IDENTIFICATION OF THE EFFECTS OF NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES IN MANAGERIAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF GENDER DIFFERENCES

Birknerová Z., Benková E., Lajčin D., Urbański M.[*]

Abstract: The primary aim of the research was to find out statistically significant differences in the assessment of selected NLP techniques (representational systems, rapport, pacing, leading) by female and male managers who attended and did not attend an NLP course. The research used an NLPT questionnaire (neuro-linguistic programming techniques). The data were collected from 124 managers - 58 female and 66 male managers at all levels of management. The results show that the respondents who attended an NLP course evaluated the examined NLP techniques more positively. Gender differences and the interaction between gender and completion of the NLP course by assessing the NLP techniques were not confirmed. A statistically significant relation was identified only at a level of selected items of NLPT methodology. The study brought new findings in the research of measuring the NLP techniques' effects in relation to gender and contributed to the knowledge and theory of NLP techniques in the context of gender differences in the managerial environment.

Key words: neuro-linguistic programming, managers, gender, NLP techniques

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Introduction

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is a model which people use to structuralize their unique life experiences and managers can create a globally competitive environment. It is a set of models, abilities, and techniques for effective thinking and behaviour (O'Connor and Seymour, 2011) that can be also applied to the entrepreneurial and managerial environment from the perspective of gender differences. Education and socialization affect women and men differently, which leads to socially created differences in their behaviour, attitudes, and values (Oakley, 2015; Szczepańska-Woszczyna, 2018). Connell (2021) states that the topic of gender has a key dimension for personal life, social relations, and culture, and it is an issue

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[*] **Zuzana Birknerová**, Assoc. Prof. PaedDr., PhD, MBA, University of Presov;
✉ e-mail: zuzana.birknerova@unipo.sk,
ORCID: 0000-0002-8478-4337
Eva Benková, Mgr., PhD., University of Presov; ✉ e-mail: eva.benkova@unipo.sk,
ORCID 0000-0002-7634-6070,
Daniel Lajčin, , Assoc. Prof. PaedDr. Ing., PhD, DBA, LL.M, DTI University;
✉ e-mail: lajcin@dti.sk,
ORCID 0000-0003-4827-3748
Mariusz Urbański, PhD, Road and Bridge Research Institute, Poland
✉ corresponding author: murbanski@ibdim.edu.pl

about which there are many prejudices, ideologies, myths, and misinformation. According to Eckert, McConnell-Ginet (2003), gender issues are addressed in almost every discipline that deals with human behaviour, cognition, society, and culture. Innovations generally offer new solutions to problems caused by changes in the managerial environment, customer requirements, technological development, and other activities (Kurmanov et al., 2022). Innovated products, technologies, and production organizations do not represent a replacement for the old ones, but it is a new level of quality. This materialization of the application of new knowledge is also carried out using progressive management methods and their tools (Vrablova and Gregor, 2011) that can include NLP.

Within NLP, several tools and techniques for discovering what represents perfection are presented (Knight, 2020). NLP enhances the efficiency of the processes of remembering, forgetting, information evaluation, and their displaying, perception, and responsiveness in all areas of a human being to maximum support of a subjective and objective benefit, flexibility, and other abilities essential for satisfactory life-building of managers (Lübeck, 2003).

At the same time, the business environment causes efficiency and performance to come to the attention of every enterprise that is interested in developing and increasing its competitiveness. The performance of a company is measured both by the volume of output and the resulting labour productivity, but also by the volume of value added and the resulting labour productivity from the value added. An increase in the company's performance can be achieved by a consistent orientation to the basic attributes of the operating base, namely costs, quality, and time (Krauszová and Janeková, 2008). Performance can also be supported through NLP, which is an art and, at the same time, a science of how to excel as well as the study of subjective experiences. NLP helps to understand the differences between the things we do leading to average results and failure and the things we do which bring success and excellent results (Alder, 2006).

NLP is therefore appropriate to apply in the business and management environment and from the perspective of gender differences, with an emphasis on the fact that managers can best face competitive pressure or turn their actions to their advantage. Competition among businesses is perceived positively also thanks to NLP techniques because it represents one of the most effective motivations for thinking and activity. In this context, competition among managers protects against apathy and stagnation, rewards the able, and supports ambitions (Jacková and Chodasová, 2017; Rajiani et al., 2018).

NLP techniques

NLP is implemented by different techniques. The literature (Basu, 2009; Fritzsche, 2015; Knight, 2020; Lazarus, 2010; Miller, 2017; O'Connor and Seymour, 1990; Wake, 2011) presents, e.g. rapport, representational systems, modelling, meta programmes, defining goals, anchoring, body language, asking questions the right way and many other techniques that are related to the setting of our minds, our values, attitudes, and the like. In the presented paper, attention is focused on NLP

techniques that can be implemented in the managerial environment, and these are representational systems, rapport, pacing, and leading.

Behind the representational systems lies the belief that each person depicts the surrounding world, i.e. represents in his brain preferably by one of the five sensory systems (Fritzsche, 2015). We use the same neurological pathways internally as for the direct experience. These same neurons generate an electrochemical charge that can be measured by an electromyographic reading device. Thought has direct physical effects; the mind and body represent one system (O'Connor and Seymour, 2003).

In management, communication plays an important role. According to O'Connor, and Seymour (2003), communication begins with thoughts that managers share with others through words, voice intonation, and body language. When they think about what they see, hear, and feel, they internally create these images, sounds, and feelings again. They again experience information in the sensual form in which they have accepted them for the first time. Knight (2020) claims that the way they think influences their actions. When managers understand how their thinking forms their actions, they can catch and repeat the moments of excellent behaviour. Another NLP technique, rapport, creates an ideal state of communication based on trust and understanding (O'Connor and Seymour, 1990), which managers can use to influence human behaviour and encourage change and persuasion.

As Lazarus (2010) claims, rapport is one of the success principles and can be defined as creating the spirit of trust and respect to create a higher probability of cooperation. Stone (2005) says there would be only one-way communication without rapport. It requires practice and authenticity, which means managers should be prepared to accept other people's opinions, observations, or motivations. Bradbury (2010) says that when managers deal with another person, whether individually or in a group, they will always either follow or lead somebody.

Regardless of how much we know about NLP, we will either:

•   Act similarly as the other person – in NLP, it is called following, that is pacing

•   Act differently than the other person – what is called leadership, that is leading.

Tuning, that is pacing, is a key part of rapport in NLP. Under the term pacing in the managerial environment, we understand adapting to somebody managers are just communicating with in a way that leads to the creation of trust. In NLP, pacing is taught as a process that includes adapting the physiology, voice qualities, and keywords (Wake, 2011). According to Lübeck (2003), this is a process in which managers orientate emotionally to another person, they enter with the person in a resonance in which they try to co-feel with the person.

One of the signs of rapport among managers who communicate with people is their tendency to have the same body position. This harmony can be also shown in the harmony of the speech pace, voice tone, and loudness (Alder, 2006). Basu (2011) offers a technique by which a good rapport can be created with a person we do not

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know very well. According to his opinion, the fastest, easiest, and simplest method how to create a rapport relationship is to assume that we already have it. At a conscious level, we will send signals and a given person will react to them with a feeling of closeness and accessibility.

Leading means leadership, accompanying, and managing. According to Alder (2002), leading means influencing the behaviour of another person. Appropriate behaviour of another person is achieved by leading him/her when it is needed to become an agent of a change that is to create a change. This offers more control in communication. McCartney (2014) states that a manager adapting oneself and creating harmony with a partner for a certain time should lead to creating sufficient rapport which subsequently allows leading the partner where the manager wants. In this way, different representational systems of the partner can be used. If the partner follows the manager's leading, they have a good level of rapport. If the partner does not follow the manager's leading, it is necessary to turn back to harmony, and pacing and consequently continue again with leading.

According to Alder (2006), changes in physiology should be carried out gradually and not in a way that is too obvious. This technique can be used as a tool by persuading another person to think, feel, and act differently. A process in the business of any type is always based on pacing, rapport, and leading (Lübeck, 2003). Basu (2011) says that his understanding of a relationship is not only a basic principle of harmony and mirroring as understood within the NLP method.

Pacing and leading are used in many situations. They are used in marketing by copywriting to influence their readers and listeners so that they would feel as if the marketing managers would talk directly to them (Miller, 2017). Within the research, we focused on the managerial environment, while analysing the differences in the assessment of NLP techniques between female and male managers who have or do not have any experience with this model.

Based on the identification of NLP techniques, the basic goal of the research was to find out, whether there are statistically significant differences in their assessment between female and male managers who have completed and have not completed an NLP course. The aim was also to enrich the field of NLP knowledge with new findings, especially in terms of the ability to measure the effects of NLP and in terms of gender. There are many studies related to gender differences in different fields (Parmar, et al., 2022; Tovmasyan 2022; Fernández Puente and Sánchez-Sánchez, 2021; Spasova 2022) but not many in NLP research.

Research Methodology

We used the NLPT questionnaire - Neuro-linguistic programming techniques questionnaire (Frankovský et al., 2018) in the research. It includes 20 items describing four NLP techniques:

•	Representational systems – finding out and using the preferred way of thinking of the partner.

•	Rapport – a close relationship between communication partners

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- Pacing – the technique of creating rapport
- Leading – the technique of changing the partner's thoughts and subsequently the change in his behaviour

The respondents were answering each item on a 6-point scale of disagreement or agreement (0-definitely no, 1-no, 2-rather no than yes, 3-rather yes than no, 4-yes, 5-definitely yes). The obtained data were evaluated by the mathematical-statistical method of multivariate analysis of variance in the statistical programme SPSS 21.

Research Sample

The research sample consisted of 124 respondents, 58 (46,8%) female managers and 66 (53,2%) male managers aged from 22 to 63 years (average age 40,70 years, standard deviation 9,880 years) with a length of practice from 1 to 40 years (average length of practice 18,30 years, standard deviation 10,399 years).

The sample was created by 53 (42,7%) top managers, 36 (29,0%) middle-level managers, 10 (8,1%) first-level managers and 25 (20,2%) respondents were executive workers. The course in the area of NLP was attended and completed by 56 (45,2%) respondents, from which 28 (50%) were men and 28 (50%) were women with an average age of 43,46 years. The NLP course was not attended by 68 (54,8%) respondents, that is 38 (55,9%) male managers and 30 (44,1%) female managers with an average age of 38,43 years.

We used purposive sampling, which is a qualified, well-considered selection. We selected respondents according to the characteristics we determined. The main criterion was a sample of managers and also respondents who completed an NLP course (56 were participants of an NLP course). It is a time-consuming, laborious, but reliable method that guarantees the basic requirement - representativeness. Data collection took place between January and June 2022.

Research Results

The results of the multivariate analysis of variance (Table 1) confirmed statistically significant differences in the assessment of NLP techniques between the managers who attended and completed the NLP course and the managers who did not attend any NLP course (Table 2). At the same time, the analysis did not confirm statistically significant differences in assessing the NLP techniques concerning gender nor the interactive relationship by assessing these techniques between the attendance of NLP courses and gender.

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Table 1. Differences in assessing NLP techniques from the point of view of attending an NLP course in the context of gender

Source	Dependent Variable	F test	Significance
Gender	Representational systems	1,938	,166
	Rapport	,048	,827
	Pacing	,221	,639
	Leading	,024	,876
NLP	Representational systems	32,820	,000
	Rapport	14,833	,000
	Pacing	12,341	,001
	Leading	16,267	,000
Gender * NLP	Representational systems	,006	,937
	Rapport	,870	,353
	Pacing	1,358	,246
	Leading	1,841	,177

Source: Authors' elaboration

Table 2. Differences in assessing NLP techniques from the point of view of attending an NLP course

	NLP course	Average
Representational systems	Not attended	3,20
	Attended	3,93
Rapport	Not attended	3,83
	Attended	4,30
Pacing	Not attended	3,36
	Attended	3,83
Leading	Not attended	2,53
	Attended	3,21

Source: Authors' elaboration

When interpreting the presented results, it is inevitable to accept the fact that the assessment of individual techniques by the managers who attended the NLP training as well as by those who did not attend the NLP training was positive. The only exception was only the assessment of Leading by the respondents who did not attend the NLP training.

A more detailed analysis of the interactive relationship between attending the NLP training course and gender carried out at the level of individual items enabled us to identify several statistically significant interactions (Table 3, Figures 1 – 4).

Table 3. Differences in the assessment of the NLPT questionnaire items from the point of view of attending an NLP training course in the context of gender

Source	Dependent Variable	F test	Sig.
NLP *Gender	When speaking in front of people, I use several communication styles	8,278	,005
	In communication with a partner, I try to understand how the partner sees it.	3,952	,047
	I speak the language that the other party can understand	3,812	,049
	In communication, I use my partner's experience, by which I lead him to a new way of thinking about a problem	6,489	,012

Source: Authors' elaboration

The presented interaction relations in the assessment of individual items of the NLPT questionnaire between the completion of the training and the gender point to an interesting tendency. In the group of managers who did not attend any NLP training course, male managers expressed a lower level of agreement with individual items of NLP techniques than female managers. Contrary to that, in the group of managers who completed an NLP course, male managers expressed a higher degree of agreement with individual items of NLP techniques than female managers (Figures 1 – 4).
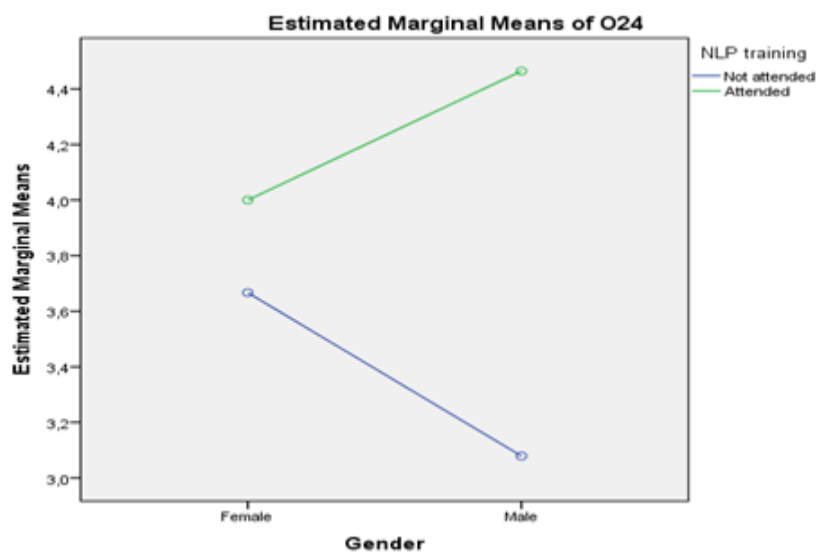
Figure 1: Assessment of the item "When speaking in front of people, I use several communication styles" from the point of view of attending an NLP training course in the context of gender

Figure 1 shows that the statement "When speaking in front of people, I use several styles of communication" was assessed by the respondents as statistically significant (.005). The interaction was examined between men and women before and after taking the NLP course. Women, regardless of whether they completed the course or not, rated the item similarly. Their answers were on the scale of agreement "yes". Men rated the given statement higher (Valinurova et al., 2022) on the "definitely yes" scale of the agreement after taking the course. Before the course, they assessed on a scale of "rather yes".
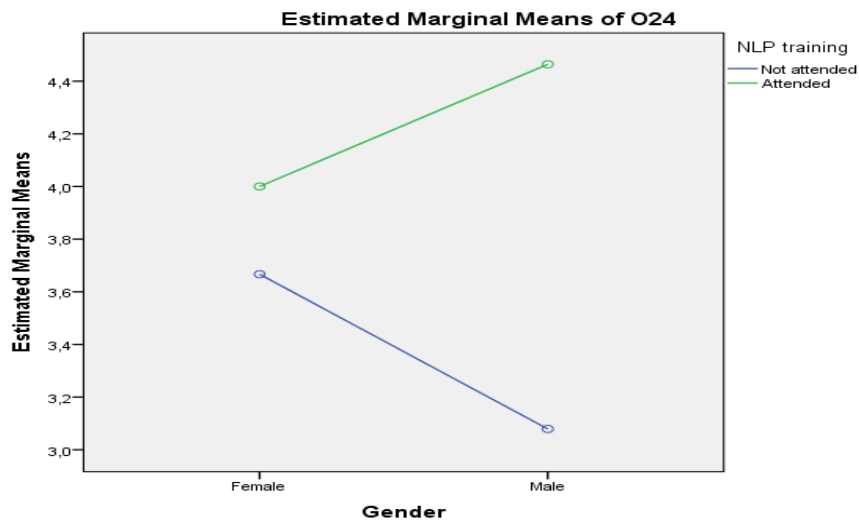
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Figure 2: Assessment of the item "In communication with a partner, I try to understand how the partner sees it" from the point of view of attending an NLP training course in the context of gender

Figure 2 shows that the statement "In communication with a partner, I try to understand how the partner sees it" was assessed by the respondents as statistically significant (.047). Also in this statement, the interaction between men and women was investigated before and after taking the NLP course. Similar to the first statement, women's answers were evaluated regardless of whether they completed the course or not similarly (from "yes" to "rather yes"). Again, men's responses differ before and after taking the NLP course. The men rated the given statement on a "rather yes" scale of agreement before completing the course, and after completing the course, their answers are closer to the "definitely yes" scale of agreement.
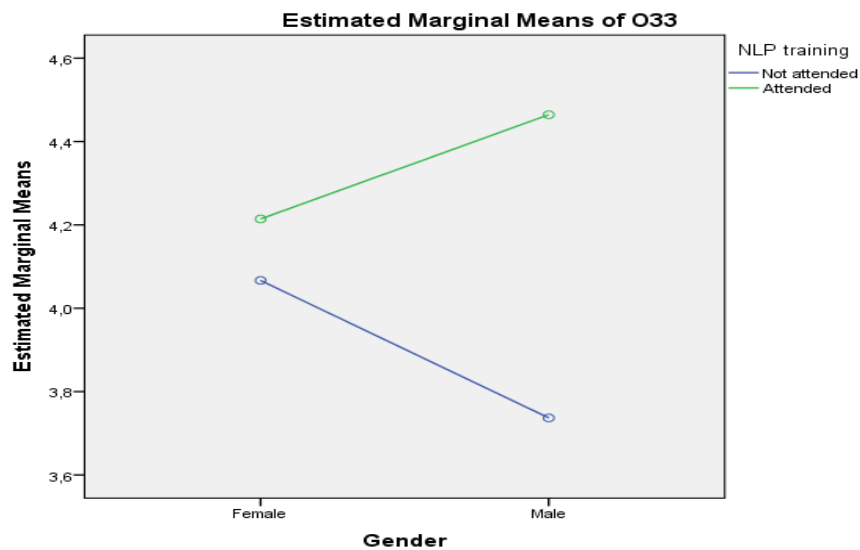
Figure 3: Assessment of the item "I speak the language that the other side will understand" from the point of view of attending an NLP training course in the context of gender

We can see a similar tendency of the answers in Figure 3, in which we present the respondents' answers to the statement " I speak the language that the other party can understand". The women rated the statement before and after the NLP course on a "yes" agreement scale. Men's responses vary. Before the course, the answers are on the "rather yes" scale, and after the course on the "definitely yes" scale. Statistical significance is at the level of .049.
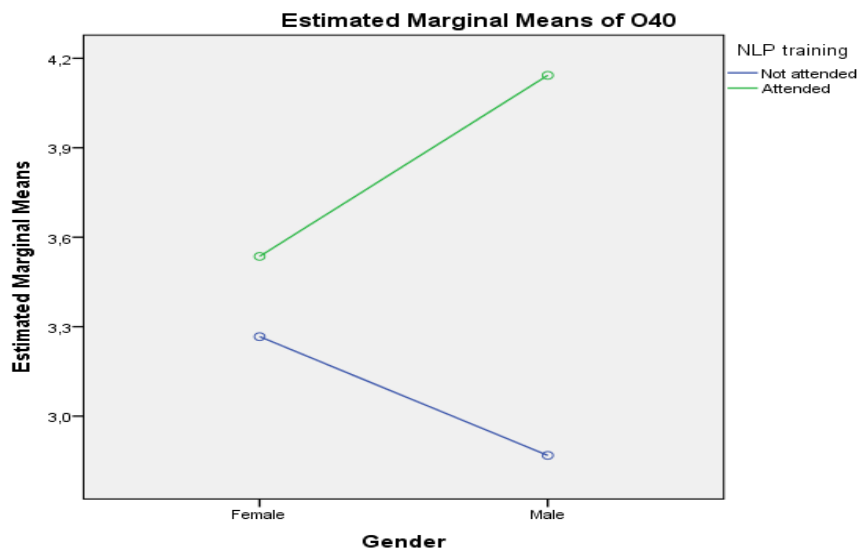
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Figure 4: Assessment of the item "In communication, I use partner's experience by which I lead him to a new way of thinking about a problem" from the point of view of attending an NLP training course in the context of gender

As in the previous statements, when assessing the statement "When communicating, I use the experience of my partner, thereby leading him to a new way of thinking about the problem", the group of men who did not complete the NLP training expressed the level of agreement on the lower scale as "rather yes" and after completing " yes". Again, the women answered approximately the same on the scale between "rather yes" and "yes", regardless of whether they completed the course or not. Statistical significance is at the .012 level.

In all four statements, there is a similar tendency to the answers of men and women before and after completing the NLP courses. Men were more likely to revise their assessment of a statement on the agreement scale after the course. After completing the NLP course, men expressed a higher degree of agreement with individual items of NLP techniques than women (Figure 1-4).

Discussion

Using a multivariant analysis, the NLP effects were examined based on the analysis of the differences in the assessment of NLP techniques between the managers who attended and completed an NLP course and those who did not attend any NLP training course in the context of gender differences.

The interpreted difference in the assessment of NLP techniques between the managers who did not attend or attended the NLP training course speaks in favour of accepting the effects of NLP training courses. The results also emphasize the fact

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that NLP is not only about understanding communication with others. It is mainly about understanding oneself. When managers understand how their brain functions, they will be able to better understand the behaviour of others. The intention of providing information about NLP is to have a choice. Understanding communication from the point of view of NLP offers a possibility to find reasons how and based on what managers communicate the way they communicate and how they behave. It is important to know that not the circumstances but reactions to circumstances determine how they will behave in a given situation (Krištofovič, 2016).

The absence of statistically significant gender differences in the assessment of NLP techniques shows the universality of using these techniques minimally from the point of view of gender specifics of managers. The research results also point to the need to conduct deeper analyses of the effects of NLP training courses. The presented findings based on the interaction analysis of gender and the completion of an NLP training course pointed out interesting gender specifics in this context.

At the same time, they contribute to a more general theoretical-methodological discussion about a meaningful level of finding out different attributes at the level of assessment as well as at the level of prediction. Based on the presented findings, it is possible to confirm the absence of statistically significant interactions between gender and attending or not attending an NLP training course at a highly generalized level of assessing the individual NLP techniques by managers. On the contrary, based on the findings, it is possible to present the existence of statistically significant interactions between the gender of managers and attending and not attending an NLP training course at a more particular level of individual items.

Conclusion

The results of the conducted research speak in favour of confirming the effect of NLP techniques in the managerial environment. Singh (2008) describes the effect of NLP in terms of improving communication with oneself as well as in terms of communication with other people, in the context of managerial work by the authors Daňková, Droppa (2015), in the context of services and marketing by the authors Štefko et al., (2014). Tripathi (2012) claims that by using NLP techniques, it is possible to understand the emotional and behavioural patterns of the behaviour of oneself. The NLP techniques can be applied They can be applied to improve the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of individuals in different areas of the economic as well as the non-economic environment. Through this, people can achieve the results they thought were unattainable or overcome obstacles in their personal growth.

NLP helps people in business and management to achieve exceptional results, set goals, improve communication, and work relationships, and at the same time, work and function in harmony, internally and externally. Many successful leaders use NLP techniques to help them achieve success. Business courses teach managers how to be successful in business but not in life.

NLP courses offer a comprehensive approach to solving some problems (e.g. prevention against burn-out syndrome). Through NLP techniques, it is possible for managers to reveal their inner potential and achieve unique results, success, and inner and outer balance in life.

A practical recommendation for managers that results from our study is to take and complete an NLP course or similar courses aimed at developing the potential of managers regardless of gender and to use NLP elements at work in managing human resources in a company.

The limit of the presented research is the sample size, as it is difficult to approach managers after completing a specific NLP course. In the future, we plan to expand the study by experimental verification of the effectiveness of NLP techniques. Based on experimental research, we plan to identify differences in the assessment of the control and experimental groups before and after completing the NLP course.

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IDENTYFIKACJA EFEKTÓW TECHNIK PROGRAMOWANIA NEUROLINGWISTYCZNEGO W ŚRODOWISKU MENEDŻERSKIM W KONTEKŚCIE ZRÓŻNICOWANYCH PŁCI

Streszczenie: Podstawowym celem badań było znalezienie statystycznie istotnych różnic w ocenie wybranych technik NLP (systemów reprezentacji, relacji, tempa, przywództwa) przez menedżerów i menedżerów, którzy uczestniczyli i nie uczestniczyli w kursie NLP. W badaniach wykorzystano kwestionariusz NLPT (neurolingwistyczne techniki programowania). Dane zebrano od 124 menedżerów – 58 kobiet i 66 mężczyzn menedżerów wszystkich szczebli zarządzania. Wyniki pokazują, że respondenci, którzy uczestniczyli w kursie NLP, lepiej oceniali badane techniki NLP. Różnice płciowe i interakcja między płcią a ukończeniem kursu NLP poprzez ocenę technik NLP nie zostały potwierdzone. Istotna statystycznie zależność została zidentyfikowana jedynie na poziomie wybranych pozycji metodologii NLPT. Badanie przyniosło nowe wyniki w badaniach pomiaru efektów technik NLP w odniesieniu do płci oraz przyczyniło się do poznania i teorii technik NLP w kontekście różnic płciowych w środowisku menedżerskim.

Słowa kluczowe: programowanie neurolingwistyczne, menedżerowie, płeć, techniki NLP

在性别差异的背景下识别神经语言编程技术在管理环境中的影响

摘要：该研究的主要目的是找出参加和未参加 NLP 课程的女性和男性经理在对所选 NLP 技术（表征系统、融洽关系、步调、领导）进行评估时的统计显着差异。 该研究使用了 NLPT 问卷（神经语言编程技术）。 数据收集自 124 名管理人员——各级管理人员中有 58 名女性和 66 名男性管理人员。 结果表明，参加过 NLP 课程的受访者对所检查的 NLP 技术的评价更为积极。 性别差异以及性别与通过评估 NLP 技术完成 NLP 课程之间的相互作用并未得到证实。 仅在 NLPT 方法的选定项目级别上确定了统计上显着的关系。 该研究为衡量 NLP 技术对性别的影响的研究带来了新发现，并为管理环境中性别差异背景下的 NLP 技术知识和理论做出了贡献

关键词: 神经语言程序设计, 管理者, 性别, NLP 技术