

SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF OPERATIONAL DIRECTORS' CRITICAL COMPETENCIES IN LIGHT OF THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED

Dominika CZUBAJ-GIŻEWSKA^{1*}, Anna JAŃSKA², Kinga BEDNARZEWSKA³

¹ Bizerba Polska Sp. z o.o.; dczubajgizewska@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0009-5355-3243

² Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej w Lublinie; anna.janska@umcs.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-5994-8061

³ Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej w Lublinie; kinga.bednarzewska@umcs.pl,

ORCID: 0000-0002-5786-928X

* Correspondence author

Purpose: The study aimed to identify the key competencies employers expect from newly hired managers for the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Design/methodology/approach: The preparation of the article was preceded by the observation of economic phenomena and processes and a literature review. Theoretical considerations in this area were supplemented with empirical research: qualitative research methods were used, which include a review of Polish and foreign literature on the subject and an analysis of the content of job offers, which constitute an essential source of information allowing the identification of crucial competencies expected on the labor market in Poland in the context of the position of director operational.

Findings: The implementation of the research objective enabled the identification of key competencies that need to be developed to climb the career path more efficiently and reach the highest-level positions in the organization. The most desired competence was business orientation. The most common social competencies were communication, influencing and negotiating, and building relationships. They appeared most frequently in the group of managerial competencies, team management, and leadership. However, in the group of personal competencies, as many as four recurring competencies can be distinguished: analytical thinking, entrepreneurship - striving for results, self-management, and independence. The most frequently mentioned professional competencies included business orientation, knowledge of foreign languages, and professional knowledge.

Research limitations/implications: In the job offers examined, the most common competencies were from the managerial competence category, while social competencies are less critical, according to the surveyed advertisers. That is undoubtedly inconsistent with the standard view that modern business is increasingly aware of the role that social competencies play in the effective functioning of the organization.

Originality/value: The article contributes to the scientific literature on assessing the competencies of candidates recruited for the positions of operational directors. It also identifies shortcomings in the creation, development, use, and preservation of human capital that need improvement in areas such as education and the social and labor spheres. It indicates areas that need to be improved in the recruitment of managerial staff.

Keywords: managerial competences, chief operating officer, labor market, management staff, soft skills.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Competencies are a multidimensional concept and may refer not only to a person - an employee, but also to a group, team, or department (Jeruszka, 2016), they may also apply to an organization; therefore, in addition to employee competencies, we can distinguish: "management competencies, knowledge and collective memory, competencies in sphere of products and technologies, competences acquired from the outside (through licenses, franchising, benchmarking, consulting, business intelligence, etc.), competences related to shaping relations with the external and internal environment and corporate social responsibility" (Oleksyn, 2014). Competences in the 21st century can be defined as capabilities and abilities. It is a set of related but different behaviors organized around a conscious mental process called intent. Depending on the situation or time, they may manifest themselves in the form of appropriate alternative behaviors.

The study aimed to identify the key competencies employers expect from newly hired managers for the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO). Implementing the research goal made it possible to identify critical competencies that need to be developed to climb the career path more efficiently and reach the highest-level positions in the organization. An advanced solution that enables the analysis of the content of published offers on the Polish labor market using the appropriate categorization key, which is detected and is crucial for the COO function.

According to the adopted methodology, the literature review procedure includes three stages:

- separation of databases and a set of publications,
- selection of publications, development of a database,
- bibliometric analysis, content analysis, and verification of the suitability of the results obtained for further research.

The method of content analysis (documentation analysis) was also used. The content of job offers was analyzed, constituting an essential source of information, allowing the identification of crucial competencies expected in the labor market in Poland in the context of the position of operations director.

A review of Polish and foreign literature on the subject was made. Foreign literature provides numerous definitions of managerial competencies; however, Polish literature identified a research gap in the diagnosis of desired managerial competencies in the positions of operational directors. In order to identify the expected competencies of organizational

directors, a review of job offers published on websites in Poland for the position of chief operating officer (COO) was carried out. The research methods used allowed the research goal to be achieved.

2. Literature Review

The literature on the subject needs to define the concept of competence clearly. Over the years, the research community has yet to develop a standard definition on this issue; there is no clear consensus, and practically every author has developed his definition of competence and a set of adequate arguments. According to literature research (Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2016), many authors researched to determine the catalog of critical competencies that effective managers should have. The list clearly shows no single position among researchers regarding creating a closed catalog of critical competencies a manager should have. There is no axiomatic definition of competence in the literature on the subject. However, three main trends in the understanding of competence can be distinguished (Róžański, 2018): observable performance, a specific standard of a person's work, or a qualitatively defined result as an attribute of a person. The very concept of competence among employees appeared at the beginning of the 20th century. The development of interest in the concept itself dates back to the 1970s when D. McClelland researched students to prove that the results of intelligence and personality tests are not determinants that ensure professional success but can be based on motivation, character, attitude, knowledge, and skills to determine whether and how a given person will perform in a specific job position (Sak-Skowron, Skowron, 2020). To achieve the research goal, the scope of the concept of competence was limited to the employee's ability to perform tasks at a specific job position according to the expectations of employers in published job offers.

When reviewing the literature, competencies should be defined concerning the profile of a manager. According to the classic definition of Ricky W. Griffin, a manager is "someone who is primarily responsible for implementing the management process, and especially someone who plans and makes decisions, organizes, leads people and controls human, financial and material resources" (Griffin, 2023). Managerial competencies are one of the critical elements of a company's success in the market. Properly used, they significantly impact the achievement of the company's strategic, tactical, and operational goals. They concern both skills, business knowledge, and motivation to perform the task appropriately entrusted to the manager, consistent with the standards of a given organization.

The literature provides numerous definitions of managerial competencies. Understanding the term "competence" varies in different countries and is determined by organizational culture. In the USA, an attempt was made for the first time to define the concept of "managerial

competence" when the profile of a "competent" manager was outlined. Reference was then made to the work of Boyatzis (Boyatzis, 1982) for the American Management Association, who surveyed two thousand managers and asked them: "What are the characteristics of the best-functioning managers?" In the context of this work, the American meaning of the term "competence" as the most essential feature of a manager is inclusive. "Competence expresses the difference in level between the average and the best performer" (Boyatzis, 1982). Due to the multitude of definitions of managerial competencies, the article focuses on selected characteristics throughout publications in this field. C. Woodruff (1993) believes that a competent manager must meet three primary conditions when carrying out his tasks:

- have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform a managerial function in a given organization,
- be motivated to perform a managerial function and be ready to devote the necessary energy,
- have the opportunity to use their competencies in a business environment (Woodruff, 1993).

The next, more recent publications are those in which A. Rakowska and A. Sitko-Lutek (2000) interpret managerial competencies as skills, knowledge, attitudes, and personality traits characteristic of managers achieving high results. However, Sitko-Lutek (2013) additionally emphasizes that the individual activity of an individual involves using competencies to act effectively. Competencies are more than just learned skills. It expands the concept of managerial competencies to include the ability to solve problems using knowledge and experience. In modern, innovative organizations, many unclear situations require flexible use of competencies. The organization allows the individual to act, trusting that he will properly use his competencies. As a result of their research, A. Rakowska and A. Sitko-Lutek (2000) developed a research model of competencies, distinguishing ten basic managerial skills that determine their competencies. These are:

1. technical skills (knowledge);
2. increasing own effectiveness (analysis of your strengths and weaknesses, planning your development);
3. stress management (effective use of time management methods, establishing a hierarchy of activities, increasing mental and physical resilience);
4. communication skills;
5. motivational skills;
6. gaining power and influence (identifying and shaping sources of power;
7. skillful influence);
8. conflict resolution skills;
9. teamwork skills;
10. making changes.

Authors dealing with managerial competencies try to answer which competencies are the most important in rapid economic and organizational changes. Rola-Jarzębowska and I. Malinowska (2011) point out that these are the competencies that support creating a work environment based on mutual trust and employees' independent decision-making. Such behaviors contribute to an increase in the use of employees' potential and, consequently, to an increase in the number of new, creative ideas that are the basis for the development of modern organizations. A different perspective on crucial competencies can be found in other publications, which include global thinking, appreciation of cultural diversity, attention to customer satisfaction, ability to work in a team, focus on partnership relations, creativity, innovation, and independence (Kupczyk, 2009). In the following publication (Gracel, Makowiec, 2017) we find that managerial competencies are being transformed due to the development of the fourth industrial revolution. Changes occurring by implementing breakthrough technology that redefines production and work methods contribute to creating a new type of interaction between people and machines. The competencies that are desired among managers in the modern economy are defined as:

- the ability to recognize innate talents and strengths,
- the ability to chart a development path that is consistent with the requirements of the position and the employee's predispositions,
- a view from the point of view of sustainable development of the team and the company,
- ability to transfer knowledge,
- building an appropriate organizational culture" (Gracel, Makowiec, 2017).

Poland has a low level of social capital compared to other European Union countries (measured by trust). Industry 4.0 requires collaborative management. Thus, the challenges managers face focus on high flexibility and openness, and competencies should be continuously and systematized (Gracel, Makowiec, 2017).

In the context of considerations regarding managerial competencies, a certain systematization can be made depending on the position in the organizational structure. Managers can be divided, depending on their place in the company's organizational structure, into lowest-level managers, middle-level managers, and top-level managers (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2012). Entry-level managers merely supervise contractors. They are not superiors to other managers. These include foremen and section managers. They are often referred to as "custodial workers" or "frontline workers". Middle managers supervise the work of other managers and sometimes contractors. Their main task is to control activities leading to the implementation of the company's policy and to balance the requirements placed on them by their superiors with the capabilities of their subordinates. Top-level managers are responsible for the overall management of the organization. They establish operational policy and control the interactions of the organization and its environment. These include general directors, presidents, vice presidents, and members of the management board of capital companies. Various analyses also include the separation of strategic management, which is responsible for

the overall concept of the company's operation in the long term, and operational management, which is responsible for the current activities of individual organizational units. The following essential types of managerial skills that constitute managerial competencies are most often indicated: technical skills, interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, diagnostic and analytical skills.

Conceptual skills are desired at the highest levels of management. Diagnostic and analytical skills allow the manager to properly diagnose the situation and choose the most appropriate response skills. Together with interpersonal skills, they are optimally used at the middle level, while technical skills are recommended for lower-level managers (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2012).

Filipowicz (2014) developed the so-called The Universal Competence Model, which presents an approach that allows the division of almost all possible sets of competencies into four basic categories: social, personal, managerial, and professional competencies. The Universal Competence Model by G. Filipowicz contains 36 essential competencies.

Social competencies influence how a given employee performs tasks requiring contact with others and how a person functions in an organization. The level of social competencies directly affects the effectiveness of cooperation, communication, and influence on others. Essential social competencies include building relationships, sharing knowledge and experience, identification with the company, communication skills, negotiations, customer orientation, the ability to work in a team, resolving conflicts, and cooperating within the company. In turn, personal competencies are directly related to the implementation of tasks. Their level proves the quality, speed, adequacy, and reliability of the challenges undertaken and tasks performed. The essential personal competencies include entrepreneurship, innovation and flexibility, analytical thinking, independence, the ability to make efficient decisions and solve problems, conscientiousness (reliability), readiness to learn (professional development), and emotional and decision-making stability. From the perspective of achieving the research goal, the most important are managerial competencies, which are directly related to employee management and include soft skills, work organization, and strategic aspects. It is these competencies that determine the effective management of others. From a theoretical perspective, the essential managerial competencies include the following: building an efficient organization, building teams, assessing and developing subordinates (coaching), delegating, motivating, strategic thinking, planning, leadership, and team management (Filipowicz, 2014). Professional competencies are those that are directly related to tasks requiring specialized knowledge and are dedicated to specific job groups. They often require specific and specific knowledge or skills without which the employee cannot perform the assigned tasks. Sometimes, they refer to having specific qualifications required for a position. The level of these competencies determines the effectiveness of the implementation of tasks directly related to the specificity of the profession or position held or function performed. The primary professional competencies include administration/keeping documentation, business orientation, procedures, knowledge

and application, IT skills, professional knowledge, project management, process management, and knowledge of foreign languages (Filipowicz, 2014).

This article ultimately focuses on the competencies of the operations director. The COO is an executive responsible for business processes and day-to-day internal administration, typically deriving authority from the responsibilities and decision-making rights delegated by the CEO, which can complement the CEO's experience, management style, and knowledge (Bennet, Miles, 2006).

In organizations employing a CEO-COO duo, the CEO emphasizes long-term goals, and the COO implements the CEO's vision through short-term goals (Bendig, 2022). Critics of the CEO/COO duo emphasized that this solution burdened the company with increased costs and reduced the effectiveness of the CEO. In a study (Marcel, 2009), a higher-level perspective was adopted to demonstrate that the presence of the COO can also bring benefits in information processing at the TMT (top management team) level, which, under certain conditions, can improve the company's performance. The research findings highlight a robust positive relationship between the presence of a chief operating officer and two established measures of firm performance: return on assets and market-to-book ratio. The data also suggest that the broader characteristics of the TMT determine these relationships. The job description of the Chief Operating Officer includes the expected competencies. These include high analytical, conceptual, and change management skills. The COO should demonstrate the ability to support a creative and dynamic environment, innovative problem-solving, increasing efficiency, and a high service provision culture. The person in this position is also expected to have interpersonal and conflict resolution skills and to supervise staff effectively, including planning, scheduling, coordination, monitoring, resource allocation, and administration. The Operations Director should be ready to work remotely in the long term and have highly developed written and oral communication skills. He is also expected to be able to manage employees in a multidisciplinary team and, therefore, has well-developed interpersonal, negotiation, and conflict-resolution skills (Officer, 2017).

This article focuses on identifying the managerial competencies of operational directors in the Polish market, where a research gap in this area has been identified. However, when reviewing foreign literature, it is worth citing studies that analyze the role of the characteristics of chief operating officers (COOs) and their relationship with exploration methods, such as patenting and risk-taking (Bendig, 2022). Research findings on U.S. companies demonstrate that different profiles of chief operating officers are associated with organizational exploration efforts. Operating directors with long career horizons are negatively associated with patenting activities, while they have a positive attitude towards corporate activities related to investment projects. Women, as operational directors, have a positive attitude to taking risks. In contrast, COOs with experience in R&D are positively associated with patenting activities and are only slightly associated with ventures. Chief operating officers (COOs) are also responsible for managing the corporation's day-to-day

operations, coordinating and monitoring operations, achieving short- and long-term operational goals, internal operations, and influencing natural earnings management (REM). However, research shows that the presence of a COO reduces the use of REM on average (Cobabe, Doucet et al., 2022). Other sources deal with the behavioral aspects characterizing the chief operating officer. An overconfident COO, taking high risks and failing to take demand fluctuations into account, maintains lower inventories while achieving an inventory reduction strategy. External factors, i.e., whether the market is competitive or concentrated, are a moderator. Thus, individual managerial characteristics and competencies are essential in explaining corporate inventory management policies (Na, Jaeseok, Kim et al., 2018). As can be concluded, managerial competencies are present in the literature in various aspects; however, no sources have been found indicating current research on the desired competencies among employers in a specific job position, such as the operations director.

3. Research Methodology

The preparation of the article was preceded by the observation of economic phenomena and processes and a literature review. Theoretical considerations in this area were supplemented with empirical research that was carried out in 2021. Qualitative research methods were used, which include a review of Polish and foreign literature on the subject and an analysis of the content of job offers, which are an essential source of information allowing the identification of crucial competencies expected on the labor market in Poland in the context of the position of operational director. The following research assumptions were made (Makowska, 2013):

- the research was conducted based on job offers published on popular recruitment portals in Poland and Polish websites,
- job offers were collected for two months in April and July 2021,
- the keyword in search engines was the phrase "operating director",
- a total of 100 published offers covering the entire territory of Poland were analyzed.

Moreover, it was assumed that when analyzing the content of the collected job offers, the researcher could discover the sender's intentions and identify the competencies expected by a given employer, even if they are not indicated directly in the content. In this study, the researcher was interested in the content of job offers and their form.

When analyzing the content, we focused on the information in the section about employers' requirements. Individual job offers were analyzed to identify the qualifications included in the job offer. If the employer did not directly define specific competencies, it was examined whether a given description was consistent with the definition or description of a given concept defining a given competency. For a deeper analysis, an appropriate categorization key was used, prepared based on the Universal Competence Model proposed by G. Filipowicz (2014).

It should be noted here that the research methodology proposed by A. Różański (2018) was used, where the author emphasized comparing the expectations of employers in various markets in Poland and the USA and identifying critical social competencies. The item mentioned above was the starting point of the research.

The analysis included job offers published by employers on recruitment portals, social networking sites specializing in professional business contacts, building and maintaining professional business relationships, and websites owned by recruitment companies. Job offers were collected in the period from April to May 2021. When searching for offers, the main criterion was the phrase "operating director", then a diagnosis was made in the job offer itself whether a given offer did not require performing a regulated profession. The job offers of employers looking for an employee for the "operating director" position or related positions via the Internet were analyzed. Entrepreneurs were not divided according to the size of employment, share capital, or industry. The only additional search criterion that was used was that the workplace was to be located in Poland. Ultimately, 100 job offers were collected and subjected to thorough analysis using a research technique called content analysis.

4. Research results

A tabular summary presenting the competency expectations towards candidates for the position of operational director in Poland based on the analyzed job offers is included in Table 1.

Table 1.
Frequency of competencies in the analyzed job offers

Competence group	Competencies required in job offers	Frequency of appearance (in 100 job offers in Poland)
Managerial	leadership	64
	team management	64
	building an efficient organization	31
	motivating	31
	planning	30
	strategic thinking	22
	assessment and development of subordinates (coaching)	22
	delegation	21
	team building	20
Personal	analytical thinking	53
	entrepreneurship	48
	self management	36
	independence	35
	innovation and flexibility	29
	decisiveness	20
	problem solving	18
	conscientiousness/reliability	13
readiness to learn	8	

Cont. table 1.

Social	communication skills	47
	influencing/negotiating	39
	building relationships	36
	customer orientation	27
	cooperation within the company	16
	teamwork	10
	conflict resolution	6
	sharing knowledge and experience	1
	identification with the company	1
Professional	orientation in business	67
	knowledge of foreign languages	56
	professional knowledge	54
	process management	35
	IT skills	27
	project management	16
	procedures	6
	administration/maintaining documentation 3	3
	technical skills	1

Source: Own study based on own research.

The research showed that the most common social competencies included communication, influencing, negotiating, and building relationships. However, communication skills appeared in almost half of the analyzed job offers. Other competencies appeared in approximately 40%. In the group of managerial competencies, team management, and leadership appeared most frequently; these competencies appeared in over 60% of the offers. However, in the group of personal competencies, as many as four recurring competencies can be distinguished, namely: analytical thinking - 53 times, entrepreneurship - striving for results - 48 times, self-management - 36 times, and independence - 35 times. When analyzing the professional competencies, the most frequently mentioned competencies included business orientation - 67 times, knowledge of foreign languages - 56 times, and professional knowledge - 54 times. Similar studies were conducted in 2016-2017. At that time, the critical competencies desired in the Polish labor market in given competence groups were building relationships as the most desired social competence, commitment as a personal competence, decision-making ability, and teamwork organization as managerial competencies. In the US labor market, employers most often indicated communication skills and specialist knowledge supplemented with building relationships. Comparing these two studies, it can be concluded that employers in the Polish market are beginning to have similar requirements for competencies in managerial positions in the USA. More and more often, there are job offers that, in addition to the benefits that can be obtained in a given position, also include the amount of remuneration, which, according to research, did not exist before.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The results presented in the research made it possible to identify the key competencies employers expect for the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO). The most frequently included competencies include business orientation, leadership, team management, analytical thinking, knowledge of foreign languages, and professional knowledge. These competencies were present in more than half of the analyzed job offers. And these are the competencies that need to be developed in order to climb the career path more efficiently and reach top-level positions in organizations on the Polish market. The most desired competence was business orientation because it was expected by employers in almost 70% of the analyzed offers. The most common social competencies included communication, influencing, negotiating, and building relationships. However, communication skills appeared in almost half of the analyzed job offers. Other competencies appeared in approximately 40%. In the group of managerial competencies, team management, and leadership appeared most frequently; these competencies appeared in over 60% of the analyzed offers. However, in the group of personal competencies, there are as many as four recurring competencies, namely analytical thinking, entrepreneurship - striving for results, self-management, and independence. When analyzing the group of professional competencies, the most frequently mentioned competencies included business orientation, knowledge of foreign languages, and professional knowledge.

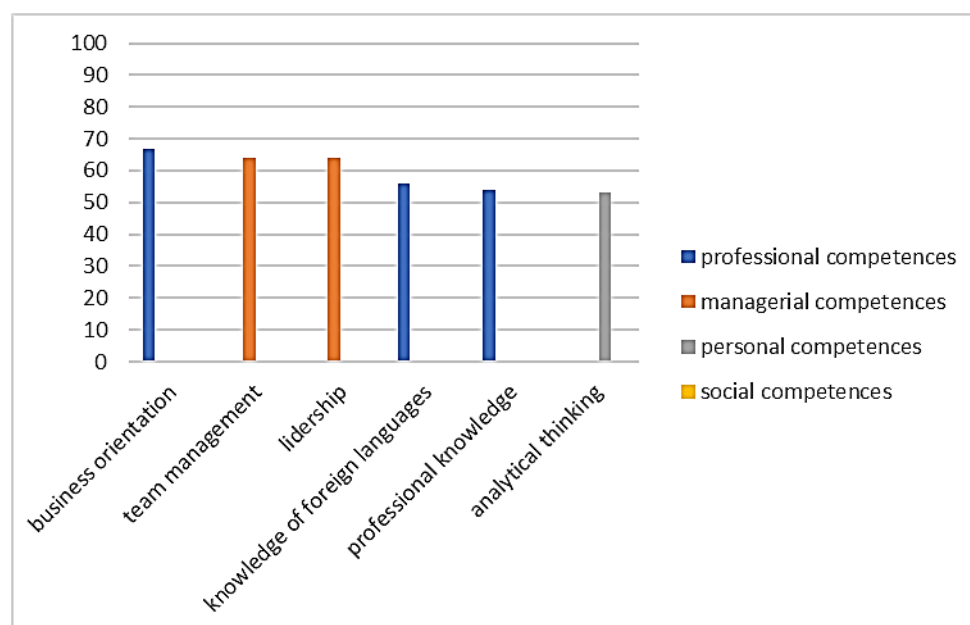


Figure 1. Most frequently occurring competencies in the job offers analysed.

Source: Own study based on own research.

The job offer survey was based on a categorization key containing 36 essential competencies divided into four main groups: professional, managerial, personal, and social competencies.

Each cataloged competency appeared in at least one analyzed job offer, indicating a significant diversity among the job market requirements. It is worth noting that competencies such as business orientation, team management, leadership, knowledge of foreign languages, professional knowledge, and analytical thinking are essential for employers in the Polish market (see figure 1). These competencies were present in more than half of all offers analyzed. If we look at the structure of critical competencies, the group of professional competencies dominates and includes three of the six most common ones. Managerial competencies are also necessary. This group also included one personal competence. However, there needs to be more social competencies.

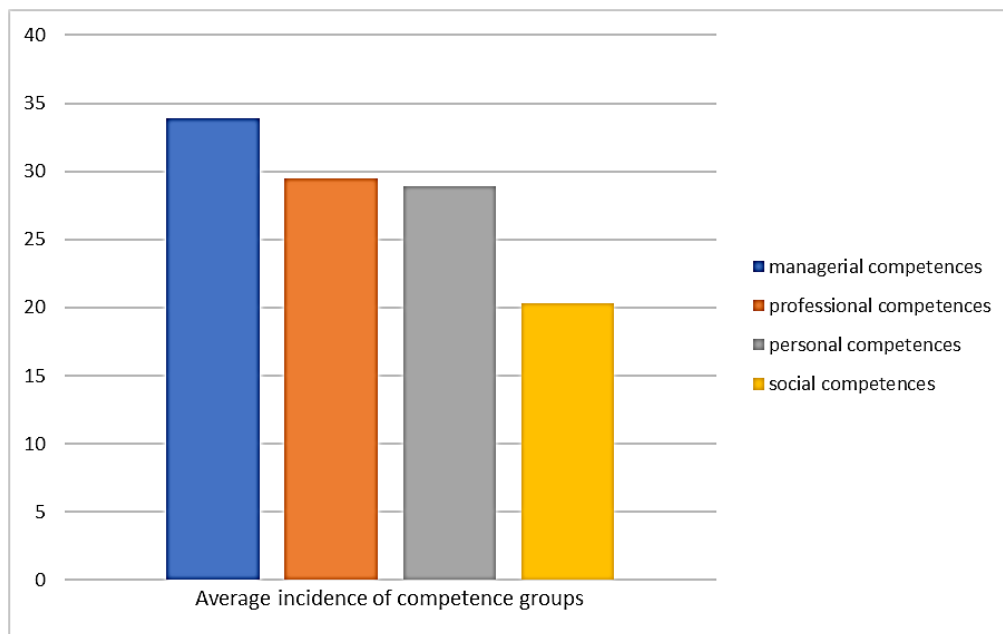


Figure 2. Average incidence of competence groups in the job offers analysed.

Source: Own study based on own research.

Distinguishing the groups of competencies discussed in the earlier part of the study, in the job offers examined, competencies from the category of managerial competencies were most common (see figure 2), while social competencies are the least important according to the surveyed advertisers. This is undoubtedly inconsistent with the standard view that modern business is increasingly aware of the role that social competencies play in the effective functioning of the organization. With technological progress and changes in the business environment, interpersonal skills are essential to professional success in modern business. The prevailing belief is that modern companies increasingly appreciate the importance of interpersonal skills in building effective teams, creating innovative solutions, change management, and customer service. Organizations that emphasize developing the social competencies of their employees are more likely to achieve success in a dynamic and

competitive business environment. As a result, social competencies are also crucial for the COO because they influence effective people management, building relationships, and achieving the organization's operational goals. The person performing this role should be able to communicate effectively, collaborate with various stakeholders, and make decisions while considering social and ethical aspects. However, based on the results obtained from the research, the surveyed companies still placed greater emphasis on hard skills while underestimating the importance of soft skills.

Deepening and developing identified managerial competencies sought among candidates for operational directors can be done formally, informally, and non-formally. Formal learning is institutional and formalized education carried out by education programs that enable the acquisition of qualifications recognized in a given legal system. Methods and techniques for improving managerial competencies include studies in a selected field, exercises, seminars, laboratories, projects, doctoral studies, and postgraduate studies. Informal learning is intended and purposeful (independent learning) and unintentional learning, occurring spontaneously in everyday situations and while gaining experience in the course of work. This form of education needs to be more organized and unsystematic. Methods and techniques for developing managerial competencies include natural social training, self-improvement through informal discussions, meetings, and exchange of views and experiences, and self-development through studying industry publications consistent with individual interests. Non-formal learning is institutional and formalized education. It includes planned, purposeful, and systematic activities through learning from experienced, entrepreneurial employees, attempting to perform tasks differently than before, job rotation, coaching or mentoring, and counseling. Improving managerial competencies can also take place through study visits, both domestic and foreign (Spychała, Branowska, 2019).

Based on the literature review, there are no current studies relating to the analysis and identification of critical managerial competencies in the positions of operational directors. The latest research that is available concerns competencies in relation to various industries, e.g., schools (Gawroński, Kwiatkowski, 2024) or managerial competencies of women in non-governmental organizations in the context of social economy entities, their management styles and business models (Reichel, 2024). On this basis, it can be concluded that the author's research fills the research gap and supplements scientific knowledge with the current state of research. The limitations of the study resulted from the fact that it was based on job offers available on external recruitment portals and social networking sites specializing in building and maintaining professional and business contacts. Due to the availability of data, job offers posted on internal recruitment portals in organizations based on which internal recruitment is conducted were not included in the study.

6. Summary

The article presents the results of a synthesis of interpretive research undertaken to identify the key competencies expected by employers in the Polish market from newly employed operational directors. The analysis included 100 job offers published by employers on recruitment portals, social networking sites, and websites owned by recruitment companies. It has been shown that employers focus on primarily business-oriented people, i.e., operational directors are expected to understand and know the market and the processes that occur in the industry in which a given company operates. The operational director should also be able to manage teams; it was often clarified that these are large teams or teams of middle-level managers. He should also be able to build and implement concepts that are used to achieve the set goals, which are directly related to leadership. He should also think analytically, which directly translates into the analysis of indicators, market trends, financial analysis, and analysis of the current situation, as well as drawing accurate conclusions. He should share his conclusions in a communicative way; he should be able to do it in at least one foreign language while demonstrating sound knowledge of the field in which he works. Research findings on U.S. companies demonstrate that different profiles of chief operating officers are associated with organizational exploration efforts. Based on the research results obtained on the Polish market, it can also be concluded that the surveyed companies still placed greater emphasis on hard skills while underestimating the importance and importance of soft skills, which is recommended for the future by the authors of this study.

References

1. Bendig, D. (2022). Chief operating officer characteristics and how they relate to exploration via patenting versus venturing. *Journal of Business Research*, 140, 297-309.
2. Boyatzis, R. (1982). *Competent Manager*. John Wiley & Sons.
3. Cobabe, M., Doucet, A., Johnson, E.S., Myers, L.A. (2023). *Chief Operating Officers and Real Earnings Management*. Available at: SSRN 3234015.
4. Filipowicz, G. (2014). *Zarządzanie kompetencjami: perspektywa firmowa i osobista*.
5. Gawroński, K., Kwiatkowski, S.M. (2024). *Dobry nauczyciel-dobry uczeń-dobra szkoła*. Wolters Kluwer.
6. Gracel, J., Makowiec, M. (2017). Kluczowe kompetencje menedżera w dobie czwartej rewolucji przemysłowej–Przemysłu 4.0. *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Zarządzanie*, 44(4), 105-129. DOI : http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/AUNC_ZARZ.2017.054
7. Griffin, R.W. (2005). *Podstawy zarządzania organizacjami*. PWN. ISBN 83-01-14394-0.

8. Jeruszka, U. (2016). *Kompetencje*. Difin.
9. Kupczyk, T. (ed.) (2009). *Uwarunkowania sukcesów kadry kierowniczej w gospodarce opartej na wiedzy*.
10. Makowska, M. (2013). *Analiza danych zastanych*. Scholar.
11. Na, J., Kim, B., Sim, J.E. (2018). Chief Operating Officer's Overconfidence and Inventory Leanness. *KAIST College of Business Working Paper Series, No. 2018-004*. SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3116644> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3116644>
12. Officer, C.O. (2017). *Chief Operations Officer. Infection Prevention and Control*.
13. Oleksyn, T. (2014). *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi w organizacji*. Wolters Kluwer S.A.
14. Rakowska, A., Sitko-Lutek, A. (2000). *Doskonalenie kompetencji menedżerskich*. PWN.
15. Reichel, J. (2024). *Liderki gospodarki społecznej. Studia przypadków*.
16. Rola-Jarzębowska, A., Malinowska, I. (2011). Kompetencje menedżerskie w gospodarce opartej na informacji. *Ekonomika i Organizacja Gospodarki Żywnościowej*, 91, 201-210.
17. Różański, A. (2018). Kompetencje społeczne menedżerów – oczekiwania pracodawców w Polsce i USA w świetle opublikowanych ofert pracy. *Edukacja -Technika-Informatyka nr 3/25*. Wydawnictwo UR, p. 140.
18. Sak-Skowrom, M., Skowron, Ł. (2020). *Kluczowe kompetencje jako kryterium diagnozowania potrzeb szkoleniowych na przykładzie uczestników instytucji dialogu społecznego lokalnego rynku pracy województwa lubelskiego*. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Lubelskiej.
19. Sitko-Lutek, A. (2013). Kompetencje menedżerskie w kontekście innowacyjności przedsiębiorstw. *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, Sectio H Oeconomia*, 47(1), 141-148.
20. Spychała, M., Branowska, A. (2019). Czynniki kształtujące kompetencje menedżerskie. *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej. Organizacja i Zarządzanie*. DOI: 10.21008/j.0239-9415.2019.079.12
21. Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, K. (2016). *Kompetencje menedżerskie w kontekście innowacyjności przedsiębiorstwa*. PWN.
22. Woodruff, Ch. (1993). What is meant by a competency? *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 14(1), 29-36.
23. Zakrzewska-Bielawska, A. (ed.) (2012). *Podstawy zarządzania: Teoria i ćwiczenia*. Wolters Kluwer.