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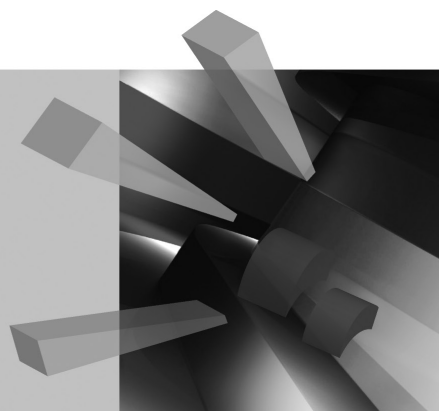
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**301**

# Pracownik w systemach zarządzania



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**NATIONAL MANAGEMENT STYLE –  
RESEARCH EVIDENCE.  
FOCUS ON PEOPLE IN THE COMPANY**

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**Summary:** The paper presents reasons underlying the choice of research direction and the research project assumptions focused on the conceptual category – national management styles. Additionally, there are presented comments to research assumptions reflecting the author's standpoint, as well as conclusions based on the conducted preliminary studies. In the author's opinion the performed analysis will facilitate defining qualities specific for Polish national management style and also NMS in other Central European countries.

**Keywords:** national management style, Polish national management style, enterprise management.

## **1. Introduction**

In the times of a breakthrough we expect from science and scientists to provide responses to many questions and uncertainties. We have to face diversified dilemmas in the areas interpreted by management science. New phenomena occurring in an organization and management require a different perception. A settlement may be risked that since the origins of management science such challenges have never occurred in the study of an organization or its management which extensiveness, intensity and novelty would stimulate undertaking basic, cognitive research. Basic research in management science focuses on separating new phenomena, interdependencies and relations in an organizational reality. New theories and approaches are crystallized. New terms become necessary to describe new phenomena and processes, or the existing ones which are explained by these new terms in a different way, however.

According to the author of the hereby study *national management style* (NMS) represents one of such new terms. Specifically, it is a new concept in the context of the Polish and the wider Central European conditions. This is not a completely new concept. However, previously it was attributed to the traditional capitalist economies or developed countries and regions of strategic importance from the point of view of

the Western world [Bjerke 1999, p. 287; Gesteland 2002]. Even though the designations comprising this term are traditional ones when put together they allow to capture two following issues. Firstly, NMS category reflects changes occurring in an enterprise which leading resource is represented by people [Szaban 2003], therefore interpersonal factors [Morawski 2010, p. 173-188] and their impact on effective organizational resources implementation constitute the basic research dimension. Secondly, rapid development of economies in many countries encourages for researching success factors within enterprises located there. Certainly it is high time to go beyond the traditional model of Anglo-Saxon management [Hampden-Turner, Trompenaars 2000]. It is true, though, that this model established the background for civilization success in a global dimension, however, more and more examples of emerging economies require to take into account also other management solutions. These solutions may be effective and recognized as a more universal pattern of an organization functioning since they go beyond the local context. They definitely constitute, if not just an alternative to Anglo-Saxon management model, its important supplement.

The hereby paper is of theoretical and conceptual nature. The assumptions of a research project are presented with the national management style as the key conceptual category. Survey studies will be carried out in Polish and Ukrainian enterprises. So far, preliminary studies have been carried out in a few Polish companies.

## **2. Reasons underlying the choice of research focus**

Dynamic development of such countries as e.g. China, India, Brazil and Turkey which, so far, have been occupying peripheries of civilization, following Western World values, results in increased interest in the sources of these economies becoming successful. Definitely, the basic questions to be answered refer to specific qualities of local management. This reminds the times of growing interest in Japanese management methods, which became attractive when Japanese economy and enterprises representing it started winning competitive advantage over American and European companies. Currently a similarly increasing attention is paid to Korean companies' management, following the spectacular success of Samsung, Kia and other enterprises. The formation of modern management in USA and Europe has many underlying reasons: the opinion of pioneers in management science, systematically appearing new "conceptual products" offered by consultancy companies and influential advisors, systemic concepts and implemented methods facilitating management processes introduced in the leading American, European and Japanese corporations, resulted in the fact that for many years the "Western" approach and, in fact, the Anglo-Saxon one to the theory and practice of management, dominated or even created an undisputable model of solutions. Undoubtedly the processes of globalization, computerization, networking did support such domination. Therefore, when the canon of management solutions is different from an Anglo-

Saxon one the dysfunctions or imperfections are pointed too. The specific nature of management in different cultural, economic or technical conditions does not have to be regarded as a pathological but, in fact, represents an efficiently formed – in given conditions – synergistic effect manifested by the accepted and generalized system of Polish [Misiak 2004], Ukrainian or Czech management. Countries and nations referred to as emerging economies can also bring in their input to the theory of management science, e.g. regarding the phenomenon of entrepreneurship, approach to human resources management, brand creation, etc.

### 3. Research assumptions

*Research thesis:* National management styles (NMS) in enterprises of the studied countries differ significantly from NMS of enterprises influenced by Anglo-Saxon management patterns.

*Research problem:* What are the differences and similarities: their size, scope, permanence, transformations in time, firstly, between NMS of the studied countries and secondly, jointly Central European countries and countries under the influence of Anglo-Saxon management patterns.

*Research questions:* What are the qualities of NMS in particular countries, e.g. German work organization, processes for professional competencies training, focus on performance, etc.; Ukrainian fantasy and disregarding limitations, Polish family entrepreneurship, relations in business, Czech pragmatic attitude and ability for flexible cooperation with different partners, etc., can enhance management in other countries, due to e.g. their efficiency?

To what extent does the formed NMS, applied in the majority of enterprises in a given national economy in central Europe, represent the imitation of “Western values” and to what degree the exemplification of local conditions?

What are the crucial determinants resulting from local conditions and having decisive influence on NMS qualities?

Is it possible to define the specific NMS qualities which are common for Central European enterprises?

*Definition:*

NMS represents the concept:

- historically and culturally determined, formed in time, informal,
- significantly influencing attitudes, behaviours and decisions of people involved in management processes,
- as the method for reality perception in an organization and its environment,
- reflected in thinking and acting,
- for constructing, influencing, modifying and development of an enterprise resources,
- functioning by exerting impact, motivating, communication and other interpersonal factors.

NMS components:

- national and organizational culture,
- method for valuation/perception of reality in an organization and outside it,
- attitudes, behaviours and decisions made by people in management processes,
- resources subject to influence,
- interpersonal factors.

The central category on which the project research is to be focused refers to *national management style* (NMS). It is not a new concept. However, in the past it was used only with reference to traditional, developed capitalist economies or countries and regions representing strategic importance from the perspective of *Western European* countries. The basic research problem covers the answer to the question what are the differences and similarities: their size, scope, stability, changes in time between NMS characteristics of enterprises in Poland and Ukraine. Additionally, it is assumed that comparative analysis will be carried out between the common characteristics of Polish and Ukrainian management style and the Anglo-Saxon model of enterprise management.

#### **4. Comments on the research objectives**

NMS category represents, to an extent, a closed concept by accepting certain elements which define particular research areas. The listed components are supposed to reflect the leading role played by people in an organization. Therefore it is accepted that the level of reality perception, by both owners and managers as well as the remaining members of an organization, has been significantly determined by the history, national culture, personal and collective experience. These determinants are reflected in the approach to resources at the disposition of an organization. NMS category represents, at the same time, an open concept since it has to cover diversified local factors typical of social environment. Such an environment persists under major impact of primary, causative forces in the form of historical events (political, economic, social), memories of them as well as their evaluation resulting from self-reflection presented by individuals and social groups. National culture is established based on such memories. This results in its universal quality and is disseminated by means of the related set of preferences and obligations understood and accepted by community members. National culture codes are transferred into the grounds of an organization and take the form of a certain organizational culture. An individual element exerts an impact on the dimension of culture and manifests itself in the style of a given entrepreneur (owner, manager). This style refers to company management, i.e. in the perspective of accepted NMS category it means determining to what extent motivation, communication and other forms of interpersonal relations influence the approach towards taking advantage of the due resources, which is reflected in adequate attitudes, behaviours and decisions of both supervisors and subordinates [*The Future of HR Profession* 2002].



The accepted research perspective means concentrating on interpersonal relations, however, in their direct, dynamic reference towards taking advantage of an organization resources in the overall management process. Owing to potential difficulties related to the analysis of such, most frequently, informal relations and interdependencies it seems founded – at least at the initial identification stage – to concentrate on a limited in number group of small and medium enterprises. In small and medium sized companies it is usually easier to capture processes involving people. Firstly, the existence of one dominating entrepreneur (manager) can be assumed, or a small decision-making group, the management style of which is relatively easily imposed on other members of an organization. The attitudes and behaviours of all or the majority of a small or medium enterprise members are therefore characterized by common logic. Additionally, it is much more feasible in a small or medium sized company, than in a large corporation functioning in line with specific procedures and standards, to identify NMS influenced by individual experiences of entrepreneurs.

In the author's opinion while selecting the adequate sample of enterprises for an analysis it is required – apart from limiting them to the group of small and medium sized companies – to search for examples of success in business in Polish conditions. It may not, however, be ruled out that some identified NMS qualities may be enriched by Anglo-Saxon patterns for managing enterprises in highly developed countries. Therefore the research will be carried out from the perspective of contemporary organization development directions recognized as the most important ones. These are as follows:

- competence,
- leadership,
- team work,
- innovation,
- information,
- entrepreneurship,
- cooperation.

In the context of presented discussion the important *research problem* should be considered as defining the specific characteristics national management styles, their influence on the selected business functioning areas: human resources management, the establishment and impact on relations with the environment, obtaining and implementing material and non-material resources.

## 5. The results of the conducted preliminary research

The author conducted research in a few small and medium enterprises. The sample is too small to put forward any generalizations, however, certain common elements of the analysed companies are well visible. The presented case of one of the studied enterprises represents a good example of Polish NMS emerging picture.

It is an engineering company specializing in the production of high quality measurement tools for such industry sectors as electrical power, construction and telecommunication. The company represents one of the largest manufacturers of electric meters in Europe. The major part of production focuses on innovative, high-tech electric meters which are not manufactured by any other producers worldwide.

**Table 1.** Selected NMS qualities in the analysed company

| NSZ qualities  | Engineering company   |
|--|---|
| Company origins  | The company founded by a group of professionals originating from a previous company   |
| Preferred values   | high level of professional competencies<br>good interpersonal relations<br>individual approach to employees' problems<br>open expression of opinions regarding both the company and team issues<br>creativity in thinking and functioning<br>flexibility in performing organizational functions and roles   |
| Basic management methods   | management by competencies<br>management by projects  |
| Management systems   | Integrated production system based on modified kaizen assumptions, quality assurance, 5S, value stream mapping, supply chain management, purchasing process management  |
| Functional organizational structure enriched by distinguishing key cross-section processes | Owners functioning as directors and Management Board representatives:<br>high quality, low costs, short delivery time, environment safety and protection  |
| Motivating employees   | Extended, multifactor, including a significant number of additional benefits (medical care, leisure and recreation, education, life insurance), the method for motivation staff covering both joint and separate elements depending on organizational structure (marketing, construction and design office)   |
| Communication  | open to a great extent: consultancy, support in education process, staff initiatives, encouragement for presenting ideas, the introduction of knowledge transfer programme  |
| Career   | Internal recruitment is dominant, gradual promotions, following consecutive management stages   |
| Integrating activities   | Golden, silver and bronze badges awarded to personnel for the number of years worked in the company and input in its development, carnival parties and family picnics for all employees and their families, common trips organized by particular teams, kaizen show – monthly meetings of all manufacturing department workers during which diplomas and rewards are awarded for participation and distinctive results in the suggestions presenting programme. |

Source: own study.

The company offer reaches several dozens of countries including currently very promising and important markets as such: Russia, Ukraine and the Far East, e.g. India. New products manufactured by the company represent infrared cameras and electric energy quality meters. The company was established in 1998, since 2008 it has been operating as a joint-stock company listed at the Warsaw Stock Exchange.

The solutions accepted in the company constitute an interesting combination of an extended motivation system combined with social benefits and visible care about employees and also friendly approach to their individual problems, long-term employment, relatively low level of employment level fluctuations, internal recruitment and promotion preference, emphasis on high professional competencies, especially with reference to specialists: electronic designers, technical and commercial consultants, as well as managers and leaders. Mutual friendliness and sympathy can be sensed in the company, support and assistance in current issues are experienced on a daily basis, personnel comes forward with interesting initiatives which extend their professional duties. Many activities are undertaken for the benefit of constructing strong relations between employees and the company. Well recognized management methods and techniques are selected and significantly modified in order to create original and integrated management systems, e.g. focused on production.

## 6. Conclusions

The first observations of Polish companies, carried out in terms of management style, allow you to carefully enumerate the following characteristics:

- the desire to establish good relations with superiors, co-workers,
- emotional relationships between employees based on the positive (and sometimes negative) attitudes and behaviors,
- rank important personal relationships,
- strong identification with the organization on a compassionate community of fate, openness and even enthusiasm for new ideas,
- formal treatment procedures, processes and time management in daily routine,
- flexibility in treatment-established parameters stored agreement,
- difficulty sustaining operations and unchanging standards of behavior,
- seek opportunities for accelerated final results,
- difficulties in establishing individual responsibility.

Subsequent research is supposed to examine the extent to which the presented qualities constitute properties typical only of one analysed company and to what extent they can become a starting point for the identification of Polish NMS attributes. However, it seems possible to distinguish the specific qualities which can provide an answer to the question: what is Polish effective management characterized by?

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### **NARODOWY STYL ZARZĄDZANIA – PRZESŁANKI BADAŃ. SKUPIENIE UWAGI NA LUDZIACH W FIRMIE**

**Streszczenie:** W artykule przedstawiono przesłanki wyboru kierunku badań i założenia projektu badawczego zogniskowanego wokół kategorii pojęciowej – narodowe style zarządzania. Ponadto zaprezentowano komentarz do założeń badawczych, odzwierciedlający punkt widzenia autora, a także wnioski z przeprowadzonych badań wstępnych. Zdaniem autora badania pozwolą rozpoznać specyficzne cechy polskiego narodowego stylu zarządzania i cechy NSZ w innych krajach Europy Centralnej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** narodowy styl zarządzania, polski narodowy styl zarządzania, zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem.