

Leadership as an attribute of management style of women from the Silesian Voivodeship

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Abstract The paper has both theoretical and empirical nature and focuses on the feminine style of management as an important attribute of leadership in an organisation. The aim of the paper is to present diagnosis features the feminine style of management on the example of firms from Silesian Voivodeship. Empirical part of the paper presents analysis of the survey results within selected aspects of the feminine style of management in the enterprises examined. Primary data collected during a quantitative study using questionnaire surveys, with a survey questionnaire as a research tool. The questionnaire was addressed to randomly selected employees of small, medium, and big enterprises located in Silesian Voivodeship that is situated in Poland.

Our results reveal that women are better suited for operational activities that require building good relationships than men do. Unfortunately, we also find that women in managerial positions are promoted at a slower rate and receive lower pay than men in the same positions.

1 Introduction

The civilisation and cultural transformations of the 21st century, as well as the social and economic changes worldwide have contributed to women's participation in the process of management and to an increase in their professional ambitions (Holska 2017). In a turbulent environment where hardly anything is certain or stable and which is marked with a huge and chaotic information flow due to communication with several persons at the same time, a management style based on cooperation and listening works best.

The authors were inspired to write this paper by the questions connected with women's participation in the labour market, which is shaped in various spheres of the economic and social life. This has been impacted to a large extent by the process of intensive transformations over the past dozen or so years, and consequently the participation of both sexes in business, as well as the existing dichotomy of relationships between women's professional aspirations and the possibility of fulfilling them. The authors were also intrigued by the questions of why it is easier for men compared to women to have a successful professional career. Why are women much less likely to be successful in their professional career compared to men even though they have the same qualifications? The aim of the paper is to present a diagnosis of female and male styles of management using companies from Silesian Voivodeship as a specific case study.

Our paper is based on analysis of Polish and foreign literature from the field of management devoted to the issues of leadership and management styles. The empirical part of the paper presents analysis of the findings of a study addressing selected aspects of the female and male management styles in the analysed enterprises.

2 Leadership and leadership styles in the literature

Since at least the 1930s, the definition of leadership has been a topic of scholarly and popular debate, yet a generally agreed-on definition has yet to emerge (Northouse 2015). Leadership, in all of its forms - whether in organisations, politics, uniformed public services or even sport – continues to attract attention of public opinion (Gipson and Pfaff et al. 2017). When analysing leadership, it is worth pointing out that it is a special type of power. According to Etzioni, leadership is a type of power that involves the leader's ability, based on his/her personal qualities, to make his/her followers voluntarily obey him/her in a wide range of matters. Leadership differs from power in that it involves influence, i.e. leads to change in preferences, whereas power only makes the subordinates suspend their preferences (Etzioni 1965).

One of the first forerunners of leadership is James MacGregor Burns (1978). He formulated the first definition of transformational leadership, introducing a distinction between transactional leadership (based on transaction) and transformational leadership (based on changes). According to him, transformational leadership significantly surpasses the transactional one, as "the objectives of the leader and those of his/her subordinates are complementary, expectations are created by reference to higher needs and the follower is fully engaged." Transformational leadership is to a large extent based on "charisma, communication of vision, treating an individual as a whole and intellectual stimulation by offering new solutions" (Griffin 1996). Griffin describes leadership as "exceeding ordinary expectations, conveying a sense of mission, encouraging the process of learning and inspiring new ways of thinking."

A new view on leadership was introduced by Trice and Beyer in the late 1980s. Their approach combines elements of transformational leadership and charisma. Many researchers describe it as leadership of the future (Makin et al. 2000). The aim of this concept is to increase emphasis on vision, change and engagement. New leadership is transformational, charismatic, visionary and magic. A somewhat different perspective of leadership is offered by Leavitt, an American theoretician in the area of organisational behaviour and psychology, who uses the term "pathfinder" to refer to managers showing imagination, creativity and ability to propose new organisations or new directions for the already existing organisations (Leavitt 1987). Leadership involves building relations through two-way communication with people (Hassan and Silong 2008). When analysing the definitions of leadership, it is worth pointing out that leadership can be developed. The process of developing leadership can be described as „expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes” (Day 2001). Women and men differ in their perception of leadership (Kiser 2015). They have different life and professional experiences and these differences should not be ignored in the development of leadership (Budworth and Mann 2010).

Ruling and management has for centuries been in the hands of men and so far, little has changed. However, the difference between men's and women's leadership is significant, permanent and systemic. Male predominance in areas connected with power and top-level management is a phenomenon observed all over the world. Unwillingness to make women leaders is especially visible in the political arena, where they very rarely occupy key positions. An important element of leadership is selection of a leadership style, which should be understood as a leader's adopted and used way of perceiving himself/herself and his/her subordinates in the context of organisational networks (Steyer 1998). A style of management should also be understood as a relatively permanent and repetitive way in which a superior impacts his/her subordinates in order to make them adopt such attitudes and behaviour that will allow an organisation to achieve its objectives. Thus, it defines a manager's attitude towards subordinates, their needs as well as professional and personal problems. It also significantly impacts the character of relationships between the manager and subordinates and within the teams of employees.

The female and male styles of management in business differ significantly. Men occupying managerial positions are mainly characterised by self-confidence, easiness of making decisions and capability of strategic planning, as well as effectiveness in negotiations and ability to lead people. Women are mainly characterised by great attention to detail, high level of business ethics and honesty, good communication skills, expensive factual knowledge and professionalism (Zakrzewska-Bielawska 2012). According to Rosener (2003), women are characterised by an interactive style of management, which is in line with their life experience and involves orientation towards cooperation and communication with others. In contrast, men prefer coercive-controlling, authoritarian style of management (Rosner 2003). Most authors claim that women and men can achieve comparable effectiveness in management. Both the sexes use both autocratic and democratic styles of management. However, women are more likely to use the democratic

style of management, which is more about cooperation than giving orders, and manage in an authoritarian way if it is necessary to introduce norms (Wiśniewska-Szałek 2007).

The female style of management is characterised by: partnership-based relationships with subordinates, orientation towards compromise and mediation, thinking in terms of what is good for people, matter-of-factness and effectiveness, emphasis on communication and interpersonal skills, high emotional intelligence, ability to motivate subordinates with ease, easiness of sharing knowledge by mentorship and coaching, cooperation and teamwork, participation-based democracy.

According to Fisher (2003), women tend to think in a contextual, holistic way. They look at issues more broadly compared to male bosses, take into account more data, factors and options while making decisions, and perceive more ways in which actions can be taken. Women prefer network thinking to sequential thinking, with the latter being focused, compartmentalised, linear and characteristic of males (Fisher 2003). Brol and Kosior think that the female style of management can be described as "managing through love", while the male one as "managing through fear." The female management is based on partnership relationships between the superior and subordinates, thinking in terms of what is good for people, orientation towards compromise and mediation, and significant emphasis on communication and interpersonal skills. The female style of management uses emotional intelligence to effectively motivate, cooperate and work in a team (Brol and Kosior 2004). Eagly and Carli (2003) point out that the male style of management is effective and goal-oriented, while the female one is characterised by wide interpersonal contacts, communication, and decreased effectiveness when cooperating with men in managerial roles (Eagly and Carli 2003).

Women show more characteristics that are attributed to the transformation leader, so theoretically they should be in managerial roles more often than men (Kandola 2004). They attach less importance to hierarchy, find it easier to establish contacts and maintain bonds, cooperate rather than compete, and above all build their success by striving to achieve a common goal. This is a style of management that is based on creative leadership, giving employees more freedom in taking actions and decisions. It provides a chance for women, because they have resources that allow them to be successful in managerial roles without resigning from the natural aspects of their personality. According to Peters, women make better leaders than men, because they are more determined and win trust more easily than men. He thinks that women are also better salespersons (thanks to their good communication skills) and investors (thanks to cautious decision-making). They also more often educate themselves and are open to changes (Peters 2005). Some researchers claim that the female style of management is more suitable for today's conditions and the modern form of enterprises compared to the male one. The literature offers examples of analyses covering the tactics applied by women and men in business. One of them is a comparative analysis of the tactics used by women and men in management by Guadagno and Cialdini (2007).

Women are much less likely to participate in scramble and competition for power, influence or dominance in an organisation. Women manage through cooperation and treating team members as partners (Opperman and Weber 200). They are also characterised by high emotional intelligence. Research shows that women score better compared to men on almost all of the components of emotional intelligence: they are more empathetic, better at recognising and naming their own feelings, deal better with frustration and stress, can concentrate better, and solve conflicts and interpersonal problems more effectively (Pinker 2005). Women's contribution to the style of management mainly includes competencies in effective communication as well as building relations and dialogue. Nikulina et al. (2016) stress that women integrate employees and are able to cooperate. Researchers' views on the female and male styles of management presented in this part of the paper enabled identification of the attributes of those styles (Nikulina et al. 2016).

3 Management style of women from the Silesian Voivodeship: methodological aspects and research findings

The empirical studies regarding professional career were conducted between January 2016 and May 2016. They covered 358 inhabitants of the Silesian Voivodeship. They used the method of a diagnostic survey, with the research tool being an original survey questionnaire consisting of 27 questions divided into three parts.

The aim of the study was, among other things, to define factors determining the development of a professional career of women and men. A non-probabilistic (non-random) method of sampling was selected, i.e. purposive sampling. For that reason, the findings of the studies cannot be generalised to the entire population. They only characterise a fragment of the reality. They present some symptomatic opinions of residents of the Silesian Voivodeship and may contribute to further research into the issues addressed in the paper.

In this paper, the following question was adopted as the research problem: What are the distinctive features of the female style of management? For the purpose of the studies, the following research hypotheses have been formulated:

- *H1: The female style of management is characterised by focus on people.*
- *H2: The female style of management is democratic and based on partnership.*

For the purpose of this paper, only the responses of women (N=178) were analysed. At the beginning of the study, the research population was characterised in terms of such features as: gender, age, professional activity, years worked, position at work, partner's professional activity, place of residence (subregion of the Silesian Voivodeship), which are presented in detail in Table 1 that follows.

Table 1. Characteristics of the research population (N=358)

Characteristics of the respondents		Structure of the women participating in the study		Structure of the men participating in the study		Overall structure of the respondents	
		N=178	(%)	N=180	(%)	N=358	(%)
Age	below 25 years old	18	10.1	27	15.0	45	12.6
	25-34	61	34.3	59	32.8	120	33.5
	35-44	50	28.1	41	22.8	91	25.4
	45-54	36	20.2	36	20.0	72	20.1
	55-64	11	6.2	14	7.8	25	7.0
	over 64 years old	2	1.1	3	1.7	5	1.4
Professional activity	yes	177	99.4	174	96.7	351	98.0
	no	1	0.6	6	3.3	7	2.0
Years worked	below 5 years	28	15.7	30	16.7	58	16.2
	5-10 years	39	21.9	50	27.8	89	24.9
	11-15 years	43	24.2	30	16.7	73	20.4
	16-20 years	25	14.0	20	11.1	45	12.6
	21-25 years	26	14.6	20	11.1	46	12.8
	26-30 years	4	2.2	10	5.6	14	3.9
	over 30 years	13	7.3	20	11.1	33	9.2
Position at work	management	91	51.1	98	54.4	189	52.8
	employee that is not in managerial role	84	47.2	78	43.3	162	45.3
	I don't work	3	1.7	4	2.2	7	2.0
Place of residence - subregion of the Silesian Voivodeship	Central	85	47.8	118	65.6	203	56.7
	Northern	41	23.0	4	2.2	45	12.6
	Southern	34	19.1	26	14.4	60	16.8
	Western	18	10.1	32	17.8	50	14.0

Source: Own results

First, the respondents were asked whether women can work in managerial positions just as men do. 73.0% of the respondents indicated "definitely yes" as the answer to this question, while 20.2% indicated "rather yes". The response "definitely no" was indicated by 1.1%, while "hard to say" - by 5.6%.

The next issue concerned women's skills that allow them to occupy managerial positions. The respondents were asked to indicate five such skills. Figure 1 presents the structure of the responses. According to the female respondents, skills that to a largest extent predispose women to occupy managerial positions are interpersonal skills (53.9%), ability to build a creative team and ability to operate under stress (36.0% each). Leadership skills were indicated by 33.1% of the female respondents. Men, in turn, mainly noticed interpersonal skills in women (68.9%) and the ability to create a creative team (39.4%).

The female respondents were also asked whether they agreed with certain statements about women in management (fig. 2). The majority of the respondents claimed (responses "I completely agree" and "I agree")

that women: look at issues in a broader way compared to men (76.4%), are able to work under the pressure of time (75.8%), perceive a company as a whole, (74.7%), find it easier to establish contacts and maintain bonds (72.5%), find it easier to gain trust (71.9%) and rely on intuition when taking decisions (71.3%). Men, in turn, noticed that women act based on intuition (75.6%) and find it easier to gain trust (65.6%). Thus, the respondents' responses indicate that in the process of management women show behaviour that is focused on people and a holistic approach to their organisation.

The studies also included indication of the gender of managers who achieve better results in the different categories (fig. 3). According to the female respondents, their style of management is characterised by such attributes as: good organisation of own work (93.8%), maintaining a high level of professional ethics (87.6%), personal development and learning new skills (82.6%), effective communication with the team and superiors (78.5%), motivating employees (80.3%), good organisation of the team's work (78.5%), continuous learning about the enterprise (75.3%), setting current tasks (70.8%), openness to changes and novelties (60.1%), keeping a balance between work and private life (52.8%). Thus, according to the female respondents, the female style of management is characterised by focus on people, own development and management of employees, and organisation of own work and the work of the team. The male style of management is described by women as bold and decisive acting, and strategic approach to management. Men, in turn, see the following attributes of the female style of management: maintaining a high level of professional ethics (72.8%), keeping a balance between work and private life (62.8), effective communication with the team and superiors (62.2%) and good organisation of own work (61.1%).

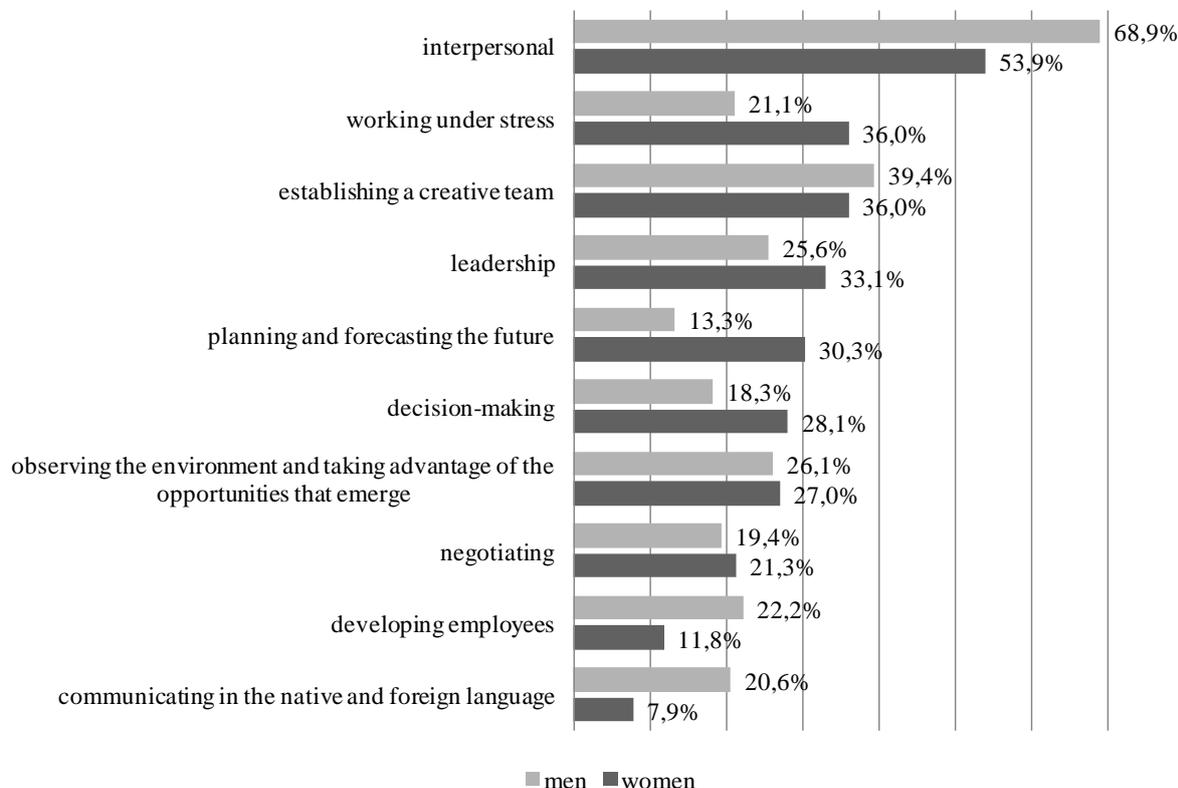


Fig.1. Women's skills that predispose them to occupy top positions, according to women and men.
Source: Own results

Women were also asked about the techniques of exerting influence on people that are most often used by women and men. According to the female respondents, women mainly use the following three techniques of exerting influence (Figure 4):

- consultation and endearing, i.e. persuading others by engaging them in the process of working on a given issue or provoking others to express their opinions about it (82.0%);
- inspiration - referring to common values and ideals (80.9%);
- coalition, i.e. creation of a kind of an alliance, a group of people who confident about a certain idea will more easily impact others than one person (68.5%).

Men, in turn, (according to women) use the following techniques of exerting influence:

- rational justification - referring to facts, data, numbers and logical arguments that follow from them (39.9%);
- exchange - offering benefits in return for doing work (42.1%);
- pressure, i.e. direct coercion - order, expressing an expectation, reminding in a persistent way, referring to a higher rank (24.2%).

The male respondents, in turn, indicated the following techniques as most often used by women: consultation and endearing (65.0%), inspiration (60.6%) and coalition (57.2%). Thus, women manage in a way that is democratic and based on partnership, and relies on three main elements, i.e. emotions, intelligence and intuition, which are of key importance for interpersonal contacts.

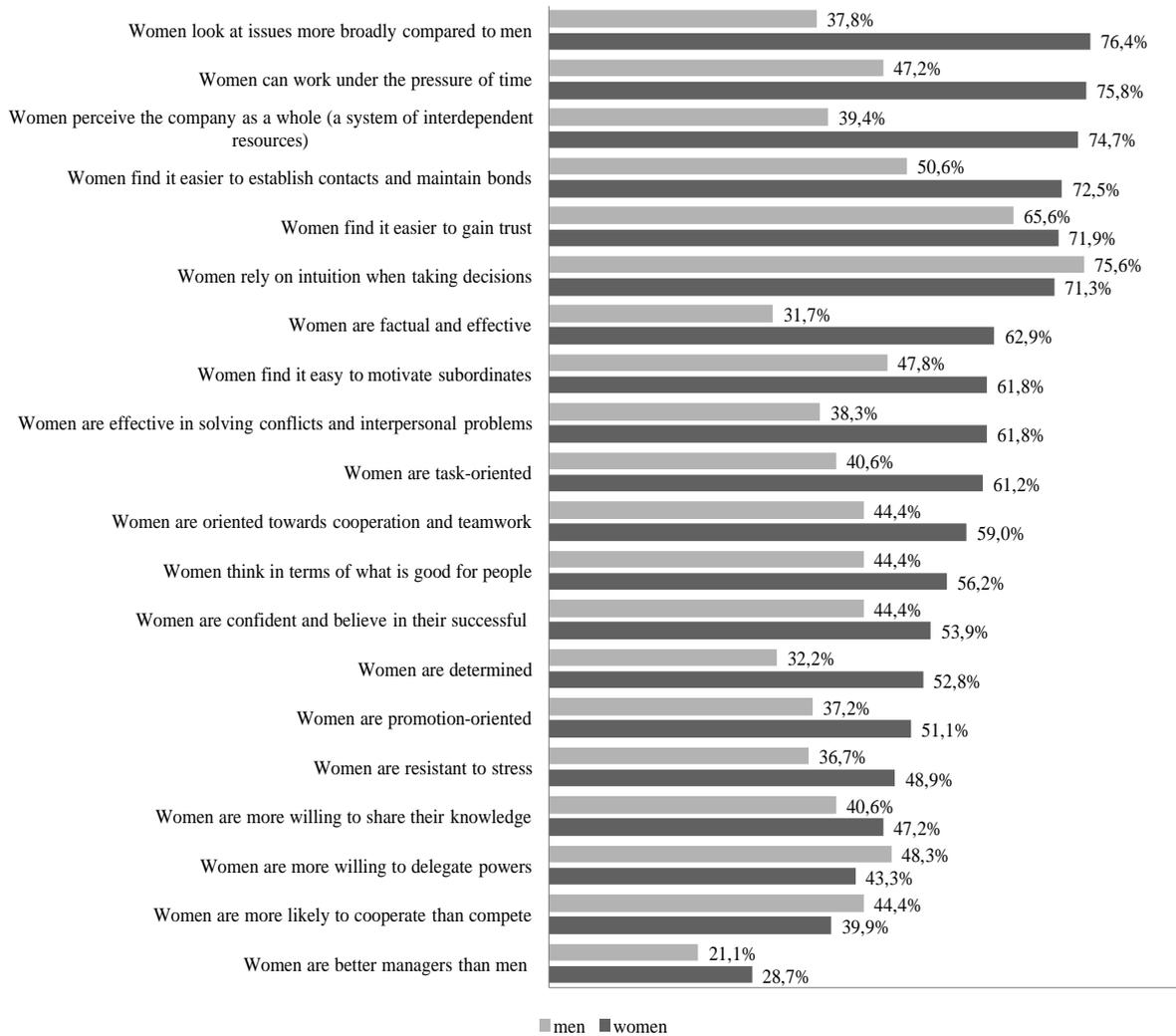


Fig. 2. Women in management as perceived by women and men
Source: Own results

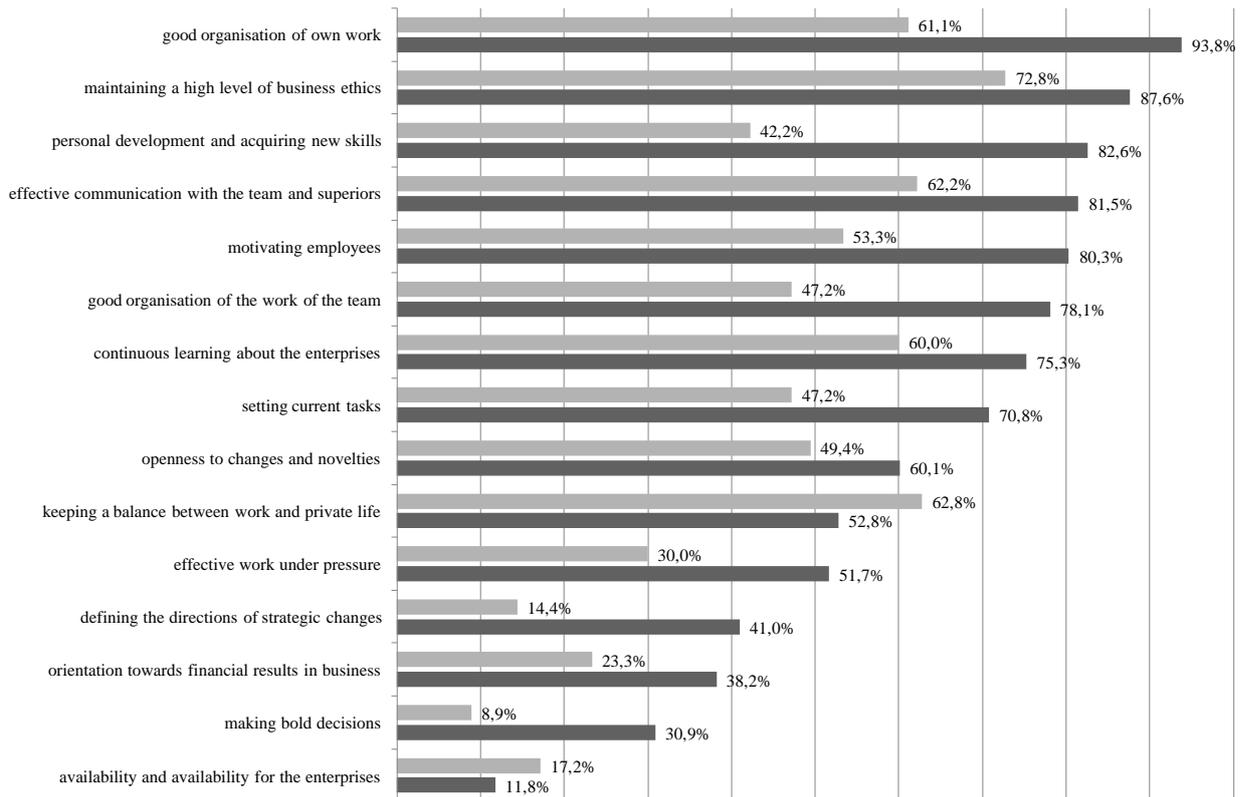


Fig. 3. Attributes of the female style of management according to women and men
Source: Own results

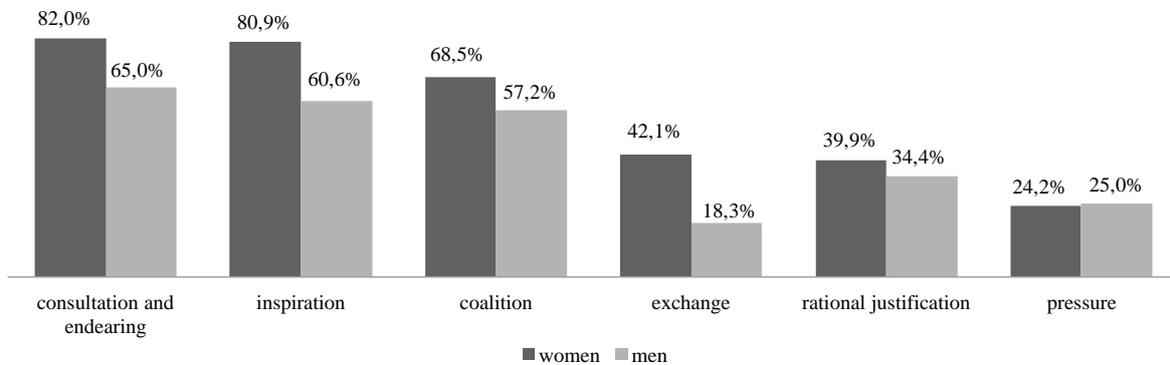


Fig. 4. Techniques of exerting influence used by women according to women and men
Source: Own results

4 Conclusions

Today's labour market places increasing responsibility on employees. They are expected to possess numerous specific qualifications and a range of universal competencies, which currently constitute the fundamental factor in competitive advantage. Women find it increasingly easier to build their own positions compared to men, from whom more traditional measures are expected (Dzieńdziora 2017).

The paper, in accordance with its aim, presented the female and male styles of management using companies from the Silesian Voivodeship as an example. As shown by researchers' opinions presented in the paper and the results of the questionnaire survey, the male and female styles of management differ significantly. Men usually manage in an authoritarian way, while women in a way that is democratic and based on partnership. There is an increasingly widespread view that the female style of management is the future, as it is based on three elements: emotions, intelligence and intuition, which are of key importance for interpersonal contacts. However, it should be stressed that despite significant differences between the female and male styles of management, it is impossible to indicate which of them is better. Depending on the knowledge and skills of managers in a given organisation, the character of problems to be solved and

numerous internal and external factors, both these styles overlap in practice, forming a variety of ways of managing diversity. Taking into account the benefits of diversity for an organisation, conditions should be created for development of the female and male styles of management.

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