Preferences of the Lesser Poland Police Management Staff in Terms of the Styles Used to Manage Officers

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Abstract. Managers’ competence in selecting a management style takes on particular importance in the conditions of nonlinear organisational reality. The flexibility of an appropriate management style in relation to the requirements of a given situation is an essential aspect of these competencies. The article aims to identify the diversity of management styles used by Lesser Poland Police managers and to recognise preferences in their selection. The study used methodological triangulation by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The questionnaire on the effectiveness and adaptability of the LEAD managers validated by the Delphi method and the author’s in-depth discussion guide, implemented using the TDI technique, were used. The four management styles (coaching, supporting, directing, and delegating) distinguished in the SLT situational leadership model were adopted as the basis for the analysis. The study covered 89 managers of the Lesser Poland Police Garrison, taking into account all levels of management. The obtained results showed that the surveyed managers use the full range of management styles and various styles depending on the assessment of the situation. The preferred management style in the Lesser Poland Police is the coaching style, which indicates the importance the management attaches to relations with officers. The presented conclusions complement the previous knowledge on situational leadership and management in the Police. They can be used to improve the accuracy of management style selection.

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Introduction

Nonlinear reality shaped by the increasing turbulence and complexity of the organisation’s environment significantly increases the scope of risk and uncertainty of actions taken by contemporary managers. The repetitiveness and routine of management situations are disappearing, replaced by unusual phenomena considered rare, also referred to as black swans.1 Their unpredictability forces managers to move away from traditional management paradigms to react quickly and adapt to unexpected circumstances. An additional manifestation of the intensity of changes in the organisation’s functioning affecting managers’ work is the generational diversity of employee teams. The emerging differences between

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representatives of various generations are visible, among others, in how employees behave in the organisation and their competencies.

A good choice of management style is a fundamental issue in coping with an organisation in a turbulent environment. S. Sudoł believes that the essential condition for the survival of an organisation in a turbulent environment is a flexible adaptation. A. Kwiecien states that the requirement of flexibility results from the frequency and span of changes taking place. While C.V. Brisson-Banks notes that organisations in the face of rapid and frequent changes characteristic of the modern macro- and micro-environment should demonstrate strong abilities of flexible adaptation of the management style to the current conditions. The relevance of the selection of management style in determining the effectiveness of management was fully expressed in the concept of situational management. The situational leadership model developed by Blanchard and Hersey illustrates the relationship between a specific management style and the determinants of the existing situation, which is shaped by the level of professional maturity of employees and environmental factors.

The essence of situational leadership is reflected in the authors’ studies analysing managerial effectiveness. According to T. Strzelecki, an effective manager should skillfully select management styles, taking into account situational criteria, competencies, and personality traits, both his or her own and of subordinates. In the conditions of nonlinear organisational reality, the importance of the proper selection of management style has significantly increased. It is even perceived as a condition for flexible adaptation to changing situational factors.

The subject of interest in this study was the ability to use different management styles by managers of the Lesser Poland Police in the conditions of dynamically changing situations. It was assumed that police officer management is implemented using the situational leadership model and diverse management styles. The article aimed to identify management styles used by Lesser Poland Police managers and to recognise their preferences in this area — the executed study used methodological triangulation by combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The structure of the article includes a theoretical overview of selected concepts of situational management styles, the methodology of the conducted research taking into account the survey method and in-depth interview, presentation of the results of the research carried out among the Lesser Poland Police management staff, and a discussion and conclusions resulting from the analysis of the obtained results. The entire study was summarised by indicating the limitations of the conducted research and the directions of possible further research and scientific analysis.

Literature review: situational styles of employee management

The extensive literature on management styles does not constitute a unified compendium of knowledge that managers are free to use to improve their management efficiency. The problems that emerge in the process of literature analysis in this area result to a large extent from the methodological assumptions adopted by the researchers and the classification criteria created on their basis. The authors of the analysed concepts emphasise selected features of a given style of employee management differently due to the differentiated meaning assigned to them. This results in the presence in the literature of many different and often overlapping classifications of management styles.

It is generally accepted that the essence of the management style is the way of managing the organisation, the purpose of which is to accomplish the set tasks by maximising the potential of resources, including human resources. J. Teczke considers the management style universal, specific and located at a specific time and manner of performing managerial functions. According to L. Korzeniowski, the management style is a relatively permanent behaviour of the manager towards the employee, aimed at triggering specific and desired organisational behaviours. The presented definitions of the management style include influencing the operation and behaviour of employees in the organisation. Leadership and management styles are often identified in the literature.

An interesting typology organising the concepts of situational styles of employee management was presented by M. Mroziewski. He stated that situational management styles are conditioned by factors identified by the manager as the most important in the existing situation. These factors determine:

— the degree of diversification of the manager’s interference in the employee’s work,
— how the manager influences the employee,
— the level of employee participation in decision-making processes,
— pragmatism of the manager towards the subordinate.

Among the groups of styles with a diverse scope of interference in the employee’s work, it is worth mentioning the concept of J.A.C. Brown, who distinguished the following styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. The researcher indicated that the determinant of the manager’s preferred style of managing employees

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is his or her character traits. In turn, the four-level management system developed according to the concept of R. Likert determines the degree of the manager’s interference in the employee’s work. It indicates the most appropriate management style in a given situation. The researchers point out that Likert’s four-level model of management effectiveness takes into account the type of tasks assigned to the employee, the degree of his or her participation, the method of control, and the intensity of awards and penalties. Ultimately, the manager should strive to apply a participative management style, but the choice of management style depends each time on the situation. The concept presented by W. Kieżun and S. Kwiatkowski is based on the differentiation of two spheres of the relationship between the manager and the employee. The first area concerns the implementation of tasks (task-oriented style), while the second concerns shaping attitudes (directing style). The model by A. Bednarski and J. Szlendak differentiates management styles by the criterion of employee participation in task implementation. Researchers list three situational management styles: individualised, federated (group), and integrated.

The literature on situational groups of management styles differentiated according to the manner of influencing the employee distinguishes the directive and integrative styles. R.A. Webber formulates considerations about the differences in these management styles in the context of exerting influence and the forms of power and hierarchy of employee needs. How the manager exerts the influence is determined by the form of power, which is determined by the approach to the employee’s needs. According to J. Penc, power is the ability to dictate and enforce decisions and influence people’s attitudes and behaviours.

J. Zieleniewski classified the selection of styles of employee management according to three criteria: orders, incentives, and arguments. In the directive style, the manager uses various forms of orders and negative incentives (penalties). He or she sets goals, directions, and ways of solving problems him/herself.

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while thoroughly controlling the effects of the given tasks.\textsuperscript{24} The directive style may be the most appropriate in crises or situations requiring an immediate decision.\textsuperscript{25} The arguments, in turn, are associated with the integrative style, which, according to J. Kurnal,\textsuperscript{26} emphasises the importance of motivation and argumentation in managing human teams. It consists in a detailed specification by the manager of their expectations towards the subordinate as to the results of the assigned tasks, leaving the employee freedom in the manner of their implementation. In addition to the directive and integrative styles, J. Zieleniewski lists another style of employee management, that is, management by consulting.\textsuperscript{27} This style gives the subordinate complete freedom to decide on tasks, how to implement them, and to take full responsibility for their own decisions.

In turn, the factor of employee participation in decision-making processes in situational terms was included in the decision-making model of V. Vroom and P. Yetton, later modified by V. Vroom and A. Jago.\textsuperscript{28} The model assumes that in certain types of situations, the manager should apply one of five styles of employee management, which include two directive styles, two consultative styles, and one group style.\textsuperscript{29} The authors developed a system for selecting management styles, indicating the one that is the most appropriate for a given situation.\textsuperscript{30} Taking into account the level of employee participation in decision-making processes, M. Evans and R. House\textsuperscript{31} developed the path-goal model. The concept’s core was based on the expectancy theory of motivation, which assumes that the employee’s motivation depends on the expected benefit and the value it brings. The manager determines the course of action performed by the employee and informs him or her of the behaviours supporting the development of the assumed effect.

R. Tannenbaum and W.H. Schmidt,\textsuperscript{32} who developed the theory of creative attitudes, contributed to developing the situational approach in management. They proposed the division of management styles based on a six-point scale of employee participation. Before choosing the most appropriate management style in a given situation, they indicated that the manager should analyse three elements of the work: tasks, current expectations of the team of employees, and individual needs.

\textsuperscript{26} J. Kurnal, Zarys teorii organizacji i zarządzania, Warszawa: PWE, 1969, pp. 65–66.
\textsuperscript{27} T. Strzelecki, Organizacja …, op. cit., pp. 92–93.
\textsuperscript{29} S. Jex, T. Britt, Organizational Psychology: A Scientist-Practitioner Approach, New Jersey: Willey, 2015.
of the employee. These styles are: suggesting, selling, testing, consulting, joining, and delegating.

Styles classified due to the manager’s pragmatism strongly emphasise a realistic and rational assessment of the current situation. The pragmatic approach to management is a multifaceted process, based on the manager’s knowledge and understanding of the employee’s attitudes and behaviours in the organisation. By analysing publications on groups of pragmatic styles of employee management, it can be noted that management theorists discuss and characterise two extreme styles, i.e., autocratic and participatory. Less attention is paid to the precise indication of boundary features of the indirect management styles, i.e., directing, task-oriented and democratic.

I. Żuchowski emphasises that numerous studies on employee management styles indicate that employee teams managed autocratically achieve high productivity, often at the expense of lower quality of the work performed. A similar opinion is expressed by A. Brahim, O. Ridić and T. Jukić, who add that the autocratic style is effective when the tasks are simple and repetitive, and the employees are inexperienced. Employee satisfaction is most often associated with democratic management as an open and collegiate way of running a team. This style is characterised by the decentralisation of power and the employee’s involvement in decision-making. Thanks to the invitation of team members to participate in the development of the decision, there is an increase in their involvement and readiness to develop competencies.

The presented classification of selected groups of situational styles of employee management highlights the repeatability of some styles in the concepts of various authors. This is because the creators of individual concepts present management styles with the same or related name differently, clearly exposing only certain aspects of a given style, which, in their opinion, more accurately determine the application of a given solution in a given situation.

In turn, on the background of the police literature on management styles, the authors more often use the terms directing, commanding or leadership, which are related to the specificity of tasks, often carried out under conditions of danger. As M. Nepelski points out, command is associated with police operations due
to the need to ensure high efficiency of police forces and resources. In the literature dealing with aspects of police functioning, the position has been perpetuated that due to the paramilitary nature of this formation, the desired command style is autocratic.\footnote{J. Struniawski, *Dowodzenie w trakcie operacji policyjnych w zakresie imprez masowych i zgromadzeń publicznych*, Szczytno: Wyższa Szkoła Policji, 2014, M. Nepelski, *Dowodzenie zorganizowanymi działaniami Policji*, Warszawa: Szkoła Główna Straży Pożarnej, 2020.} This is also confirmed by the research of A. Letkiewicz\footnote{A. Letkiewicz, *Partycypacja decyzyjna w Policji*, ‘Ekonomika i Organizacja Przedsiębiorstwa’, 2006, Vol. 1, pp. 98–105.} on decision-making participation realised among Police executives. The respondents indicated autocratic solutions in more than 50% of decision-making problems. This is because command is based on discipline and the power to require absolute obedience from subordinates. On the other hand, the dependence of the choice of style on the characteristics of the situation is pointed out, since an important aspect of command is the analysis of data about the situation and the prediction of its changes and rapid response to them. These situations are often of a crisis nature due to the above-average accumulation of difficulties in the execution of leadership functions.\footnote{M. Stępiński, *Teoretyczne i prawno-organizacyjne uwarunkowania decyzji dowódczych w Policji*, Szczytno: Wyższa Szkoła Policji, 2015.} However, in some situations, police negotiation and assistance without the use of direct coercive measures are legitimate.\footnote{J. Struniawski, *Dowodzenie działaniami policyjnymi z wykorzystaniem zespołów negocjacyjnych*, ‘Przegląd Policyjny’, 2017, Vol. 4, pp. 136–148.}

G. Wiatrak\footnote{G. Wiatrak, *Rola przywództwa w procesie kierowania organizacją Policji*, ‘Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Humanitas. Zarządzanie’, 2016, Vol. 1, pp. 319–330.} points out that in the current socio-organisational conditions in the police, a differentiated approach to leadership is needed regarding servant leadership and responsible leadership. These concepts emphasise the meaning of public organisations, which is to serve people. In this context, the author emphasises the importance of being able to select a leadership style to suit the situation. Based on the research carried out among police officers, A. Letkiewicz and V. Karpenko\footnote{A. Letkiewicz, V. Karpenko, *Information system as a determinant of effective change implementation in the Polish Police*, ‘Internal Security’, 2022, Vol. 14, Issue 2, pp: 43–56.} developed a model of change in the police and the conditions for its implementation. They noted the crucial importance of the information system and the use of so-called ‘complete knowledge’. The authors point out that changes in the police require a change in the attitudes of police officers from reacting to orders to creativity, from passivity to responsibility. The issue of leadership and leadership styles in the police is also taken up by J. Łuczak,\footnote{J. Łuczak, *Przywództwo w kierowaniu jednostką organizacyjną policji*, ‘Studia i Prace WNEiZ US’, 2015, Vol. 39, Issue 4, pp. 167–178.} pointing out the need to take action not only by issuing orders but also on a cooperative basis. According to the author, the situational approach to management, based on the assumption that the situation is a determinant of the leadership style, could be specifically used in police units and organisational units.

The review of the literature indicates that in the current, very dynamically changing organisational reality, Blanchard and Hersey’s Situational Leadership

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Theory (SLT) model is gaining renewed validity and usefulness in management practice. Based on this model, the diversity of methods of employee participation in decision-making processes shown is related to the dynamics of situational conditions. It is determined by four styles, i.e., directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. This concept does not answer the question of which management style is the best but assumes that the effectiveness of various leadership styles depends on the degree of an employee’s professional maturity and the existing situation. Situational leadership is based on a curvilinear relationship between the manager’s behaviour and the employee’s maturity, which each time requires taking into account feedback between the organisation, manager, and employee.

The research carried out so far extends the scope of analyses on situational styles and SLT with new factors or groups of respondents. However, they are not numerous. The rediscovered area of situational leadership reveals several unfilled research spaces. No studies were found in which the subject of analysis in the field of situational leadership was Police officers. In order to fill this cognitive gap and verify the diversity of management styles used, the following hypotheses were put forward.

Hypothesis 1: The Lesser Poland Police management staff use diverse management styles.

Hypothesis 2: The Lesser Poland Police management prefer a coaching style of managing officers.

Research Methodology

In order to verify the hypotheses presented in this study and to ensure high reliability of data collection and accuracy of inference, methodological triangulation (quantitative and qualitative studies) was used. Methodological triangulation involves using several research methods for the needs of one research project. As A. Stolecka-Makowska adds, ‘the use of various research methods allows one to supplement information and confirm it mutually, and thus promotes the increase in the reliability of a single method’.

Therefore, the empirical data was acquired in two stages. First, the data was collected using the quantitative method through a questionnaire. The second phase focused on obtaining the material using the qualitative method via an expert interview. The CAWI (computer-assisted web interviewing) electronic data acquisition

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47 K. Blanchard, Przywództwo wyższego…, op. cit.
technique was used for the survey. At the same time, the discussion guide provided for using the TDI (telephone in-depth interview) technique, as illustrated in Tab. 1.

**Tab. 1. Research methods used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research type</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Research technique</th>
<th>Research tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quantitative</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>CAWI – computer-assisted web interviewing</td>
<td>Survey questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualitative</td>
<td>In-depth Interview</td>
<td>TDI – telephone in-depth interview</td>
<td>Discussion guide</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


The quantitative research tool was the *Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability (LEAD) questionnaire*. The survey questionnaire used in the study is a comprehensive tool for measuring situational leadership developed by the creators of the Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) model, Blanchard and Hersey.51 The LEAD questionnaire measures the effectiveness of situational leadership and the parameters of four styles of employee management that form the basis of the analysis in the SLT concept, i.e., directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating styles. This article focuses on analysing and discussing research results related to preferences in applying situational management styles.

The questionnaire on which the research was conducted was based on a description of 12 different management situations and assigned to each of them four possible variants of actions that the manager can take in response to the situation. The respondent’s role was to choose one variant of action for a given situation, which in his or her opinion was the most appropriate way to proceed in the presented circumstances. The selected response option shows the manager’s preferred situational management style. The analysis and evaluation of the respondents’ choices were carried out following the instructions/code for statistical counting and interpreting results attached to the LEAD questionnaire.

In order to estimate the measurement reliability of the situational leadership questionnaire, the method of estimating the absolute stability of the test (test-retest) was used, using the Spearman correlation coefficient as a measure of interim compliance. A pilot study was conducted two weeks before the actual research. The respondents in the pilot study were 26 representatives of the police management staff, representing various levels of management (18 managers of the lower management level, 7 — middle, and 1 — top). Due to the knowledge of the studied population, selecting people for the study was non-random and intentional. The conducted reliability analysis showed that the measurement of individual preferences of the Lesser Poland Police Management Staff in Terms of the Styles Used to …

management styles constituting the SLT concept is characterised by intra-individual stability over time, which means that the survey questionnaire used in the study was characterised by high measurement reliability. The results of the analysis described above are presented in Tab. 2.

**Tab. 2. Results of the reliability assessment of the research tool measuring situational management styles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>directing 1</th>
<th>coaching 1</th>
<th>supporting 1</th>
<th>delegating 1</th>
<th>directing 2</th>
<th>coaching 2</th>
<th>supporting 2</th>
<th>delegating 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>directing 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coaching 1</td>
<td>-0.46*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supporting 1</td>
<td>-0.66***</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delegating 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directing 2</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.52**</td>
<td>-0.64***</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coaching 2</td>
<td>-0.42*</td>
<td>0.99***</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>-0.45*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supporting 2</td>
<td>-0.67***</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.99***</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.66***</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delegating 2</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.52**</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>1.00***</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

**Source:** Authors’ study based on the results.

The survey covered 89 Lesser Poland Police managers of various management levels. The respondents were 97% male. The age range of the respondents was as follows: 51% of them were officers aged 36–45, 25% indicated ages 26–35 or 46 and above, and there were no respondents in the age category of 25 and below. Police managers are well educated because 74% indicated higher education and 26% reported secondary education. Data relating to the years of service in the Police showed that the most numerous group is the managerial staff in the range of 13 to 19 years — 35% of indications. Following were police officers with seniority of 20–26 years — 31.5% and in the range of 6 to 12 years — 25.5%. The smallest group (8%) was respondents with service experience in the Police equal to 27 years or more. The presented data do not provide any grounds for inference in relation to the broader population.

The qualitative research procedure consisted of conducting expert interviews with the management of the Police — managers of various levels of management. The development of the discussion guide aimed to deepen, clarify and supplement the empirical data obtained using the questionnaires. In the expert interview with the Police managers, information was obtained on such issues as the preferences
of the managers in the field of applying the style/set of management styles, and the appropriateness of the selection of management style, taking into account the specificity of the situation, among others.

Ten police officers — managers were invited to participate in the expert interview. The managers were selected for the study deliberately because these people had specific desirable attributes in the studied community. Tab. 3 contains a detailed description of the socio-demographic characteristics of the surveyed experts.

Tab. 3. Characteristics of the in-depth interview respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee no.</th>
<th>Level of management in the Police</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Police service experience – in the range of</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Age range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Top</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27 years and over</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>46 years and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Top</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20–26 years</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>46 years and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20–26 years</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>46 years and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13–19 years</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>36–45 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27 years and over</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>46 years and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13–19 years</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>36–45 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6–12 years</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>26–35 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27 years and over</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>46 years and over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20–26 years</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>36–45 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27 years and over</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>46 years and over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R – interviewee, respondent participating in the in-depth interview

Source: Authors’ research.

The spatial scope of research was limited to the Lesser Poland Voivodeship. The Lesser Poland garrison houses the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Kraków and its subordinate units throughout the Voivodeship. The subject of the study was managers of the Lesser Poland Police. It should be emphasised that based on service pragmatics in the Police, there is a formal, two-stage criterion determining which police positions are considered managerial positions. However, it did not include some commanding positions in the Anti-Riot Police Unit/Independent Sub-Division Anti-Riot Police, i.e. platoon commander and squad leader. Therefore, for

53 Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji z dnia 6 grudnia 2001 r. w sprawie szczegółowych zasad otrzymywania i wysokości uposażenia zasadniczego policjantów, dodatków do uposażenia oraz wysługi lat, od której jest uzależniony wzrost uposażenia zasadniczego (Dz. U., 2015, item 1236 as amended).
the purposes of the study, the police managers participating in it were categorised in a manner generally accepted in the literature on the subject, indicating the appropriate level of management, such as (1) lower, e.g., team commander, platoon commander, squad manager, district manager, (2) middle, e.g., the head of a department, the commander of a company, the commander of a police station, and their deputies, (3) top, e.g., the provincial/city/poviat commander, the commander of the crime prevention unit, and their deputies. Conducting the actual research was preceded by a request to the Provincial Police Commander in Krakow for consent to perform the research in the Police.

The results

The process of verifying the research hypotheses took place in two stages. First, the empirical data obtained from the questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis. For this purpose, the appropriate calculations were carried out according to the directives attached to the LEAD questionnaire key. Subsequently, analyses of statements collected from the in-depth interviews were performed. The data obtained from questionnaires showed that the Lesser Poland Police management staff uses different styles in the management of officers depending on their assessment of the situation. The collected material showed the managers’ preferences and diversity in the selection of management styles, considering the management levels. The highest average rating, i.e., at the level of 5.56, was obtained in relation to the coaching style of employee management by the Lesser Poland Police managers. Another style of management eagerly chosen by the Police management staff is the supporting style, with a result of 3.24. Then there is the directing-directive style, with an average rating of 2.49. The least preferred management style was the delegating style, with a score of 0.69. Tab. 4 summarises the described distribution of preferences of management styles of the Lesser Poland Police management staff.

Tab. 4. Distribution of preferences in the field of employee management styles by the Lesser Poland Police management staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Styles</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Σ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Style</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Style</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directing Style</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegating Style</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M — mean value, SD — standard deviation, Σ — sum of the choices of a given management style

Source: Authors’ research.

The coaching style in this study was the most preferred management style of the Police management staff among all four styles. The sum of the choices of the coaching style was 495 indications, which corresponds to nearly half of all the choices in the study, i.e., 46.34%. This means that the management staff of the Lesser Poland Police considered the coaching style to be the most appropriate way of acting in the presented management assumptions in almost every second situation described in the questionnaire. This shows that the Lesser Poland Police management clearly focuses on both implementing tasks and on their subordinates. However, in the case of several descriptions of situations included in the questionnaire, these preferences were not fully appropriate in relation to their conditions. This applies, for example, to a situation characterised as follows: You are considering a significant change. Your subordinates are pretty accomplished. They respect and understand the need for change. Despite many indications from managers (as much as 66 for the variant: You take into account the recommendations of the group, but you do not forget that you are in charge of the change, which after decoding means a way of acting following the coaching style), this choice was not the right way to proceed according to the creators of the research tool used. In the situation mentioned above, the most effective variant of action that the manager should take is to allow the group to formulate its direction, which corresponds to the delegating style. This way of working in a hierarchical organisation may be limited to some extent, particularly for managers at the lower level of management, as indicated by the results — no manager in this group chose an action option corresponding to the delegating style.

The supporting style is the second style of employee management indicated by the Lesser Poland Police managers. A total of 289 indications were recorded for the discussed style, corresponding to 27.05% of the choices. An example of a situation in which the respondents often chose the supporting style as a management method is the situation described as follows: You have been promoted to a new position. The previous supervisor was not involved in the group’s issues. The group has appropriately handled the tasks and objectives. Group relations are good. Fifty-four managers decided that the most appropriate action in this situation is to involve subordinates in decision-making and to strengthen the sense of positive contribution. It should be emphasised that the mentioned option of action is, according to the authors of the research tool, the most appropriate course of action in the presented situation.

Further analysis of preferences in the selection of management styles showed that the Lesser Poland Police management staff chose the directing style 222 times, constituting only 20.78% of all indications. Of the 12 management situations included in the survey questionnaire, the following is worth noting: Your supervisor has appointed you as a Task Force Commander/Manager for a group, which is behind schedule. The objectives are not clear to the group. The group activity was weak. Their meetings have turned into social gatherings. Potentially, the group has the needed talent. In the presented situation, more than half — 48 respondents — would redefine the objectives and supervise their implementation with great care. According to the data interpretation key attached to the research tool, the variant of action chosen by the managers indicates a high degree of adjustment of the directing style to the determinants of the referenced situation.
The Lesser Poland Police managers chose the delegating style the least frequently, opting for the delegating style only 62 times out of 1,068 possible selections, corresponding to 5.81% of all indications. The study results also showed that in almost half of their choices regarding the delegating style, the Police managers erroneously selected the discussed management style for the described situations. For example, one can point out the situation: *Your group’s results have clearly increased. You made sure that all members were aware of their obligations and expected standards of action*, in response to which 24 respondents decided to choose the option: *You do not take decisive action*. Meanwhile, in the above situation, the most effective response should be to engage the manager in friendly interaction and ensure that all team members are aware of their responsibilities and expected standards of operation, which corresponds to the supporting management style.

Table 5 presents synthetically the preferences for selecting management styles for management situations, considering groups of managers of different management levels.

Tab. 5. Distribution of preferences of Lesser Poland Police managers in the selection of management styles, taking into account management levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Styles</th>
<th>Lower management level</th>
<th>Middle management level</th>
<th>Top management level</th>
<th>General distribution of the preferences of the police management staff in total: 89 respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coaching Style</td>
<td>(M = 5.59), (\Sigma = 319)</td>
<td>(M = 5.46), (\Sigma = 153)</td>
<td>(M = 5.75), (\Sigma = 23)</td>
<td>(M = 5.56), (\Sigma = 495)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supporting Style</td>
<td>(M = 3.05), (\Sigma = 174)</td>
<td>(M = 3.53), (\Sigma = 99)</td>
<td>(M = 4.00), (\Sigma = 16)</td>
<td>(M = 3.24), (\Sigma = 289)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directing Style</td>
<td>(M = 2.68), (\Sigma = 153)</td>
<td>(M = 2.28), (\Sigma = 64)</td>
<td>(M = 1.25), (\Sigma = 5)</td>
<td>(M = 2.49), (\Sigma = 222)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegating Style</td>
<td>(M = 0.64), (\Sigma = 37)</td>
<td>(M = 0.75), (\Sigma = 21)</td>
<td>(M = 1.00), (\Sigma = 4)</td>
<td>(M = 0.69), (\Sigma = 62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(M\) – average value, \(\Sigma\) – sum of the choices of a given management style

Source: Authors’ research.

Analysis of differences in management styles by managers of the lower, middle, and top management levels in the Lesser Poland Police allows one to conclude that the preferences in this area are similar (Tab. 5). This means that the preferences in terms of choices remain the same regardless of the level occupied in the organisation’s structure. At this stage of the research, there was no statistical assessment of the accuracy of the choices made.

The second stage of verifying the research hypotheses consisted of analysing the empirical data collected during the qualitative study. The analysis of the obtained research material made it possible to confirm the above-described results of quantitative research in the scope of preferences for the use of employee management styles.

Based on the responses of the Lesser Poland Police managers selected from the in-depth interview, it can be concluded that the management styles preferred...
by the examined group are determined primarily by good relations with subordinates. Regardless of the level of management occupied in the organisational structure of the Lesser Poland Police, the respondents unanimously pointed to the partner (coaching) model as their preferred management style. In the course of in-depth interviews, the surveyed leaders emphasised that in various management situations, their managerial decisions are based on the most effective solution possible for a given circumstance, developed together with the subordinates. An exception is situations with a high intensity of dynamism in action, such as security of mass events, pursuit and apprehension of a dangerous offender — then the directing (directive) style dominates. However, as the surveyed experts point out, the described situations do not happen often. In addition, during the training and exercises in the above-mentioned thematic scope, the respondents and their subordinates jointly determine and develop the most effective variants of the action tactics. Collectively developed behaviour patterns contribute to the higher efficiency of activities in actual conditions and shorten the decision-making process. The surveyed leaders pointed out that an important issue in management is providing support and assistance to their subordinates when they find themselves in new situations.

Summing up the results obtained from the qualitative survey, it can be stated that the Lesser Poland Police management staff uses different management styles in management processes, and their selection depends on the situational conditions. The management style preferred by the examined group was determined to be the coaching style.

**Discussion and conclusions**

The Police, as an organisation serving society, is systematically adapting to several new tasks in crime prevention and strengthening social security. Changes are also progressing in the perception of the role of people working in the organisation’s structures. In today’s highly changing conditions of the organisation’s functioning, the managerial staff of the Police is required to have completely different skills in the field of employee management. Management focused on building trust and commitment on the manager-subordinate line is highly desirable. To this end, the Police managerial staff should adopt flexible attitudes in using different management styles selected depending on the conditions of a given situation.

Meanwhile, in the literature on the subject, the belief that the management staff of the Police most often uses the directive (directing) style in management processes has spread. The discrepancy between the actual state and the considerations of management theorists, noticed in practice, became a prerequisite for recognising preferences in the management styles used by the management staff garrison of the Lesser Poland Police.

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The obtained research data using methodological triangulation positively verified the first hypothesis. It was established that the Lesser Poland Police management staff uses the management styles that were the subject of the analysis in a diverse, flexible, and assessment-dependent manner. Contrary to popular belief, police management is not based on the routine of duplicating the same style of impact on employees. Different situations are seen in the processes of task implementation. An issue that requires more profound recognition in further research is the correctness of the assessment of the situation and the appropriateness of the styles selected to meet the requirements of the situation.

The statistical analysis of the research material also positively verified the second hypothesis. Out of the four management styles, which together constituted the canvas of analyses adopted based on the concept of situational leadership, the Lesser Poland Police management staff most often chose activities corresponding to the coaching style. Subsequently, the choices concerned the supporting, directing (directive), and delegating styles, in that order (Tab. 4). Similar preferences for the use of management styles were noted for all three groups of Lesser Poland Police managers, i.e., for the lower, middle, and top management level staff. A low preference was found for the use of the delegating style. It should be noted that the deficiency in this respect raises the most significant concerns in relation to the top management of the Police (Tab. 5). It seems desirable for this group of respondents to have a greater scope of delegating decision-making and problem-solving powers to subordinates, which corresponds to the delegating management style.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative research results, it can be concluded that the respondents show higher preferences for management styles focused on good relations with their subordinates. This confirms the choice of the coaching style in the first place and the supporting one in the second. A somewhat cautious approach may dictate lower preferences for the use of the directing and delegating management styles for employee management. P. Hersey states that the coaching and supporting styles can be called safe because they do not have as far-reaching consequences in the event of ineffective use as the other two extreme styles, i.e., directing and delegating. The example of a justification for this statement is a situation in which the manager incorrectly identified the level of maturity of the employee and entrusted him or her with a task exceeding their competencies while also giving them discretion in the process used (delegating style). In this case, an improperly performed task may result in the manager being held responsible for improperly managing the employee. However, taking action due to uncertainty about their effects may indicate the need to further develop competencies in using a diverse range of styles.

The indicated high preferences of Lesser Poland Police managers for the coaching management style may contribute to building proactive attitudes of employees. It seems desirable to carefully develop and implement training programs that support the potential of employee teams. At the same time, actions should be taken to increase the use of other styles included in the SLT concept while ensuring their appropriate selection according to the parameters of a given situation. For this

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purpose, a human capital management model dedicated to the managers of the Police at various levels of management should be developed, which would include recommendations and indications in the field of areas appropriate for situational management styles. These directions of action may first contribute to the more effective use of situational leadership in management and second to increasing the involvement of police officers in the implementation of statutory tasks.

It should be noted that the presented results regarding the management styles preferred by the Lesser Poland Police managers should be treated with some caution due to their limitations. The research was carried out in the area of operation of Police units of one voivodeship — Lesser Poland. Therefore, the presented findings do not constitute a basis for generalisation applied to other regions of Poland or the whole country. Another issue is the small group of surveyed representatives of the Police management staff. Another issue is the size of the group of surveyed representatives of the managerial staff of the Lesser Poland Police garrison, which included 89 respondents.

To remove the described limitations, it would be desirable to extend the research to Police units located in other voivodeships and to a more significant number of analysed managers. Then, as part of nationwide research, in addition to determining the preferences of Police managers in the field of situational management styles, a parallel study could be carried out in the employee teams subordinate to them, the purpose of which would be to determine what management styles the subordinates feel are used by their superiors. Statistical analysis of empirical data compiled from two sources (from the Police management staff and from their subordinates) on the use of management styles by the Police management staff would provide a broader perspective of the analysed phenomenon. An essential aspect of subsequent research would be the issue of managerial competence in correctly assessing situations, determining the accuracy of the styles selected. In addition, taking into account the demonstrated quite strong orientation of Police managers towards relations with subordinates, it would also be interesting to examine the impact of the use of situational management styles on the quality of interpersonal relations in employee teams. Competence in the selection of management styles is still an open space for researchers interested in the correctness of their use and development.

References


35. Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji z dnia 6 grudnia 2001 r. w sprawie szczegółowych zasad otrzymywania i wysokości uposażenia zasadniczego policjantów, dodatków do uposażenia oraz wysługi lat, od której jest uzależniony wzrost uposażenia zasadniczego (i.e. Dz. U. 2015, item 1236 as amended).

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Streszczenie. Kompetencje menedżerów w zakresie doboru stylu zarządzania nabierają szczególnego znaczenia w warunkach nielinjowej rzeczywistości organizacyjnej. Istotnym aspektem tych kompetencji jest elastyczność odpowiedniego stylu zarządzania w stosunku do wymagań danej sytuacji. Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja różnorodności stylów zarządzania stosowanych przez menedżerów polskiej Policji oraz rozpoznanie preferencji w ich doborze. W badaniu zastosowano triangulację metodologiczną poprzez połączenie metod ilościowych i jakościowych. Wykorzystano kwestionariusz skuteczności i adaptacyjności menedżerów LEAD zwalidowany metodą Delphi oraz autorski przewodnik do dyskusji pogłębionej, zrealizowany techniką TDI. Za podstawę analizy przyjęto cztery style zarządzania (coaching, wspieranie, kierowanie i delegowanie) wyróżnione w modelu przywództwa sytuacyjnego SLT. Badaniem objęto 89 kierowników małopolskiego garnizonu Policji, uwzględniając wszystkie szczeble zarządzania. Liczebność badanej grupy zapewniała reprezentatywność względem jej lokalizacji przestrzennej. Uzyskane wyniki wykazały, że badani kierownicy stosują pełną gamę stylów kierowania oraz różne style w zależności od oceny sytuacji. Preferowanym stylem zarządzania w Policji jest styl coachingowy, co wskazuje na znaczenie relacji z funkcjonariuszami w zarządzaniu. Przedstawione wnioski uzupełniają dotychczasową wiedzę na temat przywództwa sytuacyjnego i zarządzania w Policji. Mogą one być wykorzystane do poprawy trafności doboru stylu zarządzania.
Resumen. La competencia de los gerentes en materia de elección de un estilo de gestión adquiere especial importancia en condiciones de realidad organizativa no lineal. Un aspecto importante de estas competencias es la flexibilidad del estilo de gestión más oportuno en relación con los requisitos de una situación determinada. El objetivo del artículo es identificar la variedad de estilos de gestión empleados por los gerentes de la policía polaca e determinar las preferencias en su selección. El estudio utilizó la triangulación metodológica combinando métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos. Se empleó el cuestionario LEAD de eficacia directiva y adaptabilidad validado por el método Delphi y la guía de discusión en profundidad del autor completada mediante la técnica TDI. Los cuatro estilos de gestión (coaching, supporting, directing y delegating) distinguídos en el modelo de liderazgo situacional SLT sirvieron de base para el análisis. El estudio abarcó a 89 gerentes de la guarnición de policía de la región de Małopolska, teniendo en cuenta todos los niveles de gestión. El tamaño del grupo encuestado garantizó la representatividad con respecto a su ubicación espacial. Los resultados obtenidos mostraron que los directivos encuestados utilizan una gama completa de estilos de gestión y distintos estilos en función de la evaluación de la situación. El estilo de dirección preferido en la policía es el de coaching, lo que indica la importancia atribuida a la relación con los funcionarios. Los resultados presentados completan los conocimientos existentes sobre el liderazgo y la gestión situacional en la policía. Pueden utilizarse para mejorar la precisión de la selección del estilo de liderazgo.


Резюме. Компетентность менеджеров при выборе стиля управления приобретает особое значение в условиях нелинейной организационной деятельности. Важным аспектом этой компетентности является способность выбора подходящего стиля управления в зависимости от особенностей определенной ситуации. Цель статьи — выявить различные стили управления, которые используются руководителями польской полиции, и определить приоритеты при выборе. В ходе исследования использовалась методологическая триангуляция посредством сочетания количественных и качественных методов. В исследовании использовалась анкета оценки эффективности деятельности и адаптации руководителя LEAD, валидированная методом Дельфи, и авторское пособие по проведению углубленной дискуссии, заполненное по методике TDI. В качестве основы для анализа использовалось четыре стиля управления (коучинг, поддержка, директива и делегирование), характерные для модели ситуационного лидерства SLT. В исследовании приняли участие 89 начальников Малопольского гарнизона полиции с учетом всех уровней руководства. Объем опрашиваемой группы обеспечил достаточную репрезентативность с учетом территориального распределения. Полученные результаты позволили установить, что орошенные руководители используют полный спектр стилей управления и различают стили в зависимости от оценки ситуации. Наиболее предпочитаемым стилем управления в полиции является стиль коучинга, что свидетельствует о важности взаимоотношений между сотрудниками в процессе управления. Представленные в статье результаты расширяют знания о ситуационном лидерстве и управлении в полиции. Они могут быть использованы для повышения уровня корректности выбора стиля управления.