard to argue with this statement. The discussed group of companies determines a number of processes in the economy, which is confirmed by the figures. For example, as shown in the report of the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development SME sector is responsible for the creation of close to 50% of Gross Domestic Product, and the micro-enterprises alone generate approximately 30% of GDP (Raport o stanie małych i średnich... 2015, p. 15). A characteristic feature of this type of businesses is the fact that a significant part of them have family character. Given the importance of this group of companies as a creator of economic growth, or a player on the labour market, it is appropriate to seek all possible management tools
that could strengthen small and medium-sized family businesses, build their potential or generate any competitive advantage.

Small and medium-sized family businesses are also an important element of the tourism market (Zapalska & Brozik, 2007, p. 142). They are these actors that create a tourist destination product in a very powerful way, being responsible especially for the development of accommodation, gastronomy and transport infrastructure.

To determine the role of family small, medium-sized and especially micro-enterprises in the tourism market, it is necessary to define the nature and specifics of the product destination. It can be divided in two key spheres (see Fig. 1). The first of them includes natural values, anthropogenic (man-made) values and all kinds of events of cultural and other character. This part of the tourism product largely determines whether tourists come to the destination. Besides, the area product further comprises the infrastructure of a region or place, which includes: a base of accommodation and catering, communications network and travel agencies that make up the basic infrastructure – targeted mainly at tourists. Another important element of the infrastructure is its complementary part, which was created primarily for the residents, but it is used by tourists as well.
Regardless of the definition being adopted, there is a consensus regarding one issue. Destination product is characterized by high complexity and is made up not only by tourist attractions, but it is also created by companies operating in the region that largely determine its competitiveness. Adopting the classification of the tourist product presented in Fig. 1, it should be noted that family tourist micro-enterprises play a significant role, being primarily responsible for the creation of infrastructure. It is the local businesses, usually of family nature of the ownership that form a significant part of both primary and supplementary spheres.
2. Family businesses as an element of tourist destination product

As indicated earlier, important destination stakeholders, having a significant impact on the development of its product and competitiveness are family entrepreneurs. For example, as noted by M. Bednarczyk perpetuated dominance of micro, small and medium enterprises and family roots of entrepreneurship in tourism belong to the essential characteristic features of entrepreneurship on the Polish tourism market (Bednarczyk, 2006, p. 39). D. Getz, J. Carlsen and A. Morrison (2004, p. 3) in turn write that family businesses are in many areas the foundation of competitiveness of destinations. These statements indicate the importance of the mentioned group of enterprises on the tourism market, which is due to several reasons.

Firstly, it should be noted that in the literature there is no dominant definition of a family business, this is a category that has not been precisely defined. This group accommodates both large entities as well as small, locally operating, companies. Comprehensive verification of the definition of family businesses has been performed by H. Harms (2014) who analyzed 267 articles from scientific journals. On the other hand, as Ł. Sułkowski (2011, p. 10) points out, there may be different criteria for the differentiation of family businesses, e.g. family ownership structure, exercising strategic control by the family, participation of family members in the management or the involvement of more than one generation in the company’s operations. At the same time, however, this author states that family businesses constitute a very important group among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). And it is SMEs that are the dominating group of entities co-creating the destination product, being especially responsible for the infrastructure in the given area. Adopting this approach allows to put forward a hypothesis about the importance of family businesses for building the competitiveness of a destination.

Another condition indicating the significance of family micro-enterprises in the tourist destination is generated by a look at the stakeholders of destina-
tions. As indicated by Ph. Kotler, M. Halin, I. Rein, D. Heider (2002) the residents and entrepreneurs belong to the key groups. It seems that family businesses are an important platform to connect these groups, since the inhabitants of destinations are usually the owners of local businesses. Such situation is beneficial from the point of view of building competitiveness because it leads to a stronger identification of entrepreneurs with the destination and increases the willingness to get involved in its development.

As is often emphasized in the literature, management or operation of family businesses is strongly conditioned by the culture of a country or region. For example, Hitchcock and Wesner (2009, pp. 265-282) describe precisely the impact of the Confucian philosophy on the functioning of the Vietnamese family businesses. They emphasize, among others, that the teachings of Confucius show a strong respect for the family, which has a positive effect on ensuring the continuity of management by the same family. In countries where there is still a strong attachment to family values, this could have a positive impact on the involvement of members of the family in the functioning of enterprises belonging to them. P. Bartkowiak and P. Niewiadomski (2012, p. 12) point out that the essential characteristic of the family business is a man, or men who founded it, their energy and commitment often decide about the success of their initiative.

Another important element for the development of competitiveness of destinations is cooperation. Especially in the case of local destinations, an important factor stimulating cooperation is the existence of informal relations, interpersonal links, which is confirmed by empirical research (Hankinson 2009, p. 105; Warnaby, Bennison & Barry 2005, pp. 191–192). The existence of this type of relationship has a positive impact on cooperation and certainly makes it easier to carry out a number of joint ventures. It seems that these relationships are stronger in the case of entities that are owned and managed by people permanently associated with the given destination.

Certainly, one cannot ignore the fact that family capital is less mobile. Family businesses, due to the attachment of the owners, are more likely to
generate an investment in the destination, reducing the tendency to seek new locations. It can therefore be assumed that the family capital, in the case of families living in a given location for several generations, will be associated with it stronger.

3. Specific character of family businesses – management and marketing

3.1 Management

Family ownership of businesses creating destination product, responsible for its competitiveness, possesses of a number of positive aspects but there are also significant weaknesses and limitations resulting from their specificity. They are indicated in aggregate way in Table 1.

Table 1. Weaknesses and limitations related with family ownership of tourist enterprises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Business environment</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Business operations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easiness to start the activity encourages people without formal qualifications</td>
<td>A large share of illegal activities among the owners of family businesses in tourism</td>
<td>Orientation on one segment of the market</td>
<td>No planning / strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of professional managers</td>
<td>Strong competition</td>
<td>Lack of research</td>
<td>Expenditures not always aimed at development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No development strategy for next generations
Location of the projects is often unattractive
Lack of knowledge on marketing activities
Relatively low quality of services, often there is no customer-orientation
Large number of bureaucratic obstacles
Large dependence on the season
No use of new information technologies
Possibility of misunderstandings between family members
Low economy of scale

Source: Petric 2003, p. 1760.

It can be assumed that majority of the indicated weaknesses of tourist family businesses are due to their limited size, which will probably only deepen in the case of micro-enterprises. Their size and related financial restrictions result in the lack of a number of professional managerial activities. Certainly at the moment of starting the company, its functioning and development carry a significant risk. In such a situation entrepreneurs have a certain, although understandable, reluctance to invest in professional management. It seems, however, that as the business grows, when it has started to function in a stable manner, the acquisition of knowledge and managerial skills by either the founders or their descendants should be a condition stimulating its further development.

For all family businesses, including the ones operating on the tourist market, a significant barrier to development is to ensure the continuity of ownership and management of the company by a given family (Tassiopoulos, 2008, p. 281). Two groups of factors limiting the issue of succession in one family can be pointed out. The first is rather universal, factors such as the lack of descendants, significant 'age gap' between parents and children or reluctance of the descendants to continue the family tradition are all problems regardless of the industry in which the family company operates. The second
group of factors discussed by D. Tassiopoulos concerns the specifics of the tourism industry, which is the reason of the following:

- location of the company may be unattractive for young people, for locations in rural areas or in small towns there is a strong tendency to leave for educational purposes to the larger cities, which may lead to staying in there and unwillingness to take over the family business.
- working conditions (long hours, limited privacy, strong contacts with customers) are seen as unattractive for a lot of people, which may also discourage from running this type of business.

One of the issues related to the management of family tourist micro-enterprises are limitations in this area. Additionally, one can indicate a strong specificity of management of the discussed activities, which also has a positive side. It should be noted that the characteristic feature of micro-enterprises (and these are predominant in the formation of destination product), including the family ones, is high flexibility of management. In such companies decisions can usually be made faster and easier, which means that they are able to adapt their offer to the expectations of customers faster and better than large entities.

Moreover, family businesses (especially in the area of accommodation services) like no other can create an atmosphere of hospitality and friendship. In tourism, this feature results in building strong relationships not only with the environment of the given destination, but also in relation to customers, which increases their loyalty. As Presas, Munoz and Guia point out in their study (2011, p. 270), family companies have a number of special intangible assets, which guarantee their uniqueness and can translate into building their brands. These values are listed by the authors and called familiness, which clearly refers to the importance of the family for the management of the company. At the same time, however, it should be remembered that Tassiopoulos (2008, p. 276) strongly emphasizes that family businesses in tourism usually require a strong involvement and frequent contacts with customers (the dominance of services in tourism) resulting in strong interference in family life and can affect it in the negative way.
Another feature is the fact that family businesses in the destination, as already mentioned, are usually formed by the residents. These people are emotionally connected with it, but at the same time have often lived there for generations. Consequently, they have a stronger capital of relations to create cooperative relations with other companies than entrepreneurs who came into the area, and as indicated it is the cooperation that can be a significant source of competitive advantage of a tourism business.

Analyzing the specifics of management in micro-enterprises a model of building competitive advantage can be proposed in tourism, which is shown in Figure 2. It appears that the described entities have unique opportunities to build relationships with customers-tourists. For further considerations it has been assumed that building positive relationships with tourists generates the benefits of re-selecting the services of the company as well as giving them positive recommendations. Cooperation, quality and communication have been decided as key variables responsible for developing relationships with clients. The first of these variables relates to cooperation with other...
entities and should result in the ability to offer higher value to consumers. As mentioned, owners of family businesses in tourism are usually people strongly associated with destination, the area where they operate, which should be reflected in potential for development of all forms of cooperation, generating mutual benefits.

Another area, or the foundation for building any relationship, is the quality of the product, in principle, its assessment and satisfaction associated with this assessment. In the area of accommodation infrastructure, in the vast majority of cases family micro-enterprises certainly have limited opportunities to compete with hotels or apartment complexes, which are an increasingly common form of the providing such services. Described businesses are usually smaller and poorer furnished. At the same time, however, they may try to stand out thanks to the commitment of the owners, their hospitality and creating a friendly atmosphere, while taking care to ensure the physical elements of the object at the highest level.

The third, but no less important element of developing the relationship with the customer is marketing communication. It is a tool most responsible for making the tourists use the services of the company. However, bringing its role only to attract customers is a simplification and a mistake. Properly conducted communication should be responsible for maintaining relations with the tourist after he leaves the destination, it should be focused on building loyalty and making the tourist use the products of the company once again and give the company a positive recommendation. Unfortunately, also in this respect family micro-enterprises have fewer financial resources than their larger competitors. Besides, one should not forget about the competence gap in terms of knowledge of marketing tools mentioned before, which can only partly be compensated by the enthusiasm and commitment of the owners.

All three of these tools serving to build relationships also affect the image of the company. Furthermore, it is of course in a strong interaction with developed relations, together influencing the behaviour of tourists. While
managing the competitiveness of a tourist micro-enterprise, the manager is less able to shape these two variables than a larger competitor.

3.2 Marketing

There is a significant advantage of a tourism micro-business regarding the choice of marketing strategies. Namely, such company has an opportunity to build relationships and image based on the family nature of the company. At the same time, there are certain issues that restrict marketing tactics. Petric (2003) names some of the limitations, such as orientation on one market segment, lack of marketing knowledge, absence of research (see Table 1). Family micro-enterprises certainly have limited opportunities to compete with hotels or apartment complexes. Even when facing the mentioned limitations, such aspects as owners’ commitment, hospitality, local experience, small scale should be highlighted in marketing communications.

Remarkably efficient and cost effective to connect with customers is the use of social media technologies, which have generated fundamentally new ways of interacting. The digital marketing landscape has changed along with the customer behavior. People are more motivated to engage and interact through social media for social connection, entertainment, information access. Consequently, this has increased customers’ consumption, participation, but also production of information of the companies’ social media platforms (Heinonen, 2011). With the growing use of social media, a company has a presence in a wider variety of places than ever before (Bradley, 2010). Unlike traditional media that are often cost prohibitive to micro-enterprises, a social media strategy does not require astronomical budgeting (Hanna et al., 2011).

Social media is one of the fastest growing media in history (Richardson, Choong, & Parker, 2016). Online social networks are web communities (Armstrong & Kotler, 2011) for consumers to engage, socialize, exchange opinions and information. Different types of platforms are available such as; Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, blogs, LinkedIn, YouTube and Snapchat. There are 2.307
billion active social media users with an annual growth of 10% since 2015 (Chaffey, 2016). Facebook offers various types of targeting opportunities for marketers to create a personalized ad-type, fan pages, subject groups. Twitter is mostly known for the updates on news and events with 328 million active monthly users worldwide with the vision to give their users the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers (Practice, 2017b). Instagram is a social media platform owned by Facebook that enables sharing videos and photos and has over 700 million users (Practice, 2017a) while being one of the fastest growing social media channels nowadays. The platform offers great opportunity for businesses to promote their brand.

The advantages of social media marketing for tourism micro-enterprises is that companies can develop communication strategies that both reach and engage people in numerous ways, on platforms that do not require expensive media spends and creative development (Hanna et al., 2011). Social media is an effective tool to reach a wider audience and create a great amount of brand awareness in a short period of time. All social media platforms may be linked, which increases an interaction across them. The sooner a company becomes involved in social media, the sooner it takes an advantage of it (Bradley, 2010).

Concluding, considering the specificities of tourism family micro-enterprises, best marketing strategies would be those that require neither much financial resources nor the technical skills, highlighting the features that small-scale accommodations offer at the same time. Developing social media marketing strategy is ideal for those businesses.

4. Summary

As considerations indicate, tourist destination product is a product with a strong specificity. It is mainly a result of its complexity, it is not only the composition of a large quantity of individual products but also of all the advantages available in the given area. Due to the characteristics of the
destination product, it is the entrepreneurs (including family businesses) who are the stakeholder group, which has a significant impact on the competitiveness of the place, while being at the same time a group which derives many benefits from the development of tourism. To maximize the effectiveness of entrepreneurs’ participation in building the competitiveness of the destination, a strong horizontal collaboration between them is necessary as is the cooperation with the local administration.

It seems that family businesses are a group of entrepreneurs which has a strong effect on the development of the destination (their owners are closely linked to it), including the intensification of links between its stakeholders. Management as well as marketing operations of these entities, however, involve a very strong specificity. On the one hand, they have significant limitations compared to larger companies. At the same time, however, especially in the case of accommodation services, they have specific advantages resulting from the family nature of the company.

It should be noted, however, that in the area of functioning of family businesses in tourism, there is a strong paucity of empirical studies, relatively little research is carried out. Consequently, it seems that the issues presented in this work should be subjected to empirical verification, in search of, among others, answers to the following questions: What is the share of family businesses among companies developing destination products, do family businesses have a stronger desire to participate in joint ventures for the development of the competitiveness of the destination, what is the specificity of managing a tourist family micro-enterprise, what can be a source of competitive advantage of a tourist family micro-enterprise in the eyes of customers?
References


Practice, W.B. (2017a). *What we know about marketing on Instagram.* WARC.

Practice, W.B. (2017b). *What we know about marketing on Twitter.* WARC.


ABSTRACT

Objective: The article deals with the question of educational leadership and the understanding of that notion. That problem is relevant in the discussions on contemporary education, which is demonstrated by numerous publications concerning such areas as pedagogy, sociology of education or management. The attributes ascribed to an educational leader (personality traits, attitudes, values, etc.) are varied and arise from different experience of the authors and the applied research perspectives. The article presents the results of studies describing the characteristics of an ideal educational leader.

Methodology: The aim of the presented studies was to attempt to identify the set of traits ascribed to a contemporary educational leader and determine to what extent the respondents identify those traits as the ones they themselves possess. The studies have been based on the opinions and experience of the participants in the education system in Poland – graduates of senior secondary schools (2017). As the analysis of relevant literature on the subject does not allow one to present...
a uniform set of qualities of an ideal educational leader, the authors of the presented studies have selected 34 traits that are most frequently mentioned in scientific papers. Subsequently, during the first stage of the studies, a group of 22 experts was asked to select 17 descriptive categories (half of the presented set) that, in their view, most accurately describe an ideal educational leader. Afterwards, a sample of 108 respondents (graduates) was provided with a survey questionnaire where, using a five-point Likert scale, the participants evaluated the occurrence of a given trait/quality in the following contexts: A pedagogue – an ideal leader; A pedagogue – a leader from the past; Self-assessment with respect to a degree of possession of the listed qualities. The studies were conducted in Google Forms technology with the randomisation of all the studied qualities of a leader for each of the questions and each of the respondents. The constructed non-random purposive sample consisted of the graduates of general education, technical and vocational senior secondary schools from cities with population exceeding 500,000 inhabitants. Men constituted 27.8% of the sample.

Findings: According to the respondents, the key traits in this case (a pedagogue – an ideal leader) included the ability to motivate others, psychological and pedagogical sensitivity and being a moral authority. The results relating to the educational leader from the past show a slightly different order of the key qualities resulting from the respondents’ own experience. The first place was taken by high intellectual capabilities. It was followed by the ability to motivate others and being a moral authority. When conducting self-assessment with respect to the listed leadership qualities, the participants indicated that the qualities they possessed to the greatest degree included psychological and pedagogical sensitivity, the ability to interpret other people’s expectations and the ability to plan the necessary changes. The achieved results also show that the averaged ( ) self-assessment regarding the degree of possession of all the leadership qualities in comparison to the qualities ascribed to an ideal leader is lower by 21.97%. At the stage of designing the studies, it may have been expected that more significant differences would be revealed between the imagined ideal type of a leader and the self-assessment of the graduates with respect to leadership predisposition/qualities.

Value Added: In summary, the applied quantitative method of measurement allows one to confirm the accuracy of the set of leadership qualities determined on the basis of the relevant literature on the subject. According to the opinions of the graduates taking part in the study (former participants of leadership relationships), it correctly describes an educational leader. That knowledge may have practical application, especially in the conscious building of leadership in the educational environment. This is because it may be assumed that the stronger the correspondence of the set of qualities of an educational leader with the expectations of the followers, the better the chance for the creation of an effective leadership relationship.

Recommendations: The perspective of the “followers” who have their own individual experience with respect to relationships with “educational leaders” seems to be worth exploring further. The analysis of available publications on the subject in question gives grounds for posing a question to what extent the postulated image of the educational leader has any empirical foundations and to what degree it is rather a speculation or intuition of numerous authors.
Leadership and the scope of the problem

Scientific approaches to the matter of organisational leadership date back to the 1930s. In the past eighty years researchers have tried to explain the phenomenon of leadership by analysing personality traits, behaviour and situational factors affecting a person who influences people. The most characteristic feature of the early studies of leadership was the conviction that there were internal, inborn qualities predestining selected persons to influence effectively other group members. A division described by Levingston (2007) that was proposed as part of the trait approach to leadership comprised thinking, feelings, interrelations and visible behavioural traits. Seemingly easy, the identification of specific traits proved to be impossible in practice. The failures of the trait approach brought about an increased interest in studies of human behaviour aiming to determine the patterns of behaviour of an effective leader that could subsequently be implemented e.g. in educational programmes. That approach was born from behaviourists’ convictions that leadership behaviours can be learnt. Such a way of thinking opened the door to the development of management sciences and resulted in the increased popularity of the idea of leadership for anyone who would like to become a leader. Leadership educational programmes are offered by various business schools around the world. They undeniably give a chance to learn the tactics of influencing others, owing to a better understanding of the rules governing social life. However, there is no unequivocal connection between the educational process and individual successes in the area of leadership in managerial positions. That difficulty resulted in the appearance of the situational approach linking a specific leadership style to certain external factors such as the place, time and nature of a given relationship.

The experience of leadership researchers in the past 80 years has resulted in the creation of a definition of organisational leadership indicating
its multiple scopes and dependency on the co-existence of internal and external factors in an organisation. According to the aforesaid definition, “organisational leadership can be defined as a relationship between the superior and the subordinates (or co-workers, depending on the type of leadership) aimed at achieving the intended goals – as well as visions, dreams, plans, values – based on respect and confidence in the leader’s competencies and frequently on the fascination with the leader and rational or irrational commitment to the implementation of jointly created vision of growth” (Haromszeki, 2010, pp. 40–41).

According to the author’s own definition adopted in this text, only a person who not only feels qualified to play the role but, most importantly, is considered as the leader by his/her followers can be called a leader. If such an approach is assumed, leadership occurs only in actual situations of influencing other people and can be studied solely from the pragmatic perspective as the explanation of the effective activity that has been completed and has measurable effects. The effectiveness of leadership, according to the Leadership Categorization Theory (Lord, Foti, & DeVader 1984), depends on having the desired traits in certain social and cultural (situational) circumstances. The leadership categorization theory assumes that people have their own ideas as to the optimum behaviour of a leader in typical or specific leadership situations based on cognitive schemas of types of leader. In this context, the notion of leadership perception appears. There is a process of creating prototypes, storing them in memory and activating them in a specific social context. “Effective leaders are the individuals who have the attributes of a category describing a leader that meet the requirements of the situation” (Kożusznik, 2005, p. 117). R.S. Lord, R.J. Foti and C.L. DeVader (1984) have identified 27 prototypical qualities of a leader. They include, inter alia, dedication, goal-orientation, being well-informed, charisma, decisiveness, responsibility, intelligence, determination, organisation and verbal skills. Other studies emphasise such factors as dedication, intelligence, charisma, strength and sensitivity (Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994). Studies carried out in the
past two decades show that effective leaders have to be flexible and adapt their behaviour to the needs of the tasks and social requirements (Hall, J. Workman, & Marchioro, 1998; Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991). In addition, R.G. Lord (1977) indicates that there is a strong correlation between leadership perception and social power. According to the theory in question, leadership is the result of an individual process of information processing and not a property of certain social groups (Kożusznik, 2005, p. 118).

Organisational leadership and leadership in education have a lot in common. Although these two environments considerably differ, the social and psychological mechanisms governing the leader-follower relationships are similar.

The educational leader in light of the challenges of contemporary education

As M. Chrabąszcz states, educational leadership is a process taking place in a group, connected with teaching and learning and requiring the maintenance of respect for the autonomy and diversity of the educational-process participants. In the relevant literature, leadership is defined through the qualities and skills of the leader as well as the attitude assumed and actions taken by the leader. Authors of articles on the subject agree that an educational leader should be optimistic, good at planning his/her actions and should take care of the relationships inside and outside the school. Important qualities include, **inter alia**, being a good listener, empathy, self-awareness, critical assessment of one’s own beliefs, awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses, and ability to cooperate. A pedagogue in the role of the educational leader should ensure proper teaching and learning conditions by determining the goals together, inspiring others, affirming successes, promoting changes, focusing on the priorities, and monitoring and evaluating the processes taking place at school (Chrabąszcz, 2014, p. 116). Other authors believe that educational leadership itself is connected with making others capable of performing their tasks to the best of their abilities and, at the same time, with a sense
of purpose, dignity, respect for others and satisfaction (Mazurkiewicz, 2011, p. 392). Educational leadership also means “the search for and continuous interpretation of meanings carried out with the learner” (Sayer, 1995, p. 28).

K. Lorek (2011) states that a teacher, when shaping a student’s attitude to learning and ushering him/her into the world of values and moral norms (teaching and educating), influences many aspects of the student’s actions and functioning: by affecting the student’s emotions, self-perception and the perception of other people and the surrounding reality, attitudes in the broad sense, and assessments (including self-esteem). The author particularly emphasises the importance of the teacher’s authority, which, according to the basic definition of the term, means “credibility” – one of the pillars of effective leadership. As K. Lorek mentions, from the pedagogical perspective, the definition and interpretation of the leadership phenomenon is deeply embedded in such categories as the teacher’s moral authority, psychological and pedagogical maturity and sensitivity, intellect and interdisciplinary knowledge.

Elements that are crucial in creating educational leadership, according to the aforementioned authors, include charisma and authority (Śmiałek, 2010), social intelligence (Hatch, 199, p. 137) and emotional intelligence (Salovey, & Sluyter, p. 57).

The theoreticians commenting on educational leadership refer to such values as freedom, responsibility, professionalism, self-awareness, trust and critical thinking. Factors that are mentioned most frequently include the individual qualities of pedagogues, workplace factors and the characteristics of educational programmes. On the other hand, a description of the leadership relationship specifying the elements of such a relationship that are necessary for its emergence and development in specific social and cultural circumstances can rarely be found. According to Polish researchers, the effectiveness of leaders’ actions depends on the application of the so-called 7 rules proposed by Covey (2007).

The studies carried out as part of the Human Capital Balance Sheet (BKL, 2014, 2015) in a project carried out by the Polish Agency for Enterprise
Development and the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (Kocór, 2015, p. 12) in 2010–2014 (and forecasts for the subsequent years) show that the most desired competencies, irrespective of the job position for which the candidates were sought, included the competencies listed below. They strongly correspond to the postulated qualities of a contemporary educational leader. They are:

- self-organisation skills (time-management skill, self-reliance, decision-making and initiative-taking abilities, resistance to stress and willingness to work);
- job-related skills (specific competencies necessary for the performance of tasks relating to a given job);
- interpersonal skills (the ability to interact with people, communicate, cooperate in a group and solve interpersonal conflicts).

Theoretical reflections on the subject of educational leadership and the fact that the term is used with reference to the actions undertaken within educational communities were the reasons why the authors have decided to conduct studies focused on determining a coherent set of traits (prototypical qualities) of a contemporary educational leader.

The assumptions and results of the authors’ own studies

The aim of the presented studies was to attempt to identify the set of traits ascribed to a contemporary educational leader and determine to what extent the respondents identify those traits as the ones they themselves possess. The studies have been based on the opinions and experience of the participants in the education system in Poland – graduates of senior secondary schools (2017). The perspective of the “followers” who have their own individual experience with respect to relationships with “educational leaders” seems to be worth exploring further. The analysis of available publications on the subject in question gives grounds for posing a question to what extent the postulated image of the educational leader...
has any empirical foundations and to what degree it is rather a speculation or intuition of numerous authors.

As the analysis of relevant literature on the subject does not allow one to present a uniform set of qualities of an **ideal educational leader**, the authors of the presented studies have selected 34 traits that are most frequently mentioned in scientific papers. Subsequently, during the first stage of the studies, a group of 22 experts was asked to select 17 descriptive categories (half of the presented set) that, in their view, most accurately describe an **ideal** educational leader. That group of experts included, *inter alia*, such persons as human-resource-management specialists, academic teachers from social-science fields, employees of the education authority and professionally active psychologists.

The eventually selected set of leadership traits comprised the following categories, listed in a random order: the **ability to interpret other people’s expectations**; **appropriate (adequate) self-esteem**; **team-building skill**; **high intellectual capabilities**; **courage in thinking and actions**; **being a moral authority**; **psychological and pedagogical sensitivity**; **the ability to motivate others, willingness to make changes**; **unconventionality**; **taking responsibility for others**; **the ability to impress others**; **the ability to anticipate**; **innovativeness**; **being knowledgeable about various fields**; **the ability to create visions of the future**, and the **ability to plan changes**.

Afterwards, a sample of 108 respondents (graduates) was provided with a survey questionnaire where, using a five-point Likert scale, the participants evaluated the occurrence of a given trait/quality in the following contexts:

- **A pedagogue – an ideal leader**: an abstract category referring to the ideal of leadership in education. The respondents answered the following question: *Specify to what extent a pedagogue who could be called an “educational leader” should possess a given trait.*
- **A pedagogue – a leader from the past**: a category referring to the respondents’ experience from their educational past. A **pedagogue – a leader from the past** in that perspective may be interpreted as the so-called **significant**
other – in secondary socialization a person who has an important and lasting impact on the system of values or behaviour patterns of an individual (G.H. Mead). The respondents were asked to answer the following question: When thinking of a good/effective pedagogue - a leader, we usually remember one, the most noteworthy person that we encountered in our past. Such a person has often had a great influence on our lives. Please specify to what extent the listed traits and competencies describe the pedagogue you have in mind.

- Self-assessment with respect to a degree of possession of the listed qualities: the respondents were additionally asked to assess themselves in all the proposed categories of an ideal leader. The question was: Which of the listed qualities / skills accurately describe you? Those data serve as an interesting point of reference for the two previous research contexts.

The studies were conducted in Google Forms technology with the randomisation of all the studied qualities of a leader for each of the questions and each of the respondents. The constructed non-random purposive sample consisted of the graduates of general education, technical and vocational senior secondary schools from cities with population exceeding 500 000 inhabitants. Men constituted 27.8% of the sample.

The table below presents the arithmetic means of the values of traits that the respondents ascribed to an ideal educational leader, the selected educational leader from the respondent’s past and, additionally, the self-assessment of the participants in the 17 listed categories.

As predicted, all the qualities relating to an ideal educational leader were given relatively high points, within the range between 3.63 and 4.61 (minimum: 1.0; maximum: 5.0). What was important to the achievement of the goal of the studies was to determine the order of the qualities (ranks) for each of the categories. The results confirm that the selected set of qualities accurately describes the imagined, ideal educational leader. According to the respondents, the key traits in this case included the ability to motivate others (4.61), psychological and pedagogical sensitivity (4.48) and being a moral authority (4.44).
Table 1. The assessment of the key qualities of an educational leader: arithmetic means; 1–5 scale, N=108

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait/quality (assessment of the degree of possession of a given trait on a scale of 1.0 (minimum) to 5.0 (maximum))</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Leader from the past</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Self-assessment of the traits</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>An ideal leader</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Source: own studies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>continuous willingness to make changes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unconventionality</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taking responsibility for others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to impress others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to anticipate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>innovativeness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being knowledgeable about various fields</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to create visions of the future</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to plan the necessary changes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to interpret other people’s expectations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate (adequate) self-esteem</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>team-building skill</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high intellectual capabilities</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>courage in thinking and actions</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being a moral authority</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychological and pedagogical sensitivity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to motivate others</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diagram 1. The assessment of the key qualities of an educational leader: arithmetic means; 1–5 scale, N-108

The results relating to the educational leader from the past show a slightly different order of the key qualities resulting from the respondents' own experience. The first place was taken by high intellectual capabilities (4.5). It was followed by the ability to motivate others (4.3) and being a moral authority (4.26).

When conducting self-assessment with respect to the listed leadership qualities, the participants indicated that the qualities they possessed to the greatest degree included psychological and pedagogical sensitivity (4.02), the ability to interpret other people's expectations (3.74) and the ability to plan the necessary changes (3.69).

Diagram 1 shows that there is a graphically captured discrepancy (which is relatively small and in most cases does not have any statistical significance) between the imagined ideal leader and the real leader from the past. Any noticeable differences can only be observed in such dimensions as psychological and pedagogical sensitivity, the ability to motivate others, team-building skill or appropriate (adequate) self-esteem. The remaining
qualities of the leader from the past are equal to, or even slightly higher in intensity than, the ones indicated in the context of the ideal leader.

In the case of the third research context, i.e. the self-assessment with respect to leadership qualities, it can be noted that taking responsibility for others (3.54) and the ability to anticipate (3.61) are the qualities that the respondents claimed to possess at a relatively high level, if we assume that the point of reference was the previously indicated degree of existence of those qualities in an ideal leader (as well as a leader from the past). On the other hand, the qualities that were indicated during self-assessment as possessed to the smallest degree included the ability to impress others (2.87), unconventionality (3.12) and being a moral leader (3.22). The question remains: to what extent is such a result (regarding the aforementioned 3 qualities) determined by cultural factors and connected with specific mental images of those notions? It is likely that claiming with excessive ease (also in research circumstances) that one possesses such qualities as the ability to impress others or being an authority, especially a moral one, could be interpreted by the respondents as a sign of a lack of modesty or of conceit.

Table 2. An ideal pedagogue and the self-assessment with regard to the degree of possession of leadership qualities by the respondents – an analysis of the statistical significance of the resulting differences (Wilcoxon test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUALITIES</th>
<th>An ideal pedagogue</th>
<th>Self-assessment</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>The result of Wilcoxon test</th>
<th>Significance level - Wilcoxon test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arithmetic mean</td>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>Arithmetic mean</td>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>The result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking responsibility for others</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconventionality</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovativeness</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Educational Leaders and Their Qualities from the Followers’ Perspective

### Qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>An ideal pedagogue</th>
<th>Self-assessment</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>The result</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>The result of Wilcoxon test</th>
<th>Significance level - Wilcoxon test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to create visions of the future</td>
<td>4,13</td>
<td>3,57</td>
<td>0,56</td>
<td>0,90</td>
<td>5,56</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous willingness to make changes</td>
<td>3,63</td>
<td>3,31</td>
<td>0,31</td>
<td>1,07</td>
<td>2,87</td>
<td>0,004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and pedagogical sensitivity</td>
<td>4,48</td>
<td>4,02</td>
<td>0,46</td>
<td>1,02</td>
<td>4,30</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate (adequate) self-esteem</td>
<td>4,30</td>
<td>3,50</td>
<td>0,80</td>
<td>1,13</td>
<td>5,92</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to anticipate</td>
<td>3,93</td>
<td>3,61</td>
<td>0,31</td>
<td>0,98</td>
<td>3,02</td>
<td>0,003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being knowledgeable about various fields</td>
<td>4,09</td>
<td>3,41</td>
<td>0,69</td>
<td>0,86</td>
<td>6,32</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team-building skill</td>
<td>4,31</td>
<td>3,35</td>
<td>0,96</td>
<td>1,13</td>
<td>6,79</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High intellectual capabilities</td>
<td>4,35</td>
<td>3,44</td>
<td>0,81</td>
<td>0,98</td>
<td>7,85</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to motivate and inspire</td>
<td>4,61</td>
<td>3,44</td>
<td>1,17</td>
<td>0,98</td>
<td>4,69</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to plan the necessary changes</td>
<td>4,19</td>
<td>3,69</td>
<td>0,50</td>
<td>1,05</td>
<td>4,69</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to interpret other people’s expectations</td>
<td>4,22</td>
<td>3,74</td>
<td>0,48</td>
<td>0,86</td>
<td>5,09</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to impress others</td>
<td>3,87</td>
<td>2,87</td>
<td>1,00</td>
<td>1,22</td>
<td>6,60</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a moral authority</td>
<td>4,44</td>
<td>3,22</td>
<td>1,22</td>
<td>0,86</td>
<td>8,09</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage in thinking and actions</td>
<td>4,37</td>
<td>3,48</td>
<td>0,89</td>
<td>1,04</td>
<td>6,79</td>
<td>&lt;0,001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own studies.

Table 2 above presents the resulting differences in the measurement of the intensity of leadership qualities for the contexts of ideal leadership and self-assessment of the respondents. An analysis with the use of the
Wilcoxon test shows statistically significant differences for all the analysed pairs of qualities. The achieved results also show that the averaged ($\bar{x}$) self-assessment regarding the degree of possession of all the leadership qualities in comparison to the qualities ascribed to an ideal leader is lower by 21.97%. At the stage of designing the studies, it may have been expected that more significant differences would be revealed between the imagined ideal type of a leader and the self-assessment of the graduates with respect to leadership predisposition/qualities.

Summary

A significant part of studies on leadership and leaders conducted so far has focused on people holding formal job positions and having real power over others. The presented survey studies based on the opinions of graduates serve as one of the possible perspectives that may be used to explore the phenomenon of leadership in education. The key conclusions that can be drawn from the presented studies are as follows:

- The set of fundamental qualities of an educational leader identified on the basis of the relevant literature on the subject (at the stage of the conceptualisation of the studies) concurs with the set of qualities of an ideal leader imagined by the graduates who were the participants in the study. According to the respondents, the key qualities of an ideal educational leader include the ability to motivate others (4.61), psychological and pedagogical sensitivity (4.48) and being a moral authority (4.44). The least important qualities from the proposed set were the ability to impress others (3.87), taking responsibility for others (3.8), unconventionality (3.74) and the willingness to make changes (3.63).

- When characterising an important leader from their own educational past, the graduates participating in the study reconstruct the image of such a person as very similar to the ideal type. The observed differences in the intensity of various qualities are small and in most cases have no statistical significance.
The self-assessment of the study participants with respect to the degree of possession of the leadership qualities differs from the manner in which an ideal educational leader is defined. Based on the obtained results it can be concluded that the graduates participating in the study position their leadership qualities, in the aggregate, 21.97% lower than those of the imagined ideal leader. The analysis of the differences for all the studied qualities shows statistical significance in each of the 17 cases of the qualities. Such qualities as being a moral authority, ability to motivate and inspire or ability to impress others are the ones that distinguish an ideal educational leader to the greatest extent – in relation to the assessment of the degree of possession of those qualities by the graduates themselves.

In summary, the applied quantitative method of measurement allows one to confirm the accuracy of the set of leadership qualities determined on the basis of the relevant literature on the subject. According to the opinions of the graduates taking part in the study (former participants of leadership relationships), it correctly describes an educational leader. That knowledge may have practical application, especially in the conscious building of leadership in the educational environment. This is because it may be assumed that the stronger the correspondence of the set of qualities of an educational leader with the expectations of the followers, the better the chance for the creation of an effective leadership relationship.
References


ABSTRACT

Objective: Since more diverse audiences attend universities, nowadays, more advanced educational approaches are required. The current study explores the role of culture of learning transformations in facing this challenge. We employ the notion of ‘cultures of learning’ to draw attention to the socio-cultural, sustainable and competence-oriented aspects of key educational practices. We are focusing on advances in students’ learning-culture, which are implemented at the university: interdisciplinary, transformative sustainability learning and experiential learning.

Methodology: The paper considers practical issues related to the educational approaches, their benefits and limitations.

Findings: The results of the observations indicated that students’ learning culture was highly affected by educational approaches.

Value Added: We highlight that mutual relations exist between learning-culture and teaching-culture and exactly the student-teacher dialogue should be changed to transform traditional learning in higher education.


**Recommendations:** Interdisciplinarity and creativity can serve as the key factors in establishing a productive educational cycle that fosters a learning-culture based on students’ needs and values consideration.

**Keywords:** learning culture, higher education, interdisciplinary learning, transformative sustainability learning, experiential learning.

**JEL codes:** I21, D83

---

**Introduction**

Nowadays, it is the time of transition to a high-tech information society in which the quality of human potential, the level of education and culture is crucial for country’s development. Integration and globalization of social, educational, economic and cultural domains foster prospects for the development of Ukraine. According to the UN annual report on the competitiveness of countries in the world, XXI century is determined not by natural or even financial resources, but qualification of the labor force. Therefore, the main goal of every university should be large-scale activities aimed at raising the educational level of the nation. Ukraine’s entry into the world of educational space predetermines the domestic educational standards to be aligned in accordance with the norms of the world community. Thus, the objectives for the national education systems involve a radical review of the goals of education: the training of younger generations to participate in the creation of advanced society institutions; the formation of the willingness and ability of young people to participate in environmental socio-humanistic activities; the formation of new forms of sustainable thinking and behavior, which involves the ability to predict, plan, think creatively, critically and be self-critical.

Witnessing all these shifts, we consider that in order to achieve all set goals, it is necessary to change the culture of learning and teaching. In this paper, we are focused on the description of the main changes that have been introduced in the educational system at the National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”.
The advanced culture of learning implies the shift from mechanistic approach of skills and knowledge transition to the learning viewed in terms of interdisciplinary, participating, transformative and sustainable context where students, teachers and knowledge coexist and shape each other in a mutually empowering way. With this in mind, we have implemented the educational approaches that match the description above. They are as follows: interdisciplinary learning, transformative sustainability learning, project based and experiential learning.

Theoretical background

Looking back at the landscape of culture of learning related research and science in the context of higher education, certain approaches can be identified. To begin with, we would like to recapitulate the essence of “culture of learning” notion. According to Cortazzi & Jin (2006, pp. 5–20) “culture of learning” describes frameworks of assumptions, values and principles, perspectives towards rewarding teaching and learning. The main requirement to the learning process is participants’ interaction as the socio-cultural and cognitive construction of an educational discourse system. Under this explanation, the authors consider the “culture of learning” as one of the elements that construct social and educational integrity.

Similar approach to “culture of learning” is suggested by Charlotte Danielson (2013) in the work “The Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument”. She states that “culture for learning” refers to the environment in the classroom that reveals the importance of the performance level undertaken by students and a teacher as well:

“It describes the norms that govern interactions among individuals about the activities and assignments, the value of hard work and perseverance, and the general tone of the class. A classroom with a strong culture for learning is characterized by high cognitive energy, by a sense that what is happening there is important, and that it is essential to get it right” (2013, p. 9).
Danielson also identified components of “culture of learning”:

- importance of the content and learning;
- high expectations for learning and achievements;
- student pride in work (2013, p. 9).

In other words, the culture of learning or educational environment means value of mutual development, acceptance of personal and professional students’ needs. We, as teachers, have to recognize students’ intellectual curiosity, values and cognitive energy in order to direct it towards the content of the curriculum. The main idea of this phenomenon is the importance of learning. However, students should also accept their responsibility for the quality of learning and initiating improvements.

Various educational approaches have been proposed to solve the issue of rewarding culture of learning formation. We suggest having a close look at some of them: interdisciplinary learning, transformative sustainability learning, project based and experiential learning.

A growing body of literature has examined the problem of interdisciplinarity implementation: W. Humes (2013, pp. 82–93); J. Caviglia-Harris et al. (2004, pp. 395–403); L.R. Lattuca et.al (2004, pp. 23–48). The common feature of these works is that authors claim the traditional academic system is still focused on separate disciplines and the integration of interdisciplinary approach is still unusual to the undergraduate fields of study despite its numerous benefits. The researchers highlight such benefits as collaborative learning skills and active students’ participation in the learning process. The essence of interdisciplinary approach is also described in works of Lawerence (2010, pp. 125–130). He defines the goal of this approach – to analyze and integrate concepts and methods from different disciplines with a view to demonstrating perspectives and wholeness of the same topic from different sides.

Having analyzed works of mentioned authors on the topic, we revealed that interdisciplinarity develops such skills as:

- to inquire multiple ways of knowing and methods to think critically;
· to demonstrate reflective and explicit knowledge of different disciplines functioning, their main issues and limitations;
· to make a reasonable choice in order to find out a creative decision for complex problems;
· to communicate effectively and work collaboratively.

It is also worth taking into account the elements of a successful study in the context of learning through the content of specialized disciplines suggested by the Professor of the University of Aberdeen Due Coyle (2010), namely:
· content element – progress in knowledge, skills and understanding of different disciplines;
· cognitive element – the development of thinking skills, which combines the formation of the concept (abstract and concrete), understanding and language;
· culture – openness to alternative perspectives and collective understanding that deepens the understanding of others and oneself.

Since interdisciplinarity is considered to be the backbone of sustainability, a lot of authors combine these approaches to reinforce their outcomes. In the result of experiments and examinations, we have obtained such educational approach as Transformative Sustainability Learning (TSL).

A well-known transformational learning theorist Jack Mezirow (2011) explained the transformative learning as a theory of comprehension and experience altering. He considers the transformation as a natural phase of the personal development which occurs while every transition from one educational level to the other: from school to college, from university to the working career. The objective of transformative learning is to revise old assumptions and ways of interpreting experience through critical reflection and self-reflection.

Thus, one of the transformative learning targets is to shift the control focus from the external environment into internal which ensures the awareness of own capabilities, enriches and masters professional skills. This idea is supported by Stephan Sterling and Taylor Ian (2006, pp. 349–370) who
claim that transformative learning involves deeper levels of meaning which impact our immediate level of perception. According to the finding of above mentioned transformation theorists, the perceptual changes and following shifts to a more rational and ethical way of worldview inspire the emergence of new ideas and values.

Concerning Transformative Sustainability Learning (TSL), scholars Yona Sipos, Bryce Battisti, Kurt Grimm (2008, pp. 68–86) outline transformative changes corresponding to cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of learning. TSL combines sustainability and transformative learning in order to contribute to profound personal and societal changes which are reflected in upgraded skills, knowledge and attitude towards ecological, social and economic justice. This connection allows to speak about TSL as a separate pedagogical strategy which employs transdisciplinary, experiential and placed-based learning.

With mostly the same direction of educational goals and learning transformations, we outlined community serviced learning as a practical way of finding solutions to the local issues, connecting practice and theory to correspond students' professional needs. Improvement of culture learning requires students' active engagement into the learning process, however, it is impossible without motivation to learn and master. This approach allows to rise students' motivation by demonstrating real implementation and value of gained knowledge.

Community service learning involves practical activities which students are able to perform for the community. Due to the service learning, students can connect personal, social and professional development. Community involvement usually occurs through the cooperated projects between faculty and community representatives (non-governmental organizations, agencies) where course content is integrated into a real-world context. According to Kerissa Heffernan (2001, pp. 1–8), service learning is considered as integrative, reflective, contextualized, reciprocal and lifelong educational strategy which outcomes are as follows: application of theory in practice,
development of high order thinking skills, self-estimation rising through the
development of personal efficacy and identity, improvement of communication
and leadership skills, advancement of social responsibility, deeper cultural
and citizenship understanding. Faculties also gain some positive feedback
and benefits: interdisciplinarity which leads to the new research and ideas,
improvement of students learning outcomes, a connection of curriculum
with real-world requirements, increase of the level of students motivation
and commitment to study.

The evidences from literature sources allow us to conclude that the na-
ture of “culture of learning” is extended and holistic as it combines learning
environment, teacher-student cooperation, acceptance of students’ needs
and requirements, and development of high order thinking skills. In addition,
high level of culture of learning is essential for training future leaders in sci-
ence and technology. It cannot be improved or reinforced with one universal
educational approach. In our opinion, only combination of educational tools
will ensure the sustainable and productive culture of learning.

Culture of learning at Ukrainian universities

Today, according to rating assessment and employers’ feedback, the qual-
ity of training at Ukrainian universities satisfies labor market and society
needs. Teachers are proficient in designing curricular and delivering training
courses. However, few years ago we could observe a number of problems
in the system of higher education: students’ motivation to study was falling,
more and more students were leaving Ukraine to study abroad, employers
complained for the lack of soft skill in graduates. The learning process
considered as a series of steps to be mastered and the ability to recite the
information dominated among learning activities. A model of authoritative
learning approved the use of such methods as demonstrating, repeating,
active memorization of a material.
Nevertheless, our world is changing and teachers should change with it. We, as teachers, have to accept that a teacher is not a unique source of information for students, we are mediators for information. Students need to get skills how to learn, how to obtain and process information, how to determine the relevance and reliability of information. Moreover, students can also be an information source for us as we cannot know everything and the amount of information is endless.

In order to be in line with educational standards of European countries, we had to change the mode of learning or, in other words, it was necessary to create a culture to support learning. If we compare traditional mode of teaching, we will see its main characteristics: teacher-centered, centralized (teachers control the choice of learning resources and tools), authoritative. Now, it has been converted into learner-centered, life-long, decentralized, sustainable, interactive, and constructive.

In our opinion, one of the key differences between traditional and new learning culture is a shift in the understanding of a place-time framework for training. Previously, training could be held only in special places at a special time: lessons, workshops, conferences, seminars etc. Whereas modern learning culture implies that learning may last for the whole life and take place every day: at the university, on the job, through IT resources and social activities, during communication and any kinds of experimenting.

The university should envisage the creative collaboration of the teacher and the student in all types of educational processes. The transition from a school that sets somewhat simpler tasks and requirements to the university makes for many a difficult and often insurmountable problem. Often a student continues to study at the university as he was still at school. Moreover, the university itself often offers programs that, in form and even content, are either a repetition of the programs of the senior school, or their continuation. The possibility of creative collaboration between a university lecturer and a student means the responsibility of the first and high expectations of the second. Without this, the university education is impossible and useless.
Since “culture of learning” is a holistic term and requires many changes, it could not been transformed by means of only one method or approach. As a response to these challenges, we have chosen those ones, which develop students’ autonomy, cultivate high order thinking skills, involve teacher-student collaboration and lead to sustainable outcomes. A significant transformation is also required for universities in terms of what is taught, how it is taught and how disciplines are perceived and structured. These advances are viewed as national targets for changing practices in learning at Ukrainian universities.

**Interdisciplinary learning**

Although interdisciplinary teaching and learning is highly prioritized in most of the European countries, in practice, there is a lack of interdisciplinary perspective and motivation among teachers in undergraduate studies at Ukrainian universities. It is obvious that interdisciplinary learning has a great number of benefits: the potential to reinforce students’ cooperative learning skills and students’ active learning; development of analytics and synthesis skills; better understanding of students interests; freedom and flexibility of choice for students; developing of independent learning and investigation strategies; the combination of theory and practice which transforms the attitude toward studying.

Interdisciplinary project-based learning (PBL) is worth considering as a variant to combine science and art disciplines. This type of learning is aimed at the problem or an issue rather than at the separate discipline at a time. It emphasizes more complex and expanded awareness of the topic. A range of information sources from different disciplines, active engagement, and integration of necessary skills allow students to acquire innovative and unexpected results. The nature of PBL resembles the character of sustainable development, which is also multidimensional and integrated. Due to the implementation of the strategy, students are able to define sustainable problems, develop controversial discussion, find supportive evidence, acquire
and process necessary information from a variety of resources and create argument-based solutions.

As interdisciplinarity is considered to be crucial for sustainability and project-based learning, we combined these approaches. A beneficial example of interdisciplinary project-based approach is fourth-year students’ presentations related to their majors or future engineering carrier in terms of sustainability. It is worth mentioning that when students search for information relevant to their career, they are more motivated. For instance, students were suggested topics for their choice: perform a sustainability audit for a campus, develop a plan for deconstruction of old university buildings or campus, develop programs for energy consumption reduction, design a green device or technology, develop a recycling and composting program for campus facilities, develop a sustainability Web site to coordinate and enhance students sustainability actions, provide guidelines for greening their future products manufacturing or tools design. In the beginning of the year, students were divided into groups of 3–4 and had 2 months for developing the project. Then, during last two lessons, students presented their projects. The competent jury supported some students’ projects that might be implemented: web site on sustainability at university, sustainable campus and sustainable laser technologies.

While applying the interdisciplinary approach, we recommend to beware of some limitations which might affect the outcomes: possible loss of curricula covering due to students’ freedom of choice; time-consuming preparation; specific authentic evaluation tools; the unpredictability of a process and its results; sophisticated instructional and assessment strategies.

Transformative Sustainability Learning

As reported by Mezirow (2011) and other supporters of this approach Dirks & Cranton (2006, pp. 123–139), transformative learning is the extension of consciousness through the transformation of worldview and competences.
of a personality. It is an act of changing how we see and do things since it involves senses, feelings, will, value and beliefs. According to mentioned researchers, the three dimensions of transformative learning are psychological change in perception of knowledge, information, and theories; behavioral change in actions (observation, application, experimentation); convictional changes impose revision of beliefs and value systems. Therefore, a focus of recent research performed by Frisk and Larson (2011, pp. 117–128) has been on the combination of critical thinking learning strategies and transformative learning that influences personality’s view of the world. By engaging critical reflection and action-behavioral transformations, we are able to impact and initiate educational, ecological, social, and cultural changes. This synthesis of environmental and transformative pedagogies offer transformative sustainability learning (TSL).

Based on the above explanation, it is obvious that TSL implementation should involve critical thinking development techniques, practical skills application, engaging motivating and inspiring. The main goal of this approach is to show students and to move them from inspiration to a real action. The relationship of emotional and cognitive components gives outstanding results especially in such vital issue as sustainability and creates space for great transformations.

TSL pedagogy includes some strategies such as placed-based learning, community service learning, interdisciplinarity and problem-based learning. Place-based learning means learning through the context of students own lives, local communities and environment. Community service learning implies learning through a service conducted on community’s problems and needs controlled and monitored by the university. When implementing this approach, we decided to combine placed-based technique and community service learning. Our students were given a task to investigate the problems of their own local community and cities or towns in terms of sustainability and suggest possible solutions. Students could join students mixed abilities and age groups (from the first to the fourth course) but just from one region.
The project duration was 1 academic year. They employed such methods as inquiry of citizens and authorities, analyzing samples of natural resources in case of the pollution issue, measuring and analyzing energy or natural resources consumption, developing alternative energetic solutions etc. At the end of a year they presented their projects. Some of them were feasible and perspective, some required additional resources and work, but in any case, the knowledge and skills obtained while working on the project, which are close to students real life, gave much inspiration, empowered students autonomy and mastered both hard and soft skills of students.

Experiential learning

This is an applied and practical approach, which engage students with real results and consequences, students gain knowledge and skills through direct experience, action and reflection. Experiential learning engages real-world assignments or authentic situations, which should be done with data-driven problem solutions without preliminary checked right answers. The role of a teacher is to facilitate and direct the learner. This approach develops students’ autonomy and self-reflective critical thinking skills when students analyze their directions, mistakes, success and come to an evidence-driven solution. The benefits of this approach correlate with those we mentioned in previous ones: active engagement into the learning process, high motivation, facilitating of autonomy, development of creative and critical thinking, student-centered learning environment.

Experiential learning is presented through two options: field-based experiences and classroom-based learning (Ewert, & Sibthorp, 2009, pp. 376–389). Field-based learning involves cooperative learning, community service learning, placed-based learning, apprenticeship and internship. Classroom-based learning includes role-plays, games, simulations, case studies, group discussions, presentations etc. It is obvious that these techniques can be used at any lesson and they are used at our university. Nevertheless, we
would like to share more sophisticated methods such as discovery learning, inquiry-based and web quests, which we implement during science classes. These techniques allow students to explore a particular phenomenon themselves and find out as much information as they can about this phenomenon. Students collect data, observe, generate hypothesis, analyze, develop a solution strategy, and derive conclusions. Teachers are allowed to guide or monitor the process. Although, the most valuable benefit of the discovery learning is that students learn how to plan and manage the learning process, to set goal and take responsibility for the own learning.

Among possible limitations, we can outline time and resources consuming preparation, it needs a framework for the procedure and assessment; it also requires high level of students’ educational background; possibility of losing control over the learning process.

Conclusions

Transformation of culture of learning at the universities involves some time, resources and work up front. However, this work is worth doing as teachers see the results. To create rewarding culture of learning, we have generated some recommendations for teachers:

1) Set up high expectations to frame academic and social aspects during learning.
2) Establish supportive learning environment.
3) Encourage teacher-student interaction for students to be heard. Students should not be afraid of demonstrating disagreement or personal opinion. Dealing with disagreement successful is a useful soft skill.
4) Create a safe learning environment for making mistakes. Students should be aware that mistakes are the crucial part in the process of learning.
5) Teach students how to learn, to set goals, to plan and manage the learning process.
6) Provide objective feedback timely.
7) Do not overestimate grades. Real professional life is not based on a grading system. We have to assess and recognize every successful step, effort or improvement individually to encourage students.

This paper has highlighted the necessity of culture of learning transformations in higher educational establishments in Ukraine. We strongly believe that our experience will be of a great assistance for teachers who strive to establish a constructive dialogue with students to foster their professional maturity. Suggested approaches from our paper would eliminate many of the problems existed in some of today’s universities due to a traditional mode of learning. It would be a great opportunity to create a new tradition.

We understand that more research is needed for Ukrainian culture of learning transformation, recognizing diversity of approaches and taking into account recent changes. However, the current study makes it possible to state that the transformation of the learning culture through the interdisciplinarity, TSL and experiential learning in a higher educational institution has a fairly large list of advantages, in particular: forms a positive attitude towards the study; prepares students for further autonomous training and professional activity; provides students with the opportunity to “design” their own knowledge, skills and abilities; helps students to become competitive professionals in an international environment. In order to come out of recession our country should educate knowledgeable and skilled students who are creative, innovative and continuously learning.
References


ABSTRACT

Objective: Analyze of the characteristics and competitive strategies, dimension and structure that allowed Casa Ley to become a family economic group

Methodology: The methods used: critical historical, analytical and descriptive. The following approaches were used: 1) regional, 2) historical and 3) corporate strategies and organizations. The regional approach considers that regional origin is an important factor in the economic and political practices of Mexican entrepreneurs. The second gives more weight to the historical origin and the conditions of emergence to establish the final configuration, the prevailing economic and political practices and the patterns of development of the groups. The third approach addresses the changing organizational structure of large modern corporations and their tendency to adopt more complex management structures and corporate morphologies

Findings: The main result is the marketing strategies implemented by Casa Ley, such as: introduction of services that add value to the company, creation and diversification of formats, brand creation, centralization of distribution systems and consumption incentives, consolidate the oligopoly structure of the trade sector. The comparative method is established to consider those situations in which the common characteristics of companies are combined in historical circumstances that precede the formation of large companies or groups in Mexico.
**Value Added:** It identifies the commercial strategies that have allowed the Mexican company of the retail sector in Mexico to become a consolidated family economic group.

**Recommendations:** The Casa Ley family economic group has been consolidated using successful commercial strategies, limiting its development by not using financial resources that are available in the stock market. Considering the above, it is advisable to use this source of financing available for the business sector.

**Key words:** Estrategia empresarial, estructura de mercado, grupo económico

**JEL Codes:** L10, L13, L11

---

**Introduction**

In Mexico, the sixties constitute the historical framework of the formation of industrial groups and also the growth of large retail companies. The financial sector produced an intense process of capital centralization that led to the formation of integrated financial groups to cover all the financial services demanded by the country, such as banks, financial institutions, insurance companies, mortgage companies and others (Basave, 1996).

In the sixties, industrial and financial maturity was achieved, while the stabilization development model maintained the first decade of industrialization in its characteristics and were reinforced by the establishment of a stable exchange rate, a very favorable policy to the private sector, and of an attitude of support restricted to foreign investment that allowed the establishment of many mixed capital companies, which, having a share of Mexican capital, benefited from the protection that the government provided to national companies (Baena Paz, 2005).

Financial capital began to sustain the accelerated monopolization of trade, in some cases the share of foreign investment. In addition, population growth in cities and the rise of the middle class permeate qualitative changes in demand as they are accompanied by the use of cars, television, radio and refrigerators, the emergence of new techniques of marketing and the incorporation of female labor into the labor market (Hernández, 2004).
The large retail companies began to operate throughout the national territory, however several companies moved from the regional to the national logic. Groups also emerged whose regional presence was significant in having a higher concentration of capital according to their establishments. New stores were opened in places of easy access in medium-sized cities and other cities where there was no market saturation. Casa Ley opened its first self-service store in 1970 in Culiacan, Sinaloa and in 1972 it created its own commercial plaza with the supermarket as an anchor.

**Historical background**

Entrepreneur Juan Ley Fong, chinese immigrant came to Mexico in 1911 through the port of Mazatlan, Sinaloa. In Durango, after entering several commercial activities such as: coal sales, food, groceries (The Legal Balance) and working as a gardener in the company San Luis Mining Company, who before an unjustified dismissal sued the company and achieved a excellent compensation with which he established a store that sold everything: groceries, clothes, medicines and footwear in 1938.

That same year, he established a company authorized by the federal treasury office for the purchase and sale of gold and silver metals where about a thousand people worked. The same company would merge its own gold and silver bars that were sold to Banco de Mexico or to the Compañía Minera de Peñoles, S.A. He also entered the transportation business to transport goods through Durango, via Mazatlan and San Ignacio to Tayoltita, Durango. By 1942 the entrepreneur was able to accumulate capital from various businesses such as the grocery store in general, two ranches, one with 300 Holstein milk cows, and another with 20,000 head of breeding stock. A winery and a lard distribution company.

He moved with his family to Culiacan and in 1954 opened Casa Ley (the surname derived from Lee in Chinese), a wholesale and grocery store dedicated mainly to the sale of grains and food; its main customers were small
and medium-sized groceries as well as the final consumer. In 1955 he began to sponsor baseball teams, in 1958 he founded the Central League; in 1965 participated in Liga Sonora Sinaloa giving origin to the Club Tomateros of Culiacan (ANTAD, 2010).

Table 1. Store Opening (1954-1969)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Store</th>
<th>Sinaloa City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>La LC abarrotes y mayoreo</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Mayoreo A</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Mayoreo LG</td>
<td>Guamúchil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on data of the organization.

In 1969 Juan Manuel Ley Lopez assumed control of the family business in the absence of his parent. In 1970, Casa Ley opened its first self-service store in Culiacan. For that, they rented a store attached to the grocery store, one part of the grocery store turned it into a self-service store and the other followed as a traditional grocery store, hired experienced staff, former employees of Aurrera whose company started operations in 1958. In 1972 they built their first place which would house its supermarket and various merchants.

Family economic group

From 1970 to 1980 was opened to 11 stores in different formats such as: supermarket, wholesale, clothing store and accessories installed in Culiacan, and other municipalities of Sinaloa, as well as Sonora. With these openings they add 14 branches owned by them (Contreras, 2007). With the assets presented in the following table it is possible to affirm that Casa Ley constitutes a family economic group.
Table 2. Store Opening (1970–1980)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Store</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Autoservicio</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Guamúchil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Tienda Departamental</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Ley Plaza</td>
<td>Guasave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Tienda Departamental</td>
<td>Guamúchil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>LC Boulevard</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>LC Chico</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Mazatlán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Contreras, 2007.

Economic adjustment and rationalization

In the 1980s Latin American economies reached such levels of imbalance in their productive and financial activity that they faced the need for structural reforms, they sought new paths of growth through a new insertion in the changing international scenario (Garrido & Peres, 1998).

In Mexico, when the strategies of the companies tried to survive, several tactics were applied to form new relationships in the commerce sector, among those tactics to overcome the crisis are: purchase, closing, sale, association with foreign capital and expansion in territory. Casa Ley in that decade began a series of transformations in its operational strategy, financial and growth and introduced substantial changes in its organizational structure:
Association with foreign capital
Casa Ley sought to partner to grow and guarantee its permanence in the market of the commerce. In 1981 the Safeway supermarket chain bought 49% of Casa Ley, achieving a rapid expansion with this jointventure, one of the agreements was that they would not intervene in the management or administration of Casa Ley.

Restructuring and closing of companies
Faced with competition from the arrival of large chains from Mexico City to the northwest (Walmart), in the early 1990s, Casa Ley was restructured and took on other strategies: one of them was to leave Chihuahua.

Expansion in the regional territory
Casa Ley established 20 branches, consolidating its presence at the regional level: both in the state of Sinaloa and Sonora; increased its geographic coverage in Baja California and Nayarit.

Table 3. Store Opening (1983–1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Store</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Mexicali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>Mazatlán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>Los Mochis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Tijuana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Cajeme</td>
<td>Ciudad Obregón</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>Ciudad Obregón</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Los Mochis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>Mexicali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Pueblo Nuevo</td>
<td>Mexicali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Tepic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Tienda Departamental</td>
<td>Tepic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies and Structure of the Family Economic Group Casa Ley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>Tijuana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>Huatabampo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Mexicalí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Navojoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Plaza</td>
<td>Mazatlán</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on data of the organization.

Stores and formats

The Group created different formats, bought land, rented spaces and established alliances with suppliers (Revista Alto Nivel, 2015).

The six formats of stores are adapted to the requirements of the demand, are classified in: Law, Wholesale and Supermarket, Express Law, Super Law, Super Law Express (Casa Ley, 2015).

1) The Ley format is the flagship store of Casa Ley, it is the emblem of the organization, the concept provides integral centers of service by category and product. In that way it offers groceries, clothes and general merchandise and specialties. It also provides services such as cash dispensers from different banks, recharges of cell phone and Movistar, and payment for services such as water, electricity and telephone and serviced 365 days a year.

2) The Mayoreo format offers volumes to scale, special prices and home delivery.

3) The Super Wholesale format is a self-service store for small to medium-sized merchants; as well as to families that make their purchases in central supply, offers credit and home delivery. It offers the full range of merchandise available, as well as prices and promotions; seeks to increase the overall transaction and contributes to the achievement of economies of scale for the distribution center by optimizing its cost.

4) The Ley Express format offers the proximity to the consumer and an optimum assortment of groceries: popular perfumery, delicatessen and
dairy products, meat and poultry, fruits and vegetables wines, spirits and general merchandise such as household goods, household goods, varieties, baby accessories and services.

5) The Super Law format is a shop equipped with the highest technology, wide and has the best brands of the supplier companies; offers groceries, general merchandise, specialties and services.

6) The Super Ley Express format offers consumer proximity, quality and optimal assortment of groceries, general merchandise, specialties and services. The Super Ley Express format consists of approximately 1500 square meters of land, and is built in small cities and towns (Al Detalle Magazine, 2014).

Plazas
The retail trade is concentrated in the most dynamic economic and population entities that of course includes urbanism. The commercial chains establish strategies of attraction to the consumer such as offers of personal consumption goods in commercial assemblies known as commercial plazas and / or shopping centers (Bocanegra, 2009). Conscious of this commercial strategy Casa Ley built its first place in 1972 and from then until 1994 added 21 places.

Rent of commercial spaces, premises and land
Today, the stores and commercial plazas owned by Casa Ley, as well as commercial land, are strategically located to be visited by a large number of customers, thus favoring the commercialization of products or services, thus providing an option for other companies to set up their businesses (Casa Ley, 2015).
The crisis of 1994 put in check many commercial chains that had to stop its growth before the new economic reality, but Casa Ley continued to grow. Soriana and Sorimex commercial competitors and with some twenty stores each, both chains, were exceeded in importance at national level by Chedraui and Grupo Ley, modernized regional chains. The competition provided by Casa Ley with its dynamic growth in small and medium-sized cities, with its 57 self-services (with 8,000 square meters) and the technology and know-how of its allied Safeway US chain, supported the competition of the commerce sector in modernization and low margins (Monjaras, 1994).

Casa Ley with the Bajio as a goal, from 1991 to 2001, was given to the task of growing in the regional territory with the opening of several formats of stores, and were covered the states of Jalisco (1992), Colima (1993), Baja California Sur and Michoacán (1999), Guanajuato, Coahuila, Durango and Chihuahua (2000) and Aguascalientes (2001).

The company has a training center for its employees in Culiacan, Sinaloa, as well as agricultural fields, a center for pork and beef fattening. It also owns the La Guacamaya sauce factory, which is sent to the national and foreign market, has 77 stores (Vazquez & Bocanegra, 2004).
Table 4. Opening of stores (1991–2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Store</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Store</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Mexicali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Tepic</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Nogales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Ciudad Obregón</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Tijuana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Mazatlán</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Pto. Vallarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>LC Plaza</td>
<td>Ciudad Obregón</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Navolato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>LC Plaza</td>
<td>Guamúchil</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Ensenada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Nogales</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Tijuana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Ocotlán</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Nogales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>departamental</td>
<td>Ocotlán</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Los Mochis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Guasave</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Los Mochis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>LC P</td>
<td>Guaymas</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>LC Plaza</td>
<td>Culiacán</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>La Paz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Ensenada</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>La Paz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>J.J.Ríos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>LC Plaza</td>
<td>Guasave</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Mazatlán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Tepic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>LC Plaza</td>
<td>L. de Moreno</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>La Piedad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Mexicali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>LC Plaza</td>
<td>Colima</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Mexicali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>LC P</td>
<td>La Barca</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>León</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>León</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Guasave</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Tijuana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Escuinapa</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Torreón</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Hermosillo</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Durango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Los Mochis</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Durango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Mayoreo LC</td>
<td>Colima</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Gómez Palacio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mexico with a population of 119,530,753 inhabitants and potential consumers (INEGI, 2016) is the second largest market in Latin America and its economy is characterized mainly by a variety of consumers with differences in income and geographical conditions. The strategy of diversification therefore of Casa Ley is to cover all social levels.
Table 5. Numbers of stores, forma and state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal entity</th>
<th>Store format</th>
<th>Store number</th>
<th>Federal entity</th>
<th>Store format</th>
<th>Store number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinaloa</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Baja California Sur</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ley Express</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ley Express</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Súper Ley</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Súper Ley</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plazas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jalisco</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonora</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ley Express</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Colima</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Súper Ley</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coahuila</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plazas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ley Express</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baja California</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ley Express</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ley Express</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Súper Ley</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Súper Ley</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mayoreo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guanajuato</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on the web page: Casa Ley.

Journal to detail: Year 12 No. 10 November 2013; Year 13 no. 1 February 2014; Year 13 no. July 6, 2014; Year 13 no. 10 November 2014; Year 14 no. 3 April 2015; Year 14, no. 6 July 2015; Year 14 no. 11 December 2015-January 2016.
Regional Chains
In the supply of goods and services, the large commercial chains are positioned through the price factor in the national market, are successful, with monopolistic structures, but still do not satisfy the total demand (Morales, 2009), in the niches not covered by them smaller, regional chains, which find competitive advantages in factors such as location and in a greater number of populations, attention and promotions (Olmedo, 2005).

Casa Ley as Coppel, Chedraui, Soriana, Grupo Viz and Calimax are companies that from their regions are looking to have presence in the whole country. And although some companies started earlier, the trend of regional companies is more evident as of 2000 especially in the retail sector.

Growth has been a necessity to be competitive, seeking a differentiation can be achieved through a good location or a niche market; competing with the big ones requires being big or running the risk of being absorbed; and the need to diversify markets (Sandoval, 2006).

In Mexico with Casa Ley at the head, other regional chains operate in the north, including: American HEB, Almacenes Zaragoza, SA, Calimax, its
winery, Smart, Smart & Final, Merco and Gutierrez, these regional chains pursue common objectives of coverage.

Table 6. Northern Regional Chain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chain</th>
<th>Foundation date</th>
<th>Store numbers</th>
<th>Entity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEB</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Nuevo León, Coahuila, Sinaloa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa Ley</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Sonora, Baja California, Sinaloa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almacenes Zaragoza</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calimax</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Súper del Norte</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chain</th>
<th>Foundation date</th>
<th>Store numbers</th>
<th>Entity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HEB</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Coahuila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casa Ley</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Nuevo León, Coahuila, Sinaloa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almacenes Zaragoza</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calimax</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Súper del Norte</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on data of the web pages of the companies.
HEB
Florence Butt founded a family store in 1905 in the town of Kerville, Texas. In 1919 Howard E. Butt Jr. started a new stage of family business growth and in 1924 the H-E Butt Grocery Company began its expansion in several US cities, as well as a modern dairy and bakery. In the nineties they created their own brand concept and in 1997 opened its first branch in Mexico and today they add 45 branches distributed in the states of.

Warehouses Zaragoza
In December 1943, the family business Almacenes Zaragoza, S.A. of C.V., in Culiacan, Sinaloa. In the 1970s, under the second generation, new supermarkets were opened and the third generation added 45 supermarkets, seven furniture stores and three construction companies. With presence in almost all the state of Sinaloa generates employment for more than 3 thousand workers (Corporativo MZ, 2016).

Calimax
The company was born as a grocery store in Tijuana, Baja California and in 1962 acquired the concept of Calimax with its first store type supermarket. Its assets include 99 branches Calimax, a wholesale store called Bodegon, three calls Appreciation and three Distribution Centers located in Tijuana, Sonora and San Diego USA. It has a fleet of more than 200 trucks that supply the stores and a Meat Processing Plant, classified as TIF.

It operates more than 20,000 articles of which 30% are import and has more than 6,000 employees. It also held a joint venture with Smart & Final Inc., a company that has 15 branches in Baja California and San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora (Calimax, 2015).

Super North
In 1995 the brothers Servando and Ramiro Carbajal founded their first Super Norte in Hermosillo, Sonora; in 2000 they established five branches and in
2002 the chain added 10 new establishments; in 2008 there were 18 stores and in 2009 acquired six more that were purchased from Comercial VH that operated in Sonora. In 2010 it acquired 10 more stores: seven of VH and three of another commercial chain, to add 34 stores.

In 2014 it allocated resources for the construction of nine stores in several cities of the state. In 2016 it acquired seven Vimark stores from the Esparza family located in Hermosillo and Guaymas. The stores of Supermercados Santa fé de Ernesto Echavarria and Trigio Cañedo were bought for 600 million pesos equivalent to 52 stores (Super del Norte, 2016).

Su Bodega

It is a chain that founded its first store in 1897: Groceries “La Europea” in Tampico Tamaulipas; in 1910 new members joined the business and by 1943 they adopted the company name Almacenes Ibarra, S.A., whose offer is wholesale trade in groceries, wines, liquors, hardware and lubricants in the region.

In 1944 the first branch was opened in Ciudad Mante, Tamaulipas, later the branches Manuel Station and Ciudad Victoria, in Tamaulipas and another in Ciudad Valles in San Luis Potosí. Beginning in the 1950s, it began its expansion by inaugurating the Naranjos and Poza Rica Veracruz branches, where the supermarket concept first arrived with the opening of the chain’s first establishment: Super tiendas Modelo.

In 1980, the branches of Panuco Veracruz and Reynosa Tamaulipas began operations. Almacenes Ibarra, SA, was transformed into the Corporate Grupo Ibarraque, which participates in the sale and distribution of groceries, lubricants, tires, dampers, accessories and services in order to satisfy the demand in the Northeast of the country, through marketing as wholesaler, wholesaler and self-service. The Group is comprised of four divisions: Grocery Wholesale, Self-Service, Automotive and Real Estate.

The Self-Service Division is represented by the store chain suBodega, has more than 70 branches present in five states of the republic (Almacenes Ibarra, 2016).
S-Mart
The family business has its origins in the La Union store founded in 1935 and located in Paso, Texas. In 1975 they opened their first supermarket with an area of 1,500 square meters in the center of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua.

With the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) it was possible to found S-Mart through a trade association with the American company Larroc inc. With this financial support managed to establish 34 stores in the north of the republic in a period of 10 years. In 1997 with an innovation strategy S-Mart restructured its format to offer 24-hour service, thus becoming the only chain of self-service stores with such benefit to consumers. In 1998, it opened its first Distribution Center with state-of-the-art technology in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. Today it has 66 branches (S-Mart, 2016).

Smart & Final
The company has its origin in the Hellman grocery store, Haas founded in 1871 in Los Angeles, the name of the store takes the names of partners Abram and Jacob Hass and Bernard Cohn and Herman Hellman. In 1889, the store changed owners and was renamed: Haas, Baruch and Co, and introduced its own brand of canned food Iris Label; by 1895 it had already reached $ 2 million in sales.

On the other hand, Santa Ana Grocery Company, founded in 1912, was acquired in 1914 by Jim Smart, a Michigan banker and along with its partner Hildane Final, established the company Smart & Final Whole sale Grocers, whose sales in 1919 reached 10 million dollars. In the decade of the twenty introduced the concept Cash & Carrie.

The company went through a series of mergers: in 1953 merged with Haas, Baruch being Smart & Final the prevailing company. The success of the chain of grocery stores increased and in 1984 was acquired by Thrifmart and increased the number of branches to 83, the stores of Thrifmart were liquidated and the resources went to a strategy of expansion and modernization of the stores Smart & Final. It was finally acquired by Apollo Management in May 2007.
The company operates food stores and member service restaurants located in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Nevada and Idaho in the United States, as well as in northern Mexico. A division of store care was established: Smart & Final addressed both consumers of household products and food suppliers; Smart Food service Cash & Carry focuses exclusively on food service professionals, including small restaurants, businesses, bars, catering companies and civil organizations. S & F Stores offers 10,000 varieties of food items, supplements and groceries, in industrial sizes and quantities.

Smart and Final in Mexico was incorporated as a variable capital stock company in Tijuana Baja California in 1993. Smart & Final del Noroeste emerged as a result of a joint venture between S & F and Grupo Calimax. During 2010 Smart & Final operated a total of 13 self-service stores in Mexico, 12 located in Baja California and one in San Luis Colorado, Sonora. Today there are 15 stores.

Smart & Final stores are self-service stores specializing in the distribution of groceries and miscellaneous products to wholesale and half-wholesale without required membership under the trade name Smart & Final. Products that are distributed in the store include the Smart & Final brand (owned by S & F US) as well as other third party owners recognized in Mexico and abroad (Smart & final, 2016).

**Merco**

In the city of Nueva Rosita, Coahuila the Arteaga family founded in 1948 a modest business called “Casa Arteaga” dedicated to the purchase and sale of clothes and footwear; opened stores in different states under the concepts of Merco and Premier.

In 1978 due to the growth of the group it was necessary to establish Administrative Offices and Distribution Centers, in order to process and expedite the shipment of the products to the Merco Shopping Centers, currently have 2 Administrative Offices and two Distribution Centers located in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon and Monclova, Coahuila.
In 2008 they acquired 5 stores of the organization De las Fuentes, three in Saltillo and two in Ramos Arizpe. Merco has a founding partner of Integradora de Autoservicios S. A. de C.V., a national shopping union, which comprises five self-service chains, with 244 stores in 13 states in Mexico. Merco is a member of the WRT International Purchasing Union based in Miami Florida. The Merco Commercial Group owns 25 stores (Merco, 2017).

Gutierrez
In 2001 they inaugurated the Gutierrez CEDIS that houses its corporate and that same year the Piedras Negras Shopping Center. In 2005 they opened another Shopping Center in Ciudad Acuña and one in Sabinas called Gutierrez Founders. In 2006 the new Monclova Shopping Center and the third branch in Acuña called Gutierrez Acuña Cedros. In 2008 the San Buenaventura shopping center was born in Coahuila, totaling 17 stores (Gutierrez, 2017).

Commercial VH
Special mention should be made of the Valenzuela stores Sonora Brothers, known as VH since they are an example of the impossibility of facing the competition. The stores grew, grew, diversified and were eventually sold. They transformed the retail trade dynamics, monopolized the trade until the late 1980s. They emerged in 1963 when they opened the self-service shop Mercados del Noroeste, S.A., known as Minimax and later Maxim. In 1966 they formed a family economic group with Food Services of Hermosillo, S.A., known commercially as the Canasta. Both firms were united to give rise to
Comercial VH, S.A. de C.V. It was the first mall with the characteristics of the great trade, aimed at the consumer of medium and high resources.

In 1978 when Casa Ley arrived in Hermosillo he directed his offer to the low-income customer. VH was introduced in Guasave, Sinaloa.

The family economic group acquired other commercial establishments and in other states; the creation of companies such as: real estate services, commercial companies, agricultural fields, ranches and farms. In 1980 they changed their name to Grupo Corporativo Valenzuela. In 1982 they created their first VH Pharmacy. Of the VHs only two were shopping centers and three supermarket areas, with a total of 33 stores. Finally, for 2007, it had 23 VH and 32 Super Val stores, two distribution centers and 100 VH pharmacies located in 17 locations in Sonora and Sinaloa, with a generation of just over 5,000 jobs. In 2009, it closed the company due to the fall in sales, it stopped being competitive and gave way to the new commercial chains like Casa Ley, Soriana and Walmart (Bocanegra & Vazquez, 2010).

Sales
One particular feature of Casa Ley is that it is not listed on the Mexican Stock Exchange as do other industrial and service sector groups, with its zero indebtedness policy, so it does not publish the amount of its sales and profits. For this reason it is not easy to obtain information, nevertheless they published the sales of 2014-2015, as can be seen in the graph No. 1:

![Figure 3. Sales House Law (2014–2015) (Million pesos)](https://example.com/figure3.png)

Source: own elaboration based on the editions of the 500 most important companies of Mexico of the Expansion Magazine of 2015 and 2016.
Organs of representation

The organization representing the interests of the retail trade promoting the development of the retail trade and its suppliers in a market economy is the National Association of Self-Service and Department Stores (ANTAD) founded in 1983.

ANTAD collaborates in a constant way with organizations such as the Business Coordinating Council (CCE), Confederation of National Chambers of Commerce, Services and Tourism (CONCANACO SERVYTUR), National Chamber of Commerce (CANACO), Confederation of Employers of the Mexican Republic (COPARMEX), Confederation of Industrial Chambers (CONCAMIN), National Chamber of the Transformation Industry (CANACINTRA), among others for the achievement of common objectives.

The Association groups the main retail chains of the country. It currently comprises 104 chains, of which 32 are self-services, 16 are departmental and 56 are specialized, representing 51,637 stores with more than 27,346,009 m² of sales floor. Self-service chains are listed in the table below.

The chains of self-service stores Soriana, Gigante and Comercial Mexicana, under pressure from foreign competition, established an alliance to implement defense measures against predatory and monopoly practices, and requested ANTAD to sue the government for equal conditions, so analysts of Santander Serfin assume that before the competition the regional chains would look for a strategic partner, perhaps in supply (Rendon, 2003).
Table 7. Self-services associated with ANTAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business name</th>
<th>Logo</th>
<th>Business name</th>
<th>Logo</th>
<th>Business name</th>
<th>Logo</th>
<th>Business name</th>
<th>Logo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operadora Futura S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Costco de México S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Almacenes Zaragoza S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Tendáis de Autoservicio del Norte, S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Logo" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Servicio Gutiérrez Rico S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Wal-Mart de México S.A.B. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Central Detallista S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Sam’s Club</td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Logo" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operadora del Dpto. Centro S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Abarrotera del Duero, S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Grupo Puma Abarrotero S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image11" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Tiendas Garcés, S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image12" alt="Logo" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super San Francisco de Asís S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image13" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>La Comer S.A. B.V.</td>
<td><img src="image14" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Sam’s Club</td>
<td><img src="image15" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>H-E-B</td>
<td><img src="image16" alt="Logo" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart &amp; Final del Noroeste, S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image17" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Su Plaza de Actopan S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image18" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Grupo Zorro Abarrotero S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image19" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Productos de Consumo Z. S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image20" alt="Logo" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Bodega de Córdoba S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image21" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>SuperWilly’s S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image22" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Grupo Zorro Abarrotero S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image23" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Tiendas Soriana S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image24" alt="Logo" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Su Plaza de Actopan S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image25" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Grupo Zorro Abarrotero S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image26" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Grupo Zorro Abarrotero S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image27" alt="Logo" /></td>
<td>Tiendas Soriana S.A. de C.V.</td>
<td><img src="image28" alt="Logo" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on the ANTAD 2017 website.
ANTAD belongs to the Latin American Supermarket Association (ALAS). The owner of Casa Ley Juan Manuel Ley Lopez was President on two occasions (1990-1991 and 2001-2003) of the Board of Directors of ANTAD. Also from 1992-1993 and from 2006-2007 he presided over the Latin American Supermarket Association (ALAS), making this entity recognized as a Federation of Associations and promoting the creation of commercial groups in the countries of the region that did not yet have bodies of corporate representation, and whose organization was established in Mexico City (Al Detalle Journal, 2015).

Social support
Casa Ley undertakes social support activities, in 2015 participated with the Un Kilo Foundation of Aid, through rounding in its stores, gave a donation for 7 million 563 thousand 945 pesos for the campaign Échale los kilos 2014 for a country without anemia with iron hearts, aimed at the prevention and correction of anemia in children from 17 communities in the state of Sinaloa through the Center for Early Childhood Development, and whose intervention model is based on three programs: physical development, neurological and psychoaffective development and community development (Al Detalle Journal, Year 14 No. 3 April 2015).

In support of the Join Foundation and to encourage the Rounding for Education program, Casa Ley participated in the Tu Cambio por la Educacion program through the delivery of 170 classrooms to the benefit of more than 74,000 students in different states of the republic, has raised more than 45 million pesos that have been converted into physical work, such as the four simultaneous media classrooms that were built at Margarita Romandia de Mendez Elementary School in Hermosillo, Sonora (Revista al Detalle, 2014).

Partner Change: Albertsons & Safeway Merger
In the United States of America on March 6, 2014, Albertsons and Safeway officially announced their merger plans, the transaction ended on January 30, 2015. This merger allows for a wider selection of products, up-to-date
and modern stores, and converts it in the second largest supermarket chain in North America after The Kroger Company (Albertsons, 2016).

**Safeway Inc.**

It operates the Safeway, Vons, Pavilions, Randalls, Tom Thumb and Carrs stores, is a Fortune 100 company and one of the largest food and drug retailers in the US with sales of $35.1 billion in 2013. Previously traded shares on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) under the SWY symbol, which were withdrawn from the New York Stock Exchange as a result of the closing of the merger (America Retail, 2015).

**Albertsons**


The new privately-held merged company would operate 2,230 supermarkets, 27 distribution facilities and 19 factories with more than 250,000 employees in 34 states and the District of Columbia. It would be composed of three regions and 14 retail divisions supported by corporate offices in Boise, ID, Pleasanton, CA and Phoenix, AZ. Banners include Safeway, Vons, Pavilions, Randalls, Tom Thumb, Carrs, Albertsons, ACME, Jewel-Osco, Lucky, Shaw’s, StarMarket, SuperSaver, United Supermarkets, Market Street and Friends.

US supermarket chains Safeway and Albertsons agreed to merge into a $9.1 billion deal that would result in a giant company with more than 2,400 stores (Diario MX, 2014). With this merger the Albertsons chain of stores buys 49% of the self-service store Casa Ley.

The Cerberus investment fund was authorized by Mexico’s Federal Economic Competition Commission (Cofece) to acquire, through its Albertsons subsidiary, 49% of the shares in the Mexican supermarket chain Casa Ley,
thereby initiating its presence in the country in the market dominated by Wal-Mart and its national rivals like Soriana, Chedraui, Comercial Mexicana (America Retail, 2015).

Conclusions

Casa Ley is a family economic group of Mexican retailers, organized and with its own dynamics, is characterized by intense competition in the turn of self-services and regional logic enjoys a high degree of concentration of capital.

Among its marketing strategies are added: 1) services that add value to the company; 2) development and diversification of formats; centralized distribution system; 3) advertising, brand development and management; 4) prices and promotions; 5) corporate strategies.

The origin of capital is an important factor that shows the basis of the growth of this economic group, national and foreign capital through the merger results in Casa Ley achieve: 1) introduce new formats of store, allowing the reduction of operating costs; 2) accumulate to carry out a strong expansion process and 3) technologically modernize their stores.

Competition in the oligopolistic market gives preference to investment and will have to look for capital wherever it is, via partners, merger, Stock Exchange, others, thereby ensuring innovation, growth and expansion.
References

Albertsons (2016). *Albertsons* [online], http://www.albertsons.com/#1, access 7 June 2017.


An Exploration for the Motives behind Enhancing Senior Banker’s Level of Organizational Resilience: A Holistic Case Study

ABSTRACT

Objective: the present paper aims to explore the main motives behind Cairo bank’s attempts to raise its senior bankers’ level of organizational resilience.

Methodology: after gathering and investigating all relevant literature about organizational resilience, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 of the senior bankers who work at Cairo bank at 6 October city, Giza, Egypt. All interviews were conducted in the Arabic language.

Findings: the findings of this study show that senior bankers at Cairo bank, like many other
Egyptian classes, struggle in a state of uncertainty and consider it the main motive behind their bank’s attempt to raise their resilience level. The pressure of stakeholders is, to a large extent, present, and there is a thought that fulfilling different societal obligations is a source for economic gains and accordingly, stakeholders’ pressure is a second motive behind raising employees’ organizational resilience. Furthermore, organizational culture adaptability and the tendency to responsively act in line with unpredicted events is a third motive. Finally, senior bankers’ loud voice in calling for continuous grants for education and training has come to be the fourth motive.

**Value added:** the paper is considered the first to qualitatively investigate organizational resilience in Egypt.

**Recommendations:** The researchers are of the view that the development of every departmental agenda for needed resilience is a priority for improving organizational capacity. Moreover, reformulating the bank’s values, operations and activities should also be considered to create a harmony between the external threats and the internal duties. Furthermore, there should be also an orientation to redefine the concept of “uncertainty” from time to time to include socio-political and socio-economic types of risk.

**Keywords:** organizational resilience; uncertainty; organizational culture adaptability; stakeholders’ pressure; employees’ voice; Egypt

**Paper type:** research paper

**JEL Code:** M114

---

**Introduction**

Today, an organization’s success and possibly survival depends mostly on its ability to meet the turbulent changes in the market they serve, unlimited demands of the stakeholders they deal with, besides the complex operations they must engage in during their regular delivery of products or services (Kantur & Iseri-Say, 2012). This may be the reason behind the historical evolution and the spread of the concept of “resilience” in current economic and business spheres (King et al., 2016). Nowadays, it is needless to say that it has become one of the most widely addressed buzzwords in both academic and practical arenas (Paul et al., 2016). Resilience is often associated with an organization’s abilities to responsively adapt to all current
and potential challenges or risks occurring in both local and global contexts and to be able to mitigate their effect on the organization’s activities and subsequently ensure its continuity.

Apparently, the concept of “resilience” appeared firstly in the works of child psychologists who used it as a measure of children’s ability to maintain their persistence despite difficulties they faced (Johnson & Wiechelt, 2004). Secondly, psychology scholars used it as a measure of people’s ability to yield a positive energy after being exposed to a traumatic event (Redman & Kinzig, 2003). Thirdly, crisis management scholars used it as a reflection of people’s capacity to withstand unexpected shocks and consequently learn to bounce back particularly in institutional settings (Tierney, 2003). Resilience is still in its embryonic stages in organization-related literature despite the attempts of Mallak (1998) to address the principles of resilience and Weick (1996) to explore its sources. However, and to date, climate change, cut-through competition and even terrorist attacks that profoundly affect daily and strategic organization’s courses of actions have urged different organization-related academicians and practitioners to add resilience as one of the most relevant topics in not only academic studies but also consulting practices.

Egypt is a leading Middle-Eastern-Arabian and African country with a population estimated at 92 million as of 2016. The country witnessed a political revolution in January 2011 in which millions of Egyptians took to the streets and called for changes in their social, political, economic and cultural rights. The uprising ended with the election of the first civilian president, Mohamed Morsi, in the modern history of Egypt. Unfortunately, and after a year of Morsi’s presidency, there was another uprising because of worsened conditions of living in Egypt, economically and socially, in June 2013 to end the authority of Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood three years before their official end of the Government’s term in office. A year later, Abdel-Fatah El Sisi, the former Egyptian minister of defense took over the responsibility of government and became the President of Egypt. In a similar vein and after four years in office, the social, political and economic situation remains same.
Cairo Bank is third largest governmental bank in Egypt with a network of branches covering all twenty-seven Egyptian provinces or governates. The bank seeks to ensure an inspiring environment for its employees and to continuously provide the highest possible quality products and services to its stakeholders as mentioned in both the mission and vision of this bank (See Note 1). Occasionally, Cairo Bank occupies a noticeable space in both public and media discourses due to the ongoing governmental intent of privatizing the bank. It is worth highlighting that these ongoing attempts to privatize this bank began in 2005. A second attempt at privatization was made by the government in 2012 and again in 2017, the discourse continued.

Apart from the government’s ongoing privatization intentions and given the vision statement of Cairo Bank saying that the bank constantly seeks to maintain an inspiring work environment for its staff, this study focused on its senior managers and explores the main motives behind the bank’s attempts to raise its senior’s level of organizational resilience. Accordingly, this paper starts with a detailed theoretical background about the concept of “resilience”. Secondly, an elaboration of the exploratory qualitative case study the authors employed is made. Thirdly, the findings are articulated and fourthly, the paper is concluded and implication for research and practice, in addition to recommendations, is made.

**Literature review**

As indicated by Luthar et al. (2000), resilience can be defined as “a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (p. 543). The same study considers resilience as the process of adapting to sudden changes. Witmer & Mellinger (2016) refer to organizational resilience as an organization’s ability to match internal and external challenges and the capacity to shift these challenges into opportunities that organization can benefit from. Accordingly, it is constantly seen as a complex process that entails an exploration of a main internal and/or
external threat facing the organization and consequently reintegrating the organization’s interpersonal, psychological and structural system to manage this threat. Additionally, the process of adapting to any sudden shock/threat may call for redefining the organization’s mission, values, policies, tasks, objectives and also, connection with the surrounding environment. In this regard, Grant et al. (2009) differentiated between individual resilience, which focuses on enhancing individual competence such as hope, self-esteem and self-efficacy and altitudinal work-related resilience, which focuses on enhancing employee’s organizational commitment, work engagement and readiness to change. Within the scope of organizational resilience, Sutcliffe & Vogus (2003) highlight the existence of two schools of thought regarding organizational resilience. The first promotes the organization’s actions when facing turbulences, whereas the other one fosters the organization’s dynamic ability to constantly develop new capabilities, monitor changes in the surrounding environment and be ready to take actions towards mitigating any potential challenge.

Even though Sawalha (2015) divided resilience into 4 types: personal, organizational, sectoral and societal, Paul et al. (2016) indicated that resilience has several facets such as career resilience, trait resilience, psychological resilience and ego resilience. These different facets of resilience have their implications on both individual and organizational contexts. Foster & Dye (2005) highlight that any organizational work-related resilience can be created and maintained by empowering three main elements: human resources, business model (systems, infrastructure, reporting structure and processes) and relationships with surrounding stakeholders. Importantly, Alesi (2008) and Biggs (2011) elaborate that an organization’s size, activity, history besides leaders’ characteristics, can also play a significant role in building business resilience.

It is worth mentioning that the main importance of organizational work-related resilience derives from its ongoing ability to create meaning/purpose for organizations and their affiliated members, besides an undisputed role in
enhancing employee self-reliance (Wagniled & Young, 1990). This may justify the tendency of both organizations and individuals of owning resilience capabilities constantly. Even countries nowadays seek to establish and support national resilience of citizens. For example, the United States of America has introduced a framework titled “building a resilient nation: enhancing security, ensuring a strong economy” as an attempt to improve its citizens’ capacity in mitigating stresses and promoting inclusive economic growth (The Reform Institute, 2008). Given the preceding, work-related resilience should be seen not only as an attribute that an organization manages, but also as a capability the organization prepares, creates, maintains and evaluates regularly to ensure the organization’s ability in declining the harmful effects of any risk and turning this risk into opportunity.

To conclude the literature review it needs to be said that although the concept of “organizational resilience” has been addressed in both western and Asian private organizational settings quite significantly, it is still in its embryonic stage in both African and Middle-Eastern context and therefore an exploratory investigation of this concept in Egypt, which is an Arabian African leading nation, may offer further research opportunities for management scholars in such countries. Needless to say, focusing only on a public banking environment may contribute to the Egyptian government and its central bank’s developmental attempts, which are ongoing.

Methodology

As indicated earlier, the authors of the present paper did not touch on many papers focused on “organizational resilience” because the existing literature about organizational resilience falls under the scope of psychology, crisis management, information technology besides environmental studies. Moreover, the authors, among other scholars (Paul et al., 2016, King et al., 2016) have realized that organizational resilience is considered an emergent concept in most organization-related literature.
Needless to mention that, to the best of the authors’ knowledge, only few studies on organizational resilience were conducted in the context of Middle East and no studies have been conducted in the Egyptian context at all. This may justify, to a large extent, why the authors of this paper decided to do a case study in investigating the topic. Clearly, the decision of case study analysis limits the authors’ ability to generalize the findings but as explained by (Baxter & Jack, 2008), employing a case study gives an indication that the study is reasonable to be investigated and that the authors cannot manipulate the behavior of their participants.

Furthermore, doing an exploratory qualitative case study should result in the creation of a model, the development of a theory or a suggestion of some propositions (Yin, 2003). Importantly, the research process for this paper commenced in June 2017 with the determination of the research unit for interviews (senior bankers), time (from the January 2011 Egyptian uprising to date), place (Cairo Bank branches of the 6 October City, Giza, Egypt) in addition to the explored phenomenon/behavior/activity/practice (senior banker’s understanding of why their bank is seeking to raise their organizational resilience).

The focus only on a single organizational setting (Cairo Bank) in a single city (6 October City), though there are 3 branches in the selected location, reflected the authors’ orientation to do a holistic single case study in which authors set themselves apart from the observed case and subsequently analyzed across settings. Admittedly, the authors chose to do semi-structured Skype interviews and consider these interviews as their primary source of data whereas newspapers and bank reports were used as a secondary source.

It is worth highlighting that one of the present paper’s authors has a good working relationship with many of the senior bankers at Cairo Bank particularly at the bank’s 6 October City branches. This opportunity provided leverage for the authors in contacting the relevant officials of the bank and in the very positive feedback and approval to collaborate with the authors. Clearly, this author started contacting the said respondents in November
2011 and discovered that there are three branches of the Cairo Bank in the 6 October City and that the number of senior bankers in every branch is 8 (comprising, auditor, chief accountants, financial accounts manager, credit manager, customer service manager, sales manager, SMEs relationships manager and branch manager). Accordingly, the total expected number of respondents was 24. Most importantly, the focus on senior bankers came as a result of the purposive sampling method the authors employed. The said author who directly coordinated the conduct of the interviews, from contact with some of the senior bankers, experience and sound judgment, was of the assumption that senior bankers in the Egyptian banking environment received the maximum financial and developmental support.

As mentioned earlier, the authors conducted semi-structured interviews through Skype. All interviews were in Arabic and the duration of every interview conducted was 45 minutes approximately. As a result of the coordinating author’s already good working relationships with many of the respondents, the interviewees spoke freely and candidly. The following were the main questions asked by the interviewer:

- What kind of organizational resilience do you perceive in your workplace?
- How do you perceive such resilience activities?
- Does the bank you work in organize these resilience activities regularly or only based on need?
- To what extent has resilience existed in your workplace?

Upon conducting the interviews, a transcript was made and translated from Arabic to English. Moreover, all authors of this paper participated in coding the most important findings in the transcript. Additionally, the authors enhanced the reliability of their paper through audio recording for all interviews conducted besides employing the purposive sampling method to guarantee the maximum adequate experience level of their respondents (Lillis, 2006). For internal validity reasons, a cyclical proceeding of data collection and analysis was undertaken besides conducting all interviews in Arabic which is the native language of all respondents and at least one of
the authors. Finally, and for improving external validity, an adequate number of respondents (24) were interviewed.

Why the administration of Cairo Bank works to enhance its employees’ level of organizational resilience?

Prior to contacting respondents for this study, the coordinating authors of this paper were to some degree aware of the effort made by Cairo Bank, particularly under its new management in fueling its employees’ level of proficiency. However, a detailed picture of the real situation within this bank was not readily available. It was partly for the foregoing reasons that the authors decided to do an exploratory investigation. Additionally, it was no secret among the authors to considerably anticipate one of the main motives upon which Cairo Bank management relied on to raise its employees’ level of organizational resilience.

Furthermore, and notwithstanding the fact that the authors sought an answer to the aforementioned question of why Cairo Bank’s administration constantly worked to raise its employees’ level of organizational resilience, the authors unintentionally, in some parts of the interviews and the subsequent analysis, are responsible for an evaluation of how senior bankers at Cairo Bank perceive their attempts to improve their organizational resilience. This might be because of the current tense political and social atmosphere Egyptian businesses and general population operate in, where freedom of speech, association and other rights are non-existent or not enforced.

As mentioned by the majority, if not all of respondents, an uncertainty climate is the main motive behind enhancing employees’ organizational resilience. The second respondent said, “it was only because of uncertainty that we often got involved in organizational learning”. Another respondent added “yes, we are required to understand the meaning of uncertainty, its types, its management and much more about it”. This comes in line with
Mousa & Abdel Gaffar (2017) who indicate that uncertainty is one of the main features of Egyptian environments. As explained by four of the respondents, the climate of uncertainty Egyptians live in has fostered changes by various banks to their sales policies. Instead of focusing on Egyptian clients who live in Egypt, the focus has expanded to cover clients who live abroad. This comes as a result of increasing migration, or as heard from two of the respondents “the growing escape by Egyptians currently is in search for much more stability and security”. Another respondent clarified that Cairo bank is about to undertake an expansion strategy through establishing new branches in more stable countries like United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait. However, he added that the struggle the administration of this bank faces would be with the number of Egyptian bankers who will compete to relocate and work in these new branches when established. This comes as an affirmation to what is highlighted by Sinding et al. (1998) that both external environment (nature, rules, etc.) and internal environment (organizational strategy, economic capability and etc.) may fuel uncertainty and sometimes complexity.

Two of the respondents elaborated the difficulties they faced during January 2011 revolution Egypt witnessed. They said “it was a challenge to work under the protection of army vehicles that were placed in front of all financial institutions at that time”. A respondent said “there was a need to call one’s family members every half an hour to see how secure they were and to let them know how secure I was”. Having such fears urged the administration of Cairo Bank to train every employee to prepare them to fill in gaps in the case of a colleague’s absence. Even bank managers learnt how to be multifunctional and worked as junior tellers at some crucial times. Certainly, the case described reinforced the three types of uncertainty illustrated by Bordia et al. (2004) and confirmed their presence in this bank’s case. There is uncertainty regarding the future direction (strategic uncertainty), uncertainty regarding change in bank policies, structures and functions (structural uncertainty) and uncertainty regarding job roles (job-related uncertainty).
A second main motive highlighted by the respondents was stakeholders’ pressure. The sixth respondent asserted that currently bank employees working in Egypt are required not only to adopt their bank’s agenda of rules and instructions, but also stakeholder’s daily updated desires. This falls in agreement with Carrasco (2007) and Mousa (2017) who elaborate that organizations, whatever their type, should respect the social contract they have with their surrounding societies and this is attained only through their various stakeholders’ wants. Apparently, Egyptians have gained a very powerful social understanding after the January 2011 revolution and nowadays know how to attain the maximum benefit they expect from exercising social pressure. Two of the respondents affirmed that banks do not currently have the luxury to enter into any conflict clients simply because a very short Facebook post from any unsatisfied client can harm or may even destroy the bank social image. That is why Pless (2007) articulates that organizations guide and are guided by different stakeholders on whom/which organizations depend in perceiving support, information, advice and promotion as well. Accordingly, Cairo Bank, from time to time, undertakes very extensive workshops and seminars on how to enhance its employees’ ability to meet stakeholders’ needs as elaborated by 6 of the respondents. Furthermore, the administration of the bank allows its senior employees to participate in preparing “what if scenarios” to be ready for any threat as indicated by the fourth respondent. Moreover, the bank’s administration devotes some of its future prepared scenarios to show how the bank and its staff should responsively act even in the case of simple struggles/disturbance with a part/ or even few of its surrounding social actors.

A third group of interviewees highlighted the role of organizational culture adaptability in fostering their organizational resilience. The third respondent, for example, confirmed that a Master’s degree in business administration (MBA) has become obligatory for becoming a branch manager. Moreover, promotion to higher positions in this bank allowed only for those who have postgraduate degrees in management, finance, investment, accounting, economics
and other related disciplines. Furthermore, five of the respondents affirmed the bank’s role in making partnerships/agreements with some educational/research institutions through which Cairo Bank’s affiliated employees can reach to enjoy discount of some 50% on tuition fees. This reflects the kind of adaptability to both internal and external needs as elaborated by Dawson (2010). Such organizational culture adaptability ensures staff organizational learning (Mousa, 2016) because organizational culture for any organization acts as a personality for a human being (Hosseini, 2014), it seems that Cairo bank asserts organizational culture adaptability as a condition for its continuity.

Finally, one of the respondents said “we are not less than the staff of other banks to be denied both training and education opportunities”. This is what was affirmed by 4 other respondents who elaborated that other banks contribute to their staff’s MBA tuition fees for example. Another respondent mentioned “other banks may even provide their seniors the double of this bank developmental opportunities”. That is why employees’ voice and their continuous calls to be treated like other seniors in other banks is another motive for urging Cairo Bank’s management to foster its employees’ organizational resilience level.

Conclusion

This study aimed to answer the question of why Cairo Bank currently works to enhance its employees’ level of resilience. Having interviewed 24 senior bankers who work at 3 branches of Cairo Bank, the authors of this paper succeeded in explaining the four motives behind this behavior/orientation.

As anticipated, Egypt’s current uncertainty climate has been found out to be the main motive behind Cairo Bank’s attempts at raising its employees’ resilience. The unstable socio-political and economic atmosphere is considered the main factor in this bank’s decision-making process. As highlighted in the conducted interviews, the administration of Cairo Bank, besides its employees, has not only a lack of information about the future but also a fear
An Exploration for the Motives behind Enhancing Senior Banker’s Level of Organizational Resilience: A Holistic Case Study

of all coming events. That is why it has expanded the number of seminars, coaching and workshops regarding overcoming their future threats. This is a clear reflection to what is asserted by Song (2013) who indicates that uncertainty has its effect on both organizational members and organizational choices. It is worth mentioning that the scope of this uncertainty has fostered senior bankers’ worries about their job roles, organizational structure, nature of the environment they work in and many more.

A lot can be said about the role stakeholders’ pressure form in motivating Cairo Bank’s administration to raise its employees’ level of resilience. The analysis of the conducted interviews reflects this bank’s continuous effort in building long-term relationships with its surrounding social actors. As understood, this fulfillment of the societal obligations comes as a result of the understanding that stakeholders are considered not only a source of information but also a source of economic gain, if their word of mouth is well-managed. That is also why the bank regularly provides its employees with training about how to show care towards the poor, contribute to public well-being and participate in charitable activities.

Organizational culture has appeared to be the third motive for enhancing employees’ level of organizational resilience. As anticipated, the administration of Cairo Bank seeks to be able to responsively act even when facing unexpected situations (Dawson, 2010). That is why the interviews have showed a continuous tendency to direct senior banker towards creating and maintaining an effective organizational orientation in meeting/balancing/stabilizing expected and unexpected daily and strategic events. Finally, senior bankers themselves know how to utilize their voices in calling for continuous training and education in search for balancing the opportunities offered to their colleagues in other banks. Accordingly, senior bankers’ voice has been considered the fourth motive for improving senior bankers’ resilience level.

The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in creating the model of the main motives behind enhancing employee’s level of resilience in the case of Cairo Bank, Egypt.
Figure 1. A model of the main motives and forms of employees’ enhancement behind raising employees’ level of existence

Motives
- Uncertainty
- Stakeholders’ Pressure
- Organizational Culture adaptability
- Employees’ voice

Forms of employees’ enhancement
- Training
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Coaching
- Education

Employees’ Resilience
A raise in employee’s resilience

Banking Environment

Source: own study.

This model shows that the employee’s feeling of uncertainty, stakeholders’ pressure, organizational culture consistency and employees’ voice urged their working place to offer them some forms of employees’ enhancement (training, education, workshops, seminars and coaching sessions) in whatever their business environment needs and upon receiving these forms, there should be a kind of enhancement for every employee’s level of resilience.

Implications for managers

Given the politically, socially, economically and even culturally unpredictable environment Egypt witnesses, both senior bankers and their managers at Cairo Bank consider resilience as a dynamic trait they should raise. However, the authors of this paper did not succeed in identifying neither the main goal of where the administration of Cairo Bank lies in raising its seniors’ level of individual resilience nor senior’s level of organizational resilience. Accordingly, the authors did not realize whether either the current effort
made by Cairo Bank’s management has a considerable effect on senior banker’s level of organizational commitment, engagement, citizenship behavior and subsequently performance or not, simply because the analysis of the interviews confirmed that the senior bankers’ focus is on acquiring as many credentials (certificates, learning, academic degrees, training, etc.) as they can. Furthermore, and given the fact that a senior banker is a member of the whole system of Cairo Bank, they may have a positive influence on the bank’s organizational resilience. However, the authors did not touch on any empirical evidence to reflect the influence of individual resilience on the overall organization, the result that was discovered by Lengnick-Hall & Beck (2013) before. Consequently, the following points should be addressed.

- Development of every department agenda of needed resilience. This agenda, despite its focus on only a single department, will prompt employees to think about raising their bank’s capacity besides their own credentials. The matter that will be considered a part of forming an overall framework for consisting and maintaining Cairo Bank’s organizational resilience.

- A reformulating of Cairo Bank’s organizational behavior, operations and values should be undertaken. This will serve a way of urging senior bankers to absorb their required roles particularly in the era of uncertainty which derives from the bank’s ability to reflect all of its formal and informal intentions into written guidelines noted by its members.

- A redefinition of the concept of “uncertainty” is also needed. As understood from the analysis of the interviews, the majority of Cairo Bank’s staff link the sources of “uncertainty” back to the political revolution. The authors are aware of the dramatic trauma Egyptian banking employees had during the January and February 2011 revolution in Egypt when there was no security and daily aggressive attacks particularly in and across financial institutions occurred. However, the management of Cairo Bank should be aware that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of uncertainties. This may include climate change, social rumors, entry of new competitors, terrorist attacks, expected wars, etc.
Finally, although the authors of this paper did their best to finalize the study and find answers for questions, some limitations should be brought to the reader’s attention. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to focus on more branches of Cairo Bank and to interview more than 24 of its seniors. It is also important to note that focusing only on a single case study (Cairo Bank in this case) limits the authors’ ability to generalize the research outputs. For future studies, the authors consider asking the same research question to junior bankers in the same bank. Moreover, it should be also advisable, considering the same research question in other public (e.g. hospitals, ministries, etc.) and private (e.g. for profit companies, private universities, etc.) organizational settings.
References


Key Competences of a Health Care Manager

ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of the research was to construct a theoretical model of competences of managers employed in health care institutions in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship.

Methodology: The theoretical list of competences was based on the literature of the subject and the results developed during the workshop session with postgraduate students in the scope of management of healthcare entities. All respondents (266 persons) were health care workers and held managerial positions at various levels of organizations.

Findings: On the basis of the obtained results it can be stated that in the key competency model of the efficient manager dominates professional competence in the field of organization and management. These competences were also diagnosed with the greatest deficiencies that hinder effective work.

Value Added: Results of the research enable the introduction of appropriate curricular content into the educational model of potential healthcare managers, hence improving management quality of medical organizations.

Keywords: competence, health care, model, manager, efficient actions.

JEL codes: M12, M53
Introduction

Efficiency and effects of new management are determined by many variables, among which are human resources, more precisely – their quality. Special requirements are placed upon the management as it is their quality that influences the optimal use of other resources of the healthcare provider. In this paper, it has been assumed that competences of all employees are assets of human resources.

The term competences appeared in the literature of subject at the beginning of the 80s of the last century¹. Richard Boyatzis, in his publication for the American Management Association, presented the basic characteristics of effective manager, among which he enlisted competences as a human potential leading to such a behaviour that contributes to satisfying of requirements of a given job within the organisational environment, which in turn yields the desired results (Czapla, 2005, p.37). From the explanation in the footnote, we can derive that qualifications are a more narrow term than competences, what means that qualifications are not enough to be competent in a given work, occupation or profession. According to M. Armstrong (2000, p. 241) competent people at a workplace are those who fulfil the expectation towards achieving specific results. In turn, T.J. Watson (2001, p. 236) writes that competent managers are those who can properly influence others to fulfil their duties.

The term competencies is interdisciplinary and multidimensional, which results in different interpretations by different authors. In definitions, there is no discordance in general understanding of competences. The differences in interpretation usually concern components, their meaning in the whole competency wallet and the analytical plane. In this paper, the term competency is defined as in R. Walkowiak (2007, pp. 19–20) as a “benchmark set of knowledge, skills, personality traits, attitudes and behaviour directed at

¹. Earlier, the term qualifications was used, now those are a component of competences – cf, among others, Walkowiak, 2007, p.19.
efficient operation”. Whereas the key competences mean those competences that every manager should display in practice regardless of organisation type and management level.

In design practice, competence lists are evaluated based on the desired levels, i.e. levels that ensure efficient operation. It is done by measuring the levels of competences displayed in practice and on that basis excess and deficiencies in individual competences are identified and written in the form of competence profiles.

Designing competences for any manager, workplace, role or function in an organisation is difficult, as in practice, there is a large variety of organisations and workplaces at different levels of management and different regional conditions connected, among others, with culture of a given place (Bellini et al., 2013). That variety is also present in healthcare facilities, as seen, among others, in M. Kautsch (2015, pp. 92–105) who says that in the Polish system “important are those facilities that do not operate for profit – public and non-public (whereas among the non-public the majority operates for profit)”. In that context, we can say that although the general objective of healthcare facilities is providing healthcare services, different management types directed at obtaining the designated/accepted goals and different sets of managerial competences are effective depending on the type of the facility.

This study is aiming at expanding the knowledge on key competences of healthcare managers in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship. The research was based on literature studies, ABC (20/80) and self-assessment methods.

1. Competences of healthcare managers

Interesting reflections on the competence of non-public healthcare management are presented by R. Jankowiak (2011, pp. 123–135). The author wonders who should stand at the top of the hierarchic pyramid in medical service institutions – whether it is an entrepreneur, manager or perhaps a specialist? On the basis of his own observations and managerial experi-
ence, he is critical of the specialists at the top, who are often very prominent in terms of professional medical skills but lack managerial competence. The author justifies his criticism in the following way: at the top of the hierarchy there is often a medical specialist because he usually had the idea and was the initiator of the establishment of a new entity. If this is the case, then “he employs other specialists, thus creating functional and operating levels. It is easy to see that each of them deals with the task focusing on the details. In this case, there is a lack of people responsible for the strategic sphere (...)”.

Similar dilemma is described by N. Edwards et al. (2003), who offer three solutions for consideration:

- eliminating any management engagement into clinical matters,
- focusing on improving the quality of healthcare managers,
- developing a habit for the managers to think like doctors and vice versa, as they can learn a lot from each other.

Despite the difficulty in modelling competences, design work is being undertaken to outline the competence profiles of efficient managers. There are two design approaches. The first, most commonly used, profiles of positions roles and levels of management in a particular organisation are designed. Those are very detailed projects and due to the specific nature of the organisation, they are difficult to adapt to other entities. In the second approach, generalised profiles for the job groups are developed, e.g. for managerial positions, regardless of the specific job title or level of management. In these designs, it is assumed that any manager, without regard to job title or level of management, should be equipped with the necessary set of managerial competences. Typically, to the set of competences constructed this way, competences specific to e.g. the industry in which the manager operates are added.

In the literature of the subject a number of competence models for managers employed in healthcare institutions can be encountered. Individual authors list different sets of competences, or they emphasise the validity of only some of them. For example, K.I. Littwin (2013, pp. 209–2012), analysing
the roles of medical professionals (encompassing doctors and nurses as middle managers), states that these people are increasingly more often administrators, and hence managers, and their competence portfolio should include not only high medical competences, but also managerial knowledge and skills, for they are responsible for the results of the processes carried out in their organisational units. In the context of the author’s analysis of the key competences of the medical professional – the manager, they can include knowledge and skills in the management of medical processes, the quality and safety of patients, medical personnel, costs, cultural values and norms, and the image of the hospital.

A very general list of competences is also presented by M. Furtak et al. (2010, p. 213) emphasising the importance of issues such as knowledge of management, finance, economics and law, which they consider essential for rational decision-making and more effective results. In turn, A. Kostecka (2016) lists eighteen competences of a modern healthcare professional, including professional, interpersonal, business and strategic thinking in the medical profession. The list of key competences was also presented by R. Jankowiak (2011, pp. 123–135). Based on the analysis of the tasks assigned to the healthcare manager, the author focuses on, among others, delegation of power and responsibilities, development of mission, vision and strategies, process management, marketing and finance, and human resources management.

The authors of other studies focus on emphasising the importance of “soft” - interpersonal skills. For example, E. Jakubek et al. (2012, pp. 167–182) pay special attention to communication skills and building trust that allow for correct relationships with patients and colleagues. Other authors, such as L.E. Swayne et al. (2012, p. 183) and R. Lewandowski (2011, p. 121) also refer to trust as an important social competence. For the latter author, the important determinants of efficiency and quality in healthcare are friendliness, honesty and predictability. The importance of psychosocial competences enabling effective management of oneself and other people is also mentioned by M. Matecka et al. (2015, p. 294).
A study of leadership behaviours conducted by A.M. Burak et al. (2016, pp. 57–58) shows that active leadership is an important competence of the healthcare operational manager. In the opinion of the researchers, the most important features of such leadership are the ability to cooperate, competence, ability to solve problems, ability to act quickly, relationship building skills, assertiveness, strategic thinking, ability to provide feedback and analytical thinking.

In turn, from nationwide research conducted by the Akademia Ochrony Zdrowia (Academy of Health Protection) (2015)\(^2\) among the 1000 people in management positions in healthcare institutions, the highest rated competences were employee motivation, team management and interpersonal communication.

Competence preferences were also identified among postgraduate students in the field of healthcare management, most of them (out of 86 participants) completed medical studies in various fields (Rosińska 2013, p. 16). The research carried out by the author shows that in the opinion of the students organisational and legal issues, restructuring of the medical entities, risk management, strategic management, management of information systems and medical documentation are the most useful in their management work.

The key competences of healthcare managers in Poland mentioned above correspond in part to the list of competences presented in the world literature. For example, in the study by B. Ramirez et al. (2017) the list of competences is divided into five main domains: communication and relationship management, leadership, professionalism, knowledge of the health environment and healthcare, and business skills. In turn, A. Leotsakos et al. (2014, pp. 2–3) from the World Health Organization (WHO) have divided the leadership competences of healthcare organisations managers into three subsets: personal attributes, leadership skills, and executive skills. J.G. Calhoun et al. (2008, p. 378) also grouped competences in three areas. According to these

---

researchers, the most important competences are focused on transformational skills (e.g., analytical thinking, innovative and strategic thinking and performance orientation), executive skills (including organisational design, process management and responsibility) and human resource management skills (among others, building and managing teams, focus on personal and employee development and communication), whereas the managerial competency model at the executive level listed 50 competencies, including 23 personal, 11 interpersonal, 12 managerial and 4 marketing competences (Yen-Ju Lin et al., 2011, pp. 89–90).

2. Assumptions and research procedure

The aim of the study was to design a key competency model of healthcare manager. In pursuit of its realization, theoretical considerations and the empirical material collected in the research were analyzed. The object of the research was the model of key competences, while the subject were the persons performing managerial functions and preparing for these functions in healthcare institutions in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship. The research question was formulated in the form of the following question: What competences should the manager of an entity or a separate department of healthcare institutions in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship be equipped with? In order to address this main problem, the following specific problems were studied in the research:

- What kind of competences should a manager have in order to be capable to efficiently manage healthcare institutions in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship?
- What is the hierarchy of importance of those competences?
- What is the desired state of the key competences of a healthcare institution manager?
- What is the current state of key competences of healthcare institution managers?
What are the gaps in the key competences of healthcare institution managers?

Literature studies, ABC (20/80) and self-assessment methods were used for the research. Literature studies were necessary to build the theoretical model of a competent healthcare manager. This model contained 38 competences. Using the ABC method and in accordance with Pareto rules, a hierarchy of importance of particular competencies was established. The structure was verified by 266 students enrolled in postgraduate studies conducted in the years 2012–2014 and 2016/2017 at the Tadeusz Kotarbiński University of Information Technology and Management in Olsztyn. In workshops, students designed desirable levels, self-assessed current states, and identified gaps in the competency levels for the model of an effective health manager.

3. Research results

Post-graduate students participating in the study occupied different positions in healthcare institutions in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship. Most represented was the medium management staff and senior charge nurses. A detailed overview of occupational workplaces is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Occupational workplaces of study participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head doctor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy head doctor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy director</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief accountant</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The study was carried out under the project Healthcare Manager - postgraduate studies for the management of medical entities (Project No. POKL.02.03.04-00-049/12-00).
Nearly every third medical worker involved in the workshop worked in large and small entities, and one in four in the medium ones (classification according to the number of employees). They were mostly public health institutions (83.5%). The majority of them had medical education (73.3%). Those employed in the administrative service (finance and administration of healthcare facilities) have also completed postgraduate studies, mainly in the areas of public procurement, accounting and internal auditing. The health workers participating in the study were experienced, as one in three (33.3%) had a seniority of 6 to 10 years and 46.7% over 15 years. Among all respondents, women were predominant (79.9%).

At the beginning of the workshops, students were presented with a list of 30 competences based on the literature of the subject. This list was the basis for the exchange of views and discussions conducted in five-person teams. Students – employees of healthcare institutions, using the descriptions of their jobs and on the basis of their own experience, defined the individual competences and modified, by deleting and adding, the received theoretical list of competences. A new set of 38 competencies of the healthcare manager (Table 2) was created from the lists of individual teams.

### Table 2. List of competences of a healthcare manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Competence name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>knowledge in behaviour on the healthcare market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>knowledge in management of finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>knowledge in material resources management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>knowledge of law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>medical knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>systematic and analytical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>strategic thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>creating a vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>creating a desired image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>ability to handle uncertain situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>ability to resolve conflicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>leadership skills and ability to motivate others to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>decision-making skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>cooperation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>negotiation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>ability to delegate power and tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>time-management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>knowledge of the English language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>stress-management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>emotional intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>foreseeing the consequences of one's choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>taking responsibility for one's choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>ethical behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>focus on results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>assertiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>trust in employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>ability to build and manage a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>focus on the development of competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>ability to motivate employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>focus on quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>taking care of the wellbeing of the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>personal culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>consistency in action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own research.
In the next phase of the key competency model building process, according to methodology 20/80, a hierarchy of competences was developed. Detailed results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hierarchy of competences according to healthcare managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Competence name</th>
<th>Cumulated % of the number of competences</th>
<th>Points*</th>
<th>Cumulated number of points</th>
<th>Cumulated % of the number of points</th>
<th>Subset of competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knowledge in human resources management (P)**</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Negotiating skills (P)</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>21.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work experience (P)</td>
<td>12.51</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>31.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ability to determine strategy (P)</td>
<td>16.68</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>39.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ability to communicate clearly (P)</td>
<td>20.85</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>47.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teamwork skills (S)</td>
<td>25.02</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>54.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ability to delegate tasks (P)</td>
<td>29.19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>59.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Knowledge of the surroundings (P)</td>
<td>33.36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>65.12</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills (P)</td>
<td>37.53</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>70.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Authority (S)</td>
<td>41.70</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>73.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Courage (O)</td>
<td>45.87</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>77.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Resistance to stress (O)</td>
<td>50.04</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>80.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ability to build interpersonal skills (S)</td>
<td>54.21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>83.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Information management skill (P)</td>
<td>58.38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>86.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Creativity (O)</td>
<td>62.55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>89.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Assertiveness (O)</td>
<td>66.72</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>91.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Communication (S)</td>
<td>70.89</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>93.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>General medical knowledge (P)</td>
<td>75.06</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>95.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Focus on goals (P)</td>
<td>79.23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>96.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ability to listen (S)</td>
<td>83.40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>97.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Personal culture (S)</td>
<td>87.57</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>98.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ability to delegate power (P)</td>
<td>91.74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>99.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Focus on self-development and the development of employees (S)</td>
<td>95.91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>99.676</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Consistency in action (O)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* number of points (column 4) is an average of the indications of all respondents.  

** P – professional competences, S – social competences, O – personality competences

Source: own research.

The data in Table 3 show that the initial list of 38 competences of an effective health manager (Table 2) has been minimised to 24 competences. The new set is dominated by professional competences, accounting for 50.0% of all competences required by the respondents for good job performance in managerial positions. Nearly every third of the competences (29.2%) is social, and every fifth (20.8%) – a personality trait.

According to the Pareto rules, the key competences are contained in subset A representing 20% of all competences. In the research project, this sub-set consists of the competences listed in Table 3 under items 1–5. However, they cannot be accepted as sufficient because it is assumed that the acceptable efficiency of management activities should be at least 80%. Thus, if the manager was “equipped”, i.e., shown in practice only the five competences, the efficiency of their activities would be only 47.84% (column
6 in Table 3). Hence, their competence potential should be enriched by the competences that together will ensure the expected efficiency. As indicated in Table 3 – 80% performance level equals 12 competences located in subsets A and B (80.4% in column 6 of Table 3).

In the light of the obtained results, the competences listed in Table 3 under headings 1-12 should be considered as key competences. All have been evaluated. Health managers working in teams first designed the desirable states of these competences, and later self-assessed their current states. The difference between the desired state and the actual state is called the competence gap (Table 4).

**Table 4. The profile of key competences in the self-assessment of healthcare managers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Competence name</th>
<th>Competence level</th>
<th>Competence gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>desired</td>
<td>current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Knowledge in human resources management</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Negotiating skills</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ability to determine strategy</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ability to communicate clearly</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Teamwork skills</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ability to delegate tasks</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Knowledge of the surroundings</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Resistance to stress</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: own research.*
In the key competences portfolio, knowledge and professional skills are in the lead (66.7% of all competences in subsets A and B). According to the respondents, the most important competence is knowledge in the field of human resource management. This is a reasonable preference because success in managerial work is achieved through the work of the people under the manager. In this competence, a significant gap was identified in the self-assessment, which was 1.5 on the 5-point scale (Table 4). Health managers participating in the study added to the general knowledge about people management such specific competences as team collaboration, delegation, negotiation skills, and problem solving. In the latter competence, the gap was -1.0.

Another important competence was the knowledge of the medical environment. This is a good indication because it is difficult to imagine a situation where an efficient manager does not know the environment of the entity they manage. This knowledge should make it easier to set goals and build strategies. Unfortunately, in this competence and the ability to delegate tasks, the biggest, two-tier (-2.0) competency gaps were noted. Competency deficits in the key competency portfolio were also noted in negotiating skills (-1.0) and teamwork (-0.5).

The portfolio of the key competences of the manager should be complemented by the other competences mentioned in this project in subset C. It is dominated by social competences, among which is the focus on personal and co-workers development. This is a very important competence, and its presence, however only in the tertiary subdivision of importance, means that healthcare managers see the need for continuous improvement not only of their own but also of all employees.

In the light of the competences of managers in healthcare institutions, as summarised in Table 2, objections may be raised due to a lack of competences such as analytical and systemic thinking, behavioural knowledge in the health services market, or financial management expertise. Discussions with managers involved in this diagnosis indicate that analytical and sys-
tematic thinking have been included in competences connected to setting goals and developing strategies for action. Market behaviours are placed in competence regarding knowledge of the environment in which they see the behaviour of customers and other healthcare providers. As for the absence of financial management competence, they did not have a clear comment and explained it with the oversight or the fact that in all healthcare entities there are specialised organisational units that manage these resources. It seems, however, that an efficient healthcare manager should be “equipped” with this competence, which is extremely important under the widely criticised under-funding of all entities in the sector. It is mainly about knowledge and skills in the field of finance and budgeting.

Discussion and summary

The competence model presented in the article was based on literature sources and the practice of persons holding managerial positions at various levels of management in healthcare establishments (branches) in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship. The identified set of key competences is largely consistent with similar sets presented in the world literature (e.g. Calhoun et al., 2008, Leotsakos et al., 2014 and Ramirez et al., 2017), which indicates analogous problems in the management of healthcare institutions but also takes into account the specific nature of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship.

In the proposed own model and in the models of the above-mentioned authors, knowledge of the environment was identified as a common competence. In interpreting this competence, individual authors emphasize its various components. For example, A. Leotsakos et al. (2014, p. 8) speak of political and social astuteness, which according to them:

- “responds to changing individual and community expectations; demonstrates responsiveness, participation and inclusiveness,
- facilitates alignment with national health reforms,
- responds to global trends,
interacts effectively with the media and engages with them where appropriate”.

In turn, J. Calhoun et al. (2008, p. 379) describe the analyzed competence as “community orientation” and define it as “the ability to align one’s own and the organization’s priorities with the needs and values of the community, including its cultural and ethnocentric values, and to move health forward in line with population-based wellness needs and the national health agenda”. By contrast, B. Ramirez et al. (2016, p. 13) call this competence “navigate change” and emphasize that „the key to success is leadership and competent management to navigate change”.

Comparing the competence sets resulting from own research and published in the literature, the occurrence of competencies characteristic for managers managing healthcare entities in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship is noticed. These include competences such as resistance to stress, courage and authority, which are not articulated in competency models of other researchers. Thus, these studies complement the knowledge of competence profiles in the territorial dimension. Interestingly, such areas as strategic thinking, human resource management skills, delegation and responsibility skills, team building and management skills are emerging at the forefront of the survey, together with knowledge of the environment in which the entity operates. Yet at the same time, the biggest competence gaps were diagnosed in those competences. Thus, it seems reasonable to postulate the introduction of more curricular content enhancing the skills identified in these studies into the educational model of potential health managers.
Acknowledgements

The paper was supported by funding from National Science Centre, Poland (grant number: 2015/17/B/HS4/02747)

References


