

INTRODUCTION, OBJECT

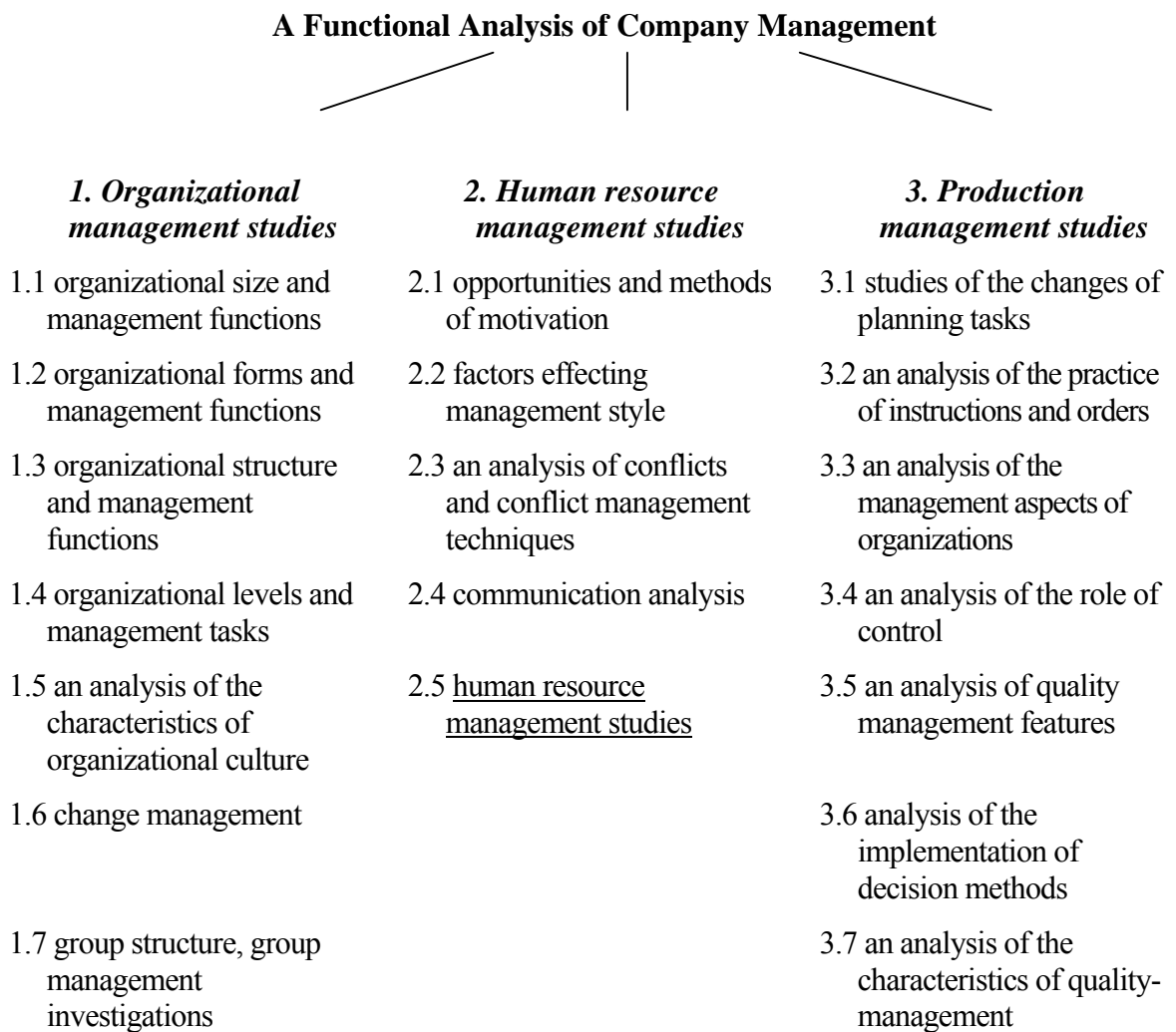
The main object of my thesis (which is based on professional bibliography; analytical approach and my own research) to draw up the present situation and satisfaction of managers (top, mid- and operative) working in agrarian sphere, compare their managerial competencies to other agricultural managers by analyzing their test results from many views. The goals of my research were the following:

- Statistical analysis of the examined managerial sample (ratio of genders, age, qualifications, region, number of years spent as a manager at the present workplace).
- Evaluation and analysis of the *managerial position - evaluating questionnaire* regarding position and satisfaction in the examined sample.
- Based on the results of the *managerial position - evaluating questionnaire* working out of a „*complex managerial index*” which can describe the managerial satisfaction level of the individuals, organizations, regions, and compare these results to each other.
- Examination of the question: which background variables effect the situation of managers, and their competencies.
- Evaluation and analysis of the managerial competency test on the examined sample, mapping ranking list and development opportunities of managerial competencies.
- Elaborating an index system, a “*competency-index*”, with which each and every member of the organization can be characterized along all competency factors.
- Examination of which background variables effect the variations of competency-indexes.
- After the examination and analysis of the correlations making conclusions and statements, to give suggestions to help that may help the effectiveness of agricultural management, and give directions to the improvement of managerial competencies.
- Elaborating some alternative development solutions based upon the position evaluation of agrarian managers. Surveying the opportunity of application of competencies in practice, giving solutions for mapping and developing managerial competencies, and introduction to the organizations’ HR system.

ANTECEDENTS AND ADOPTED METHODS

My investigations were carried out as a part of a research program entitled „**A Functional Analysis of Company Management**” set out by the Debrecen University, Department of Management Studies (BERDE, 2000). The structure of the research program is represented on figure 1.

Figure 1.: The structure of the research program



Source: Berde Cs. (2000): Functional analysis of company management

My research is connected to the theme titled „human resource management” within the *human management researches* program.

I built my researches on the results of **two managerial questionnaires**, which were used simultaneously.

The first questionnaire, the *managerial position - evaluating questionnaire*, that I elaborated, according to the methodical suggestion of social researches, has 40 questions assembling in 8 topics. With the help of the 8 topics (1. Goals, mission; 2. Innovation; 3. Leadership; 4. Cooperation; 5. Communication style, information flow; 6. Motivation; 7. Commitment, identity; 8. Flexible, learning organization) we can explore impediments, which can affect the ideal operation of the organization, and map the strengths, that provide the successful performance. The analysis of the questionnaire's results can give an overall picture about the situation and satisfaction of the three managerial levels. The questionnaire's items had to be classed to seven categories, in the "Likert 7- grade scale", according to what extent the subject agrees with the statements.

The another approach I used was: *R. E. Boyatzis' competency questionnaire*, which measures the competencies along 12 factors (1.Help; 2. Sense making; 3. Information gathering; 4. Information analysis; 5. Theory; 6. Quantitative; 7. Technology; 8. Goal - setting; 9. Action; 10. Initiative; 11. Leadership and management; 12. Relationship). The questionnaire consists of two parts, which contain the same 72-72 items. However, according to the instruction, the two parts measure and compare two different things. The first part of the questionnaire measures what extent the answerer feels the competency-criteria acquired, where he places himself concerning a given competency-criterion (own values). The other part of the questionnaire measures what extent the person thinks the same competency-criteria important to his job (expected values).

Each item had to be sorted into one of the seven categories; according to what extent the answerer feels them acquired or important to his job. I worked out the evaluations according to the guidance of CSEH-SZOMBATI L. – FERGE ZS. (1971).

The basic mass of my researches is composed of whole managements (top, mid-, and operative) of 19 companies, which means N=1456 assessable individual tests altogether. The tests were carried out between 1998 and 2002. In Geographical meaning the basic mass extends to the whole territory of Hungary. I used simple random sampling, which type was mechanical (systematic) sampling. During my research I used inductive approach, i.e. the results are referred to the target group, the agricultural sphere. Masses can be best characterized by their average and standard deviation index. Statistics use average and variance most often. (HUNYADI et al., 2001) I sorted out the sample to get

homogeneous parts in a respect. In order to make homogeneous groups I used certain criteria regarding managerial levels (top, mid-, operative) and sex, age, qualification, number of years spent as a manager at the present workplace. I defined regions: Western Hungary, Middle-Hungary, and Eastern Hungary. I evaluated the questionnaires by topics and factors; I ranked the questions in virtue of the calculated average. At the same time I made their distribution and graduation analysis.

I used SPSS 10,0 software for making calculations with average, variance, and standard error of variables, furthermore it helped to calculate the significance level of the difference of variables based on the calculated t value beside given degree of freedom. I also examined the effects of *the different background variables (sex, age, qualification, region, number of years spent as manager at the present workplace)*, on the results of the position evaluation of managers.

I used the independent sampled (two-sampled) “t-probe” statistical method to compare the expectable values of two groups. Furthermore I examined if there is a significant difference between groups made on the basis of other variables (status, age, qualification, region, number of years spent as manager at the present workplace). I used the most convenient “one-standpoint independent sample variance-analysis method” to compare the group averages with each other. I reckoned the $P < 0,05$ values to be significant only.

For the sake of the survey I created grouped variables based on different parameters of agricultural organizations:

- The examined companies’ general parameter was the size of the organization. For defining groups, according to the size of the organization (number of employees), I referred to KSH.
- The other aspect was profitability, as a general parameter, which characterizes the economical efficiency of the company. I categorized the companies according to their EBIT (earnings before taxes).
- I made manager groups according to their status (top-, mid-, operative).
- The examined managers’ age, and gender were also aspect to make groups for men and women, managers between 20-30, 30-40, 40-50 and over 50 years.
- The qualification was also a grouping aspect: I made separate groups for those, who got their qualification from technical school, technical college, high school, college or university.

- I also made attention to the number of the years that the given manager spent at his workplace. I made separate groups for those who worked less than 1, 1-5, 6-10, or more than 10 years as a manager.

Development of the complex managerial index

Based on the results of the managerial position-evaluation questionnaire, I worked out a „*complex managerial index*” which can describe and compare the satisfaction level of the individuals, organizations, regions etc. with each other. I calculated the summarized test scores of each and every person. The highest score that can be given to the managerial position-evaluation questionnaire’s 40 questions, is 280 (seven-grade scale), the lowest score is 40. I made three groups based on the scores of the satisfaction levels, (under average, average, over the average satisfaction level).

I calculated the complex managerial index of the whole sample (N=1456), than sorting out the individual scores in the three groups above, I defined the percentage of the categories related to the whole sample. In the end I defined the distribution of the three regions’ (Western Hungarian, Middle-Hungarian, eastern-Hungarian) satisfaction levels.

Development of the summarized competency-index

Improving Boyatzis' competency measuring questionnaire, I worked out the *summarized competency-index*, which was the difference of the own (self-evaluation dates) and the expected (position sensitive) competency-scores.

The summarized competency-index: $K_i = \bar{X}_{(own)} - \bar{X}_{(expected)}$

Where: K_i – summarized competency-index

$\bar{X}_{(own)}$ – the average of the competency-factor according to the scores of the own (self-evaluation)

$\bar{X}_{(expected)}$ – the average of the competency-factor according to the scores of the expected (position sensitive)

After the formula above, the summarized competency-index is the variable of the average of the own and expected competency-factors, there are three possible cases:

If $\bar{X}_{(own)} > \bar{X}_{(expected)}$ then K_i – is positive

If $\bar{X}_{(own)} \approx \bar{X}_{(expected)}$ then K_i – is zero, or converges to zero

If $\bar{X}_{(own)} < \bar{X}_{(expected)}$ then K_i – is negative

To calculate the significant difference of the own and the expected competency-scores, I applied the Student one-sample (cohesive sample) t-probe for the total sample. According to (VARGHA A., 2000; SVÁB J., 1967)

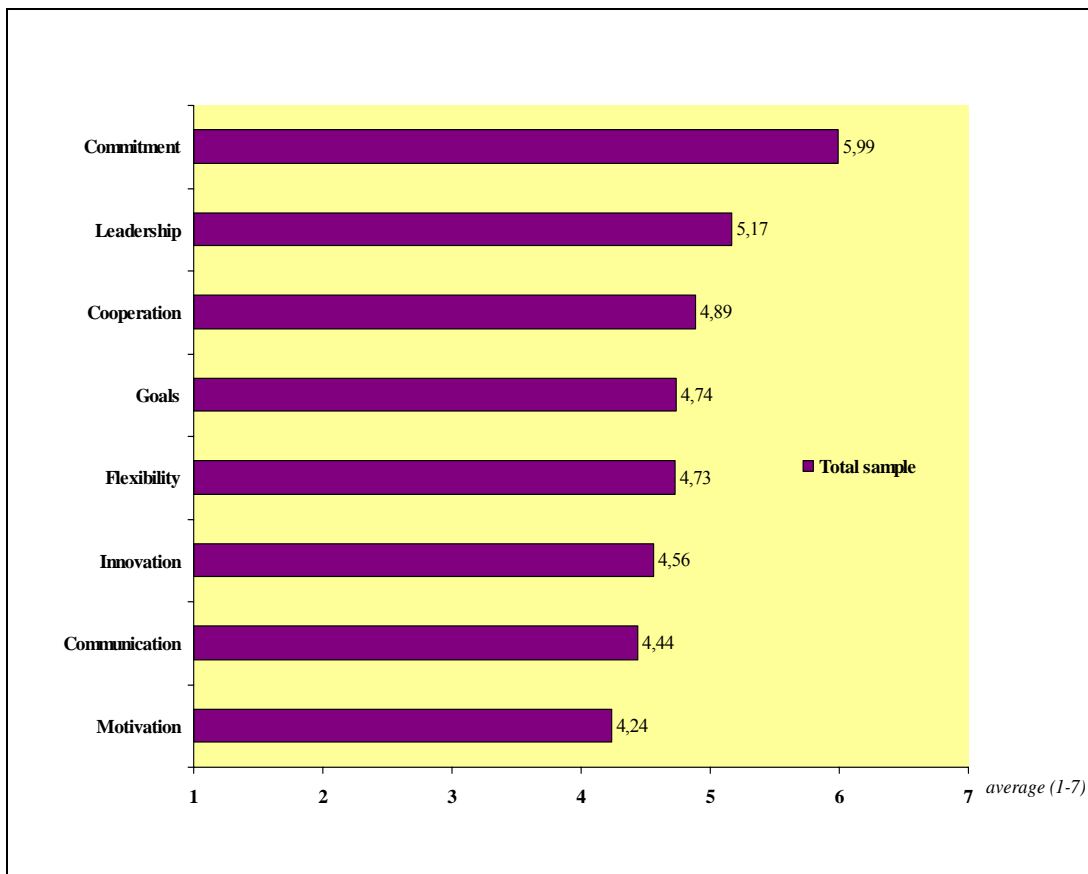
I analyzed the effect of the variables on the competency-indexes: according the formula above, in the case of genders I used independent sample (two-sample) t-probe, in other cases I applied the method of the variance analysis.

RESULTS AND EVALUATIONS

On the basis of the surveys I made the following statements:

- According to the results of the managerial position evaluating questionnaire (figure 2.) the agrarian managers are the most satisfied with the level of the *Commitment*, the direct manager (*Leadership*) and *Cooperation* with colleagues; however they were the most unsatisfied with the organizational level of *Motivation*, *Communication* and *Innovation*, and they hold extreme opinions too.

figure 2.: **Managerial position-evaluation on the total sample**

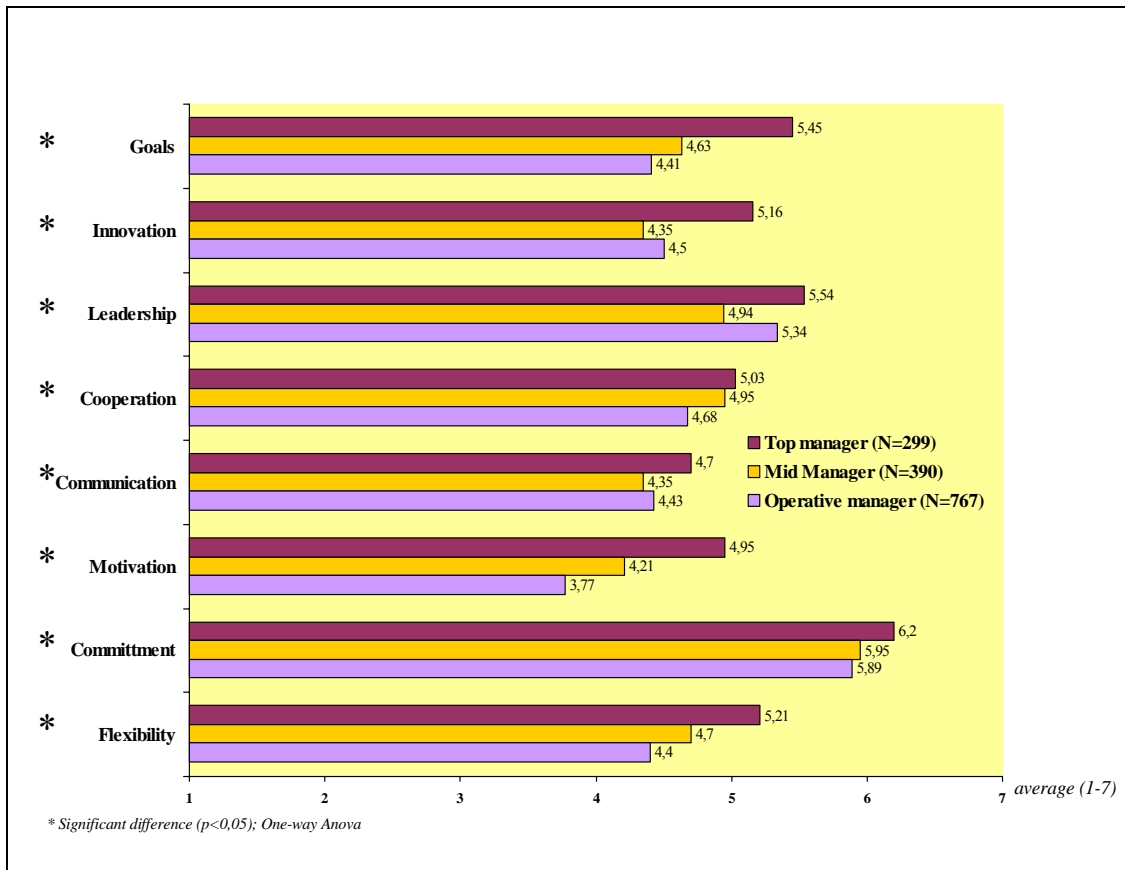


Source: Own researches

- Getting up higher in the hierarchy, the managers of agrarian companies are more satisfied with their work conditions (figure 3), i.e. the top managers are more motivated, they're better informed about the company business, and usually they evaluate their position in a more positive way, than their colleagues at mid- or

operative levels. Observing the differences between genders, men have higher satisfaction, in most topics the age group over 50 shows the highest mean results of position evaluation, - they're the most satisfied with their work conditions.

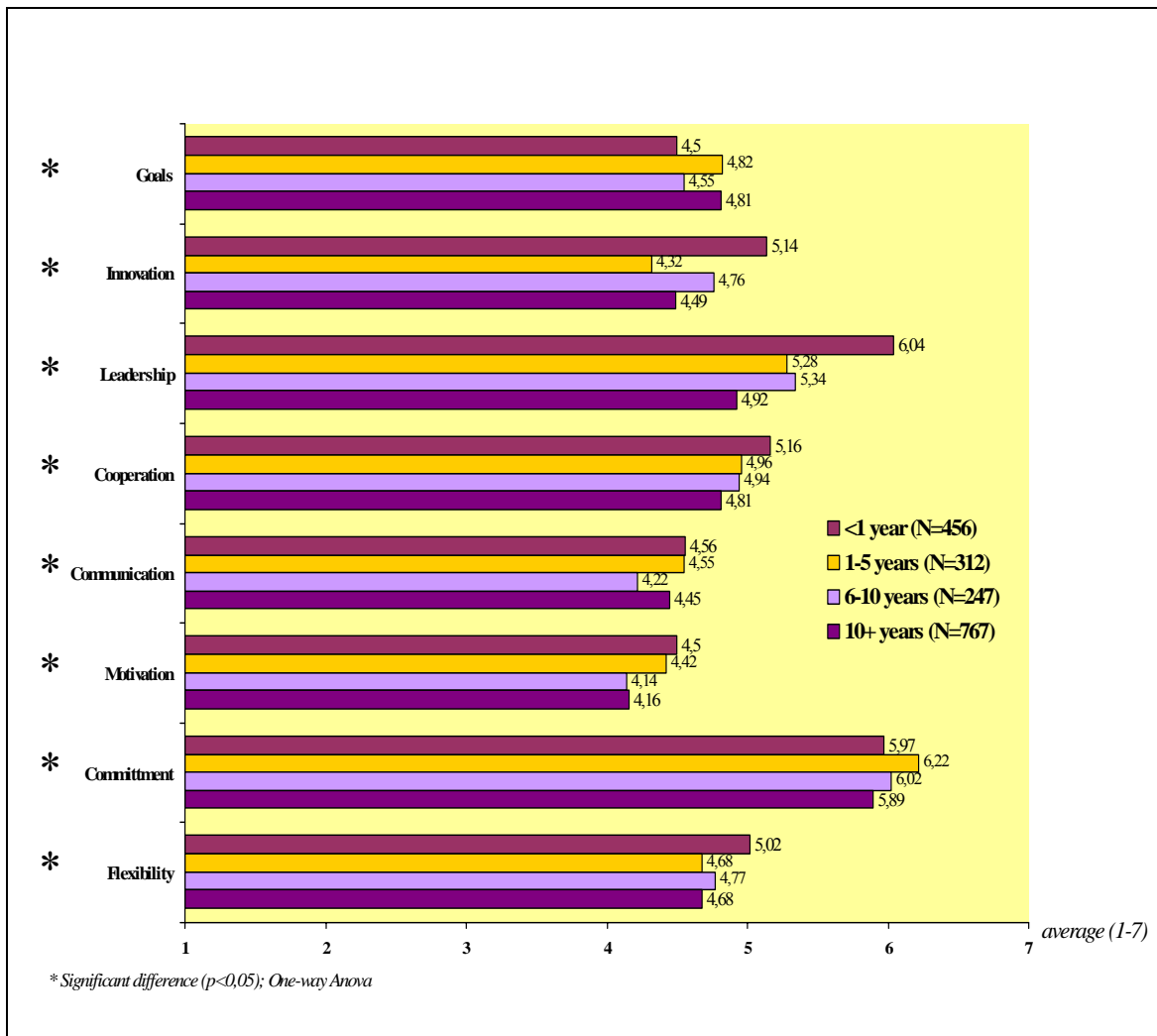
Figure 3: Managerial position evaluations when the variable is status (top-, mid-, operative levels)



Source: Own researches

- In contradiction of my hypothesis, specialists who have lower education evaluate their situation in a more positive way, they are more satisfied with their work conditions. Among the three regions the middle Hungarian mean values are the highest, and the Western Hungarian values are the lowest in all position evaluating factors.

Figure 4.: Managerial position-evaluation, where the variable is the time spent as manager at the present workplace



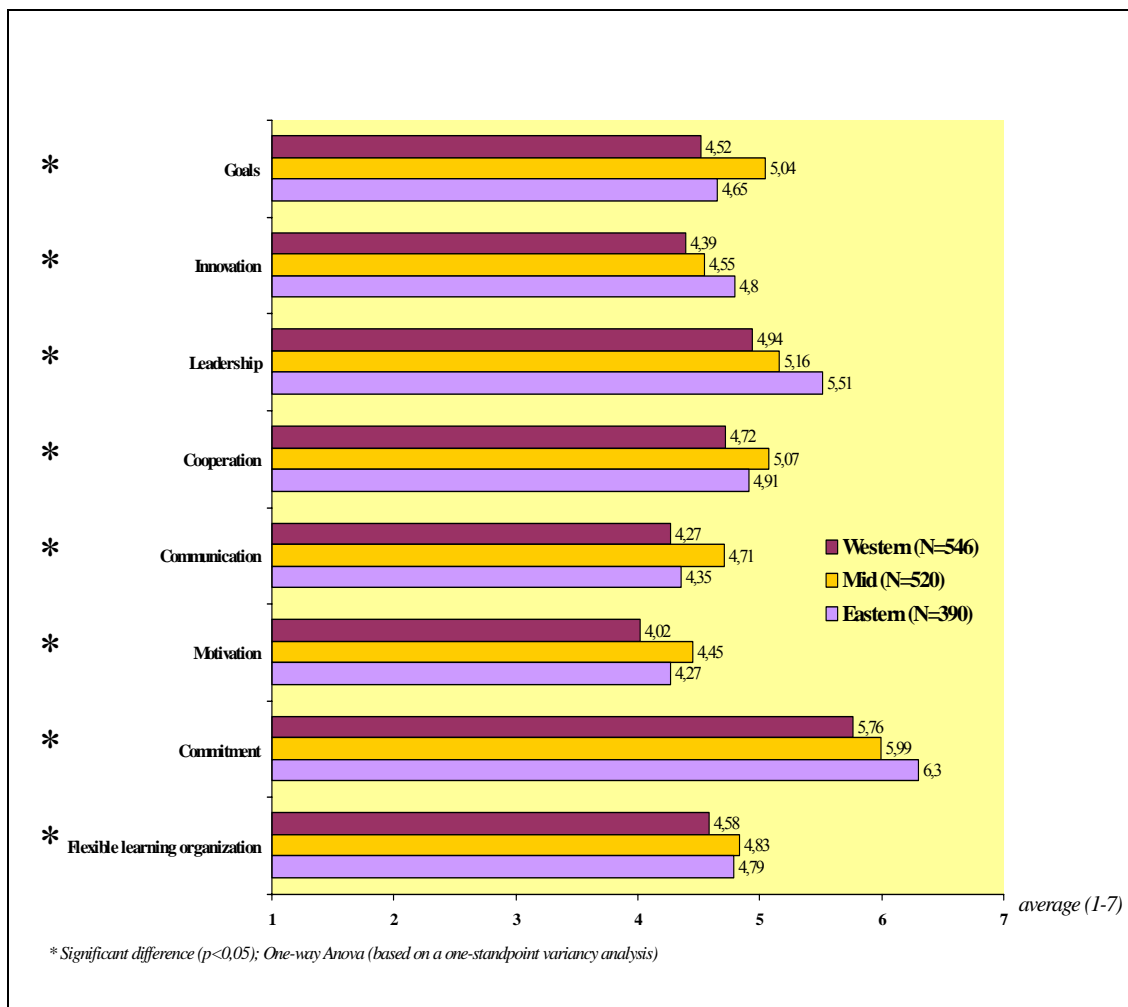
Source: Own researches

- In alignment of my original hypothesis, those managers who are employed for shorter period of time, are more satisfied with their new workplace, than those who work there more than 6- 10 years (figure 4.). The new comers are satisfied with the direct managers very much, they're open to the new, and cooperative, it is proven by their high mean results in three topics /Leadership (6,04); Innovation (5,14); Cooperation (5,16)/. There is a kind of “self-justification need” behind these high mean results of the relatively new comers, that it was a good decision to work here. In the different levels of the hierarchy, those managers who work 6 -10 years or more at the same place, show more balanced results, as they have some company experience, however their results are still

higher than the average of the seven-grade scale (the lowest average is 4,14, in the topic of *Motivation*).

- Among the three regions the Western Hungarian mean values are the lowest in all position evaluating factors. (figure 5). The greatest differences are in *Goals*, *Communication* and *Motivation*, the Middle Hungarian mean results are the highest in all three topics /*Goals* (5,04); *Communication* (4,71); *Motivation* (4,45)/. The Eastern Hungarian mean results are the highest in the factors of *Innovation* (4,8), satisfaction with the direct *Leadership* (5,51) and *Commitment* (6,3).

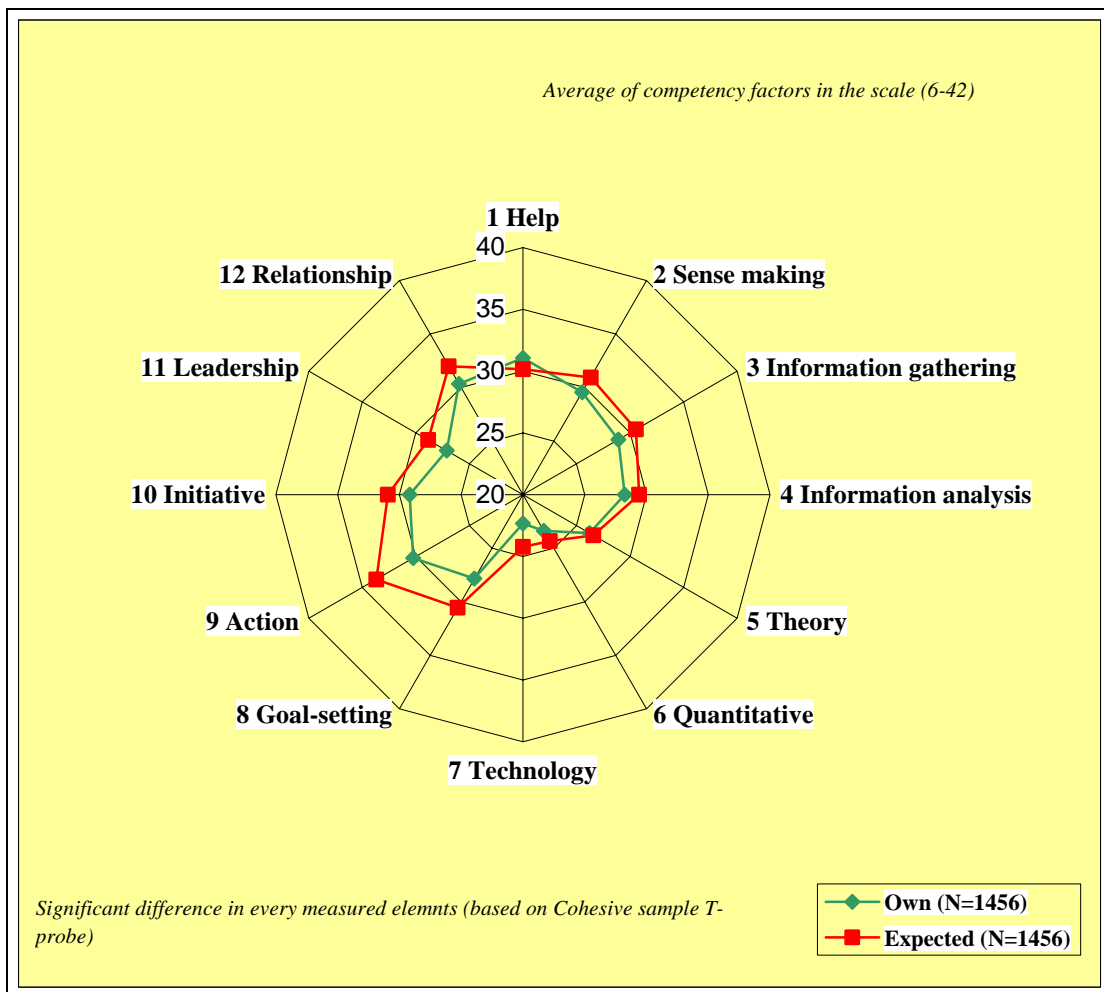
Figure 5: Managerial position-evaluation, where the variable is the region (Western-, Mid-, Eastern - Hungarian)



Source: Own researches

- According to the researches with the *complex managerial index* that I worked out, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the managers belong to the average satisfaction domain. 9% of the examined sample has satisfaction level under the average, and 15% of the managers have above the average satisfaction level.

Figure 6: Profile of own and expected competency factors in the total managerial sample (top-, mid-, operative)

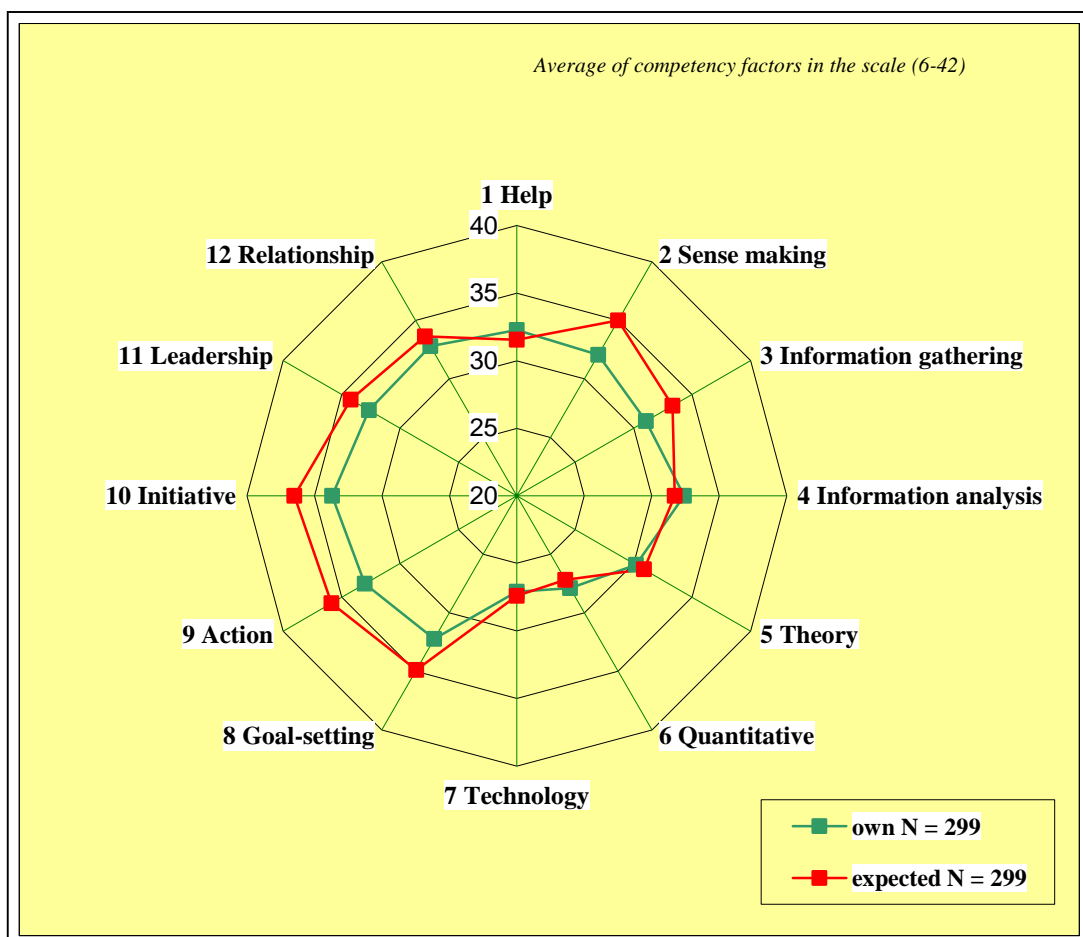


Source: Own researches

- The top, mid- and operative managerial levels' competency profiles show significant difference in accordance with the tasks related to the different levels. However the agricultural managers of all the three levels see opportunities for developing their own abilities (competencies), (figure 6) which is manifested in higher expected values comparing their own values.

- The top managers' competency profiles (figure 7) are the “most balanced” among the three levels, and they have the highest average scores. There are some competency factors (*Help*, *Information analysis*, *Quantitative*), where top managers evaluate their own competencies higher, than it is required to fulfill their position, in other cases the expected mean scores are higher than the own ones. Competencies, which considered the most important to be a top manager, belong to the factors of *Initiative* (36,48), *Action* (35,87), and *Sense making* (35). Abilities which considered the least important are: *Quantitative* (27,17), *Technology* (27,39), and *Theory* (30,87).

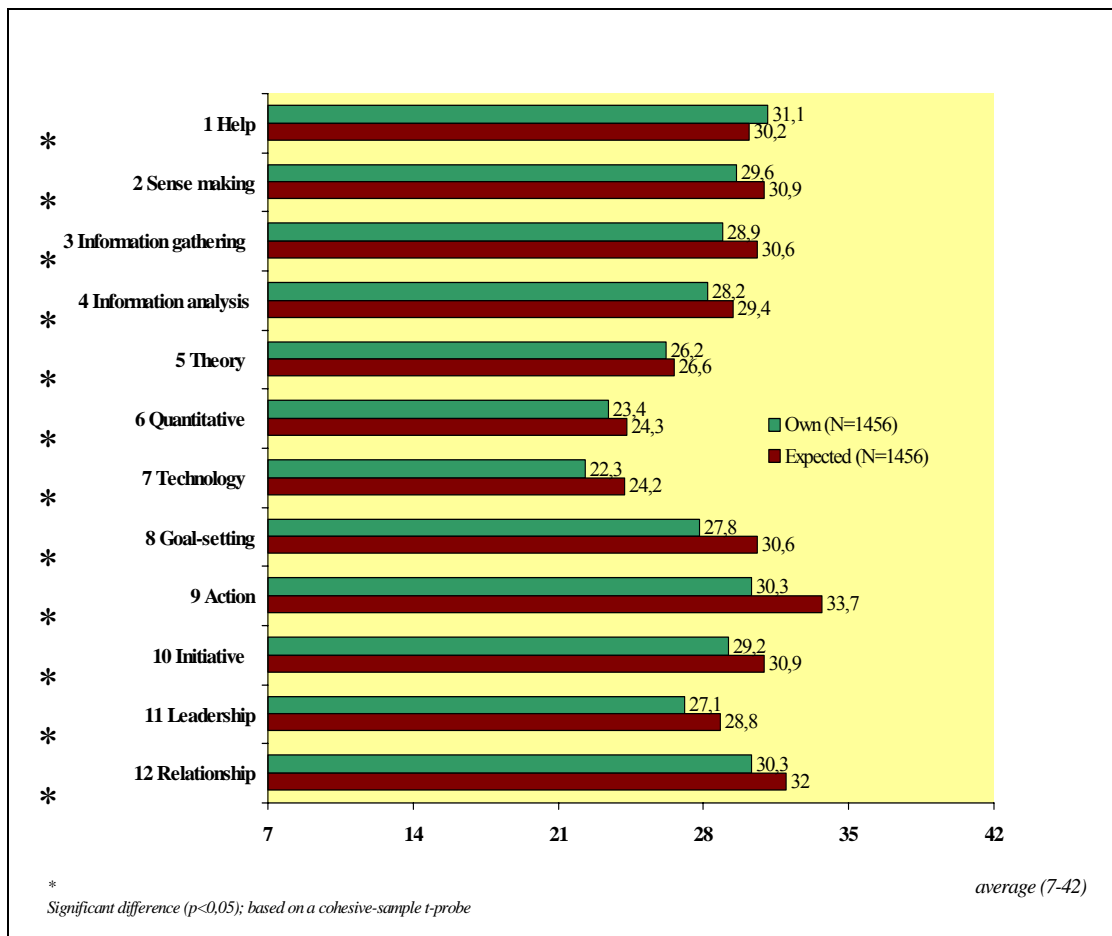
Figure 7: Profile of the own and expected competency factors based in the top manager sample



Source: Own researches

- Agricultural managers consider that the most important competencies, which are necessary to fulfill their position, are: *Action, Relationship, Initiative, and Sense making*. (figure 8) The least important factors are: *Technology, Quantitative, and Theory*.

Figure 8: Averages of own and expected competency factors in the total (top-, mid-, operative) managerial sample



Source: Own researches

- Analyzing the values of the competency-quadrants in the whole sample (figure 1) it is noticeable, that the greatest expectations develop in the quadrants of *behavioral skills* (*Goal-setting, Action and Initiative* factors), they're followed by *Interpersonal skills*, the group of *Informational skills*, then the group of *Analytical skills*. Comparing to expected data, in the case of own (self-evaluating) data the first two quadrants' sequence is inverse: the agrarian

managers evaluate themselves the strongest in the field of *Interpersonal skills* (*Leadership, Relationship, Help* factors), the group of *Behavioral skills* stands on the second place.

Chart 1.

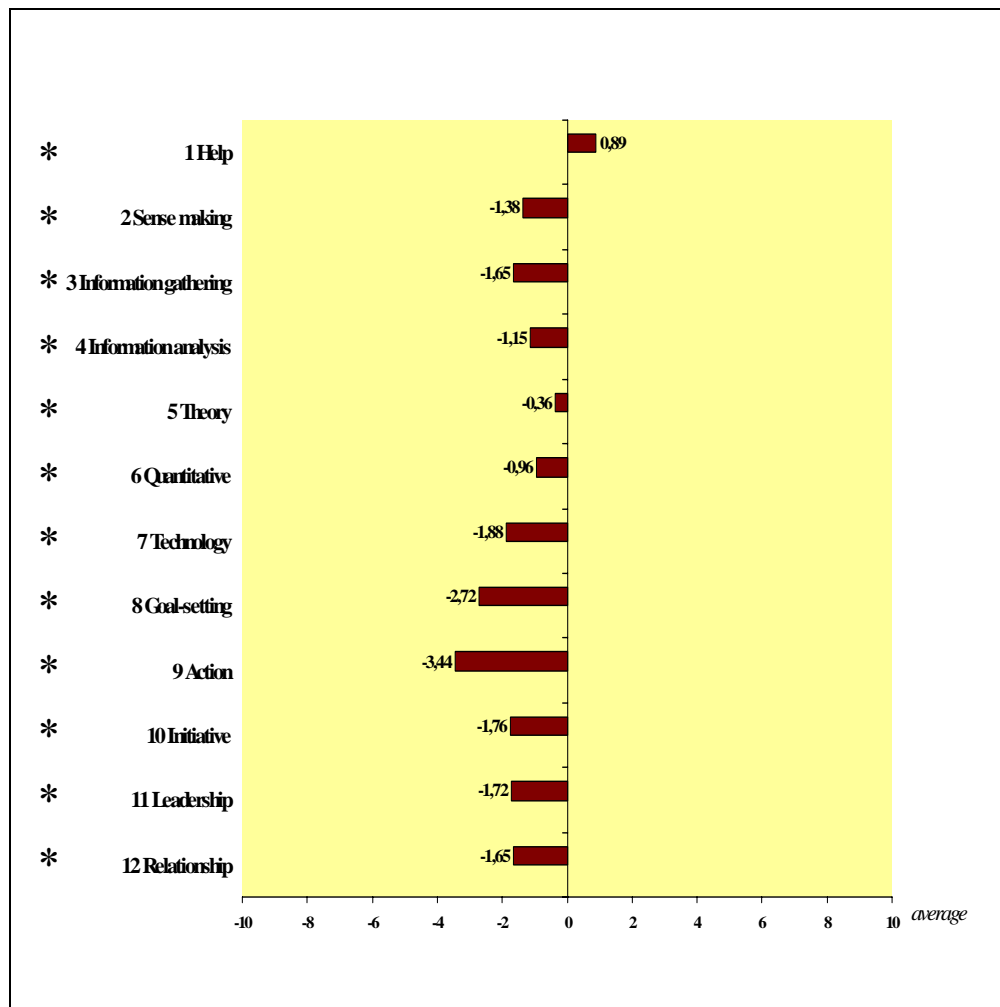
Competency – own and expected values of quadrants

Quadrants (own data)	Top manager	Mid-manager	Operative manager	Total sample
Interpersonal skills	97,70	87,88	82,73	88,52
Informational skills	95,48	85,34	82,73	86,72
Analytical skills	85,13	70,51	64,57	71,92
Behavioral skills	98,91	85,73	81,40	87,28
Quadrants (expected data)	Top manager	Mid-manager	Operative manager	Total sample
Interpersonal skills	99,39	90,03	86,47	91,00
Informational skills	100,00	90,51	84,70	90,90
Analytical skills	85,43	75,05	67,30	75,11
Behavioral skills	107,22	93,00	90,30	95,20

Source: Own researches

- Examining the effect of background variables to managerial competencies, the highest self-evaluating competency-scores belong to: top managers, in addition, those, who have the lowest educational degree, the age-group over 50, and the Eastern-Hungarian region. Comparing genders, in female managers' self-evaluation we can find higher scores in the categories of *Help, Information gathering, Information analysis* and *Technology*. Male managers evaluate themselves higher in the categories of *Initiative, Leadership, and Management* than women.
- Managers, who work for shorter than 1 year for the company, have much lower self-evaluation mean scores than the other three groups mean values. There are several competency-factors where a many-years-experience is a great advantage: in the factors of *Help, Information gathering, Initiative* and *Relationship* the highest mean scores were produced by those managers, who work for more than 10 years at the company.

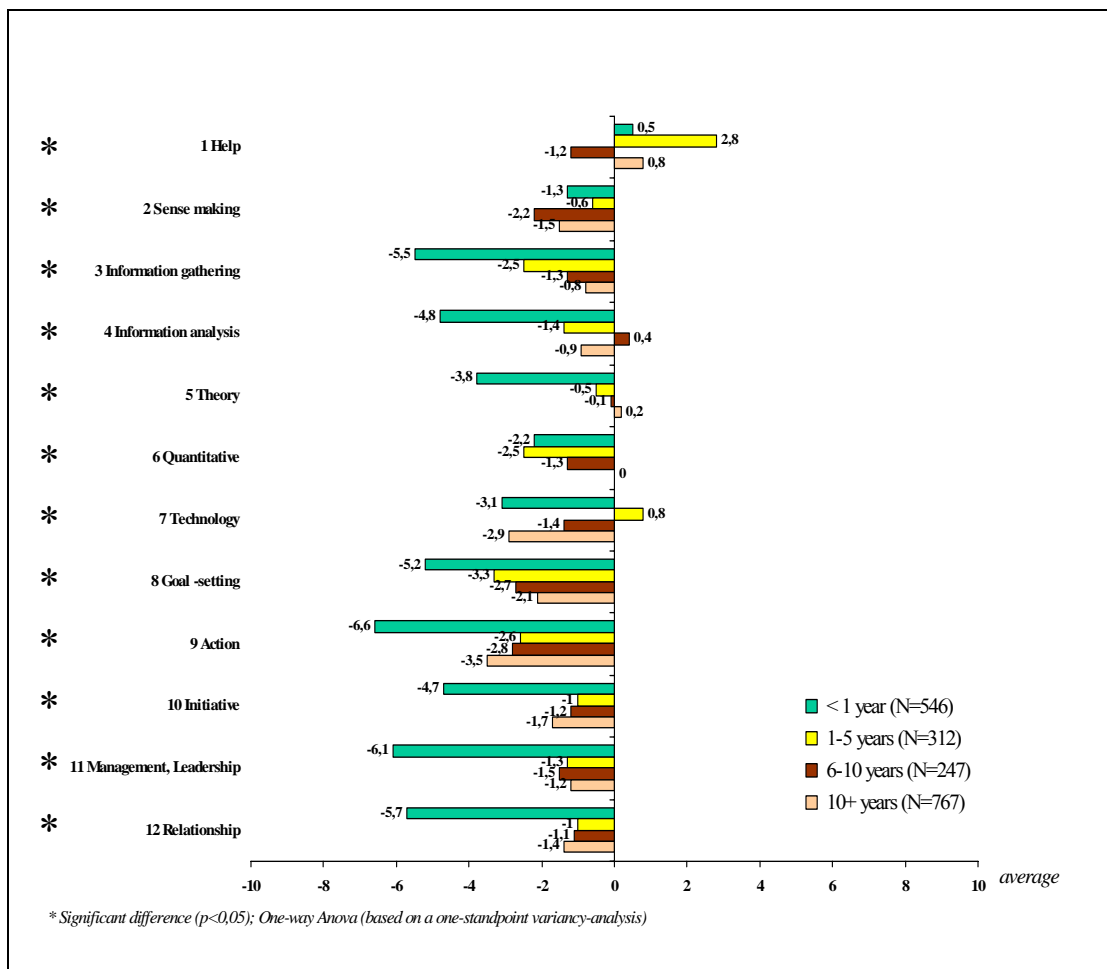
Figure 9: Summarized competency-indexes in the total sample



Source: Own researches

- All factors have negative sign except the *Help* factor, i.e. competency-deficit is manifested (figure 9), and the greatest deficits (most important areas to develop) are in factors of *Action*, *Goal-setting*, and *Technology*.
- Examining the effect of the background variables on competency-indexes: if we get up higher in the managerial hierarchy or go from younger ones to older, the competency indexes got higher values.

Figure 10: **Summarized competency-indexes where the variable is the time spent as manager at the present workplace**



Source: Own researches

- Observing the competency index plotted against leadership experience, I got a result that managers with less than one-year practice produce the most significant competency-deficit (figure 10). The greatest competency-deficits develop in competencies related to *Action*, *Management*, *leadership*, *Relationship* and *Information gathering*. There is a salient rate among the positive values: in the factor of *Help*, where managers with 1-5 years of practice feel, that they overfulfill the expectations.

NEW OR NOVEL RESULTS OF THE THESIS

- Based on experiences of many years of research, I improved the *managerial position-evaluating questionnaire*, with the help of which we can explore those impediment factors that can affect the ideal operation of the organization, and map the strengths, that provide the successful performance.
- I was the first in Hungary, who applied this method of R. E. Boyatzis competency-measuring questionnaire for examination of agricultural managers.
- My results show, that the agricultural managers are most satisfied with the level of *Commitment* to the organization, satisfaction with their direct manager (*Leadership*) and *Cooperation* with colleagues. They are most unsatisfied and have extreme opinions with relation to the level of *Motivation*, a *Communication* and *Innovation*.
- Examining the effects of the reviewed background variables to managerial position evaluation: the highest satisfaction levels belong to top managers in the hierarchy, belong to men between genders, to age-group over 50, to those who are employed for shorter period of time, to those who have lower educational degree, and to those who work in the middle-Hungarian region.
- Based on the results of the managerial position-evaluating questionnaire I worked out an index, which can describe and compare the satisfaction level of the individuals, organizations or regions.
- I worked out the *complex managerial index* to the total sample, according to the results, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the managers belong to the average satisfaction domain. 9% of the examined sample has satisfaction level below the average, and the 15% of the managers have a level above the average.
- My results show, that the top, mid- and operative managerial levels' competency profiles show significant difference in accordance with the tasks related to the different levels. However the agricultural managers of all the three levels see opportunities for developing their own abilities or competencies.

- The agricultural managers consider that the most important competencies, which are necessary to fulfill their position, are: *Action, Relationship, Initiative, and Sense making*. The least important factors are: *Technology, Quantitative, and Theory*.
- Examining the effect of background variables to managerial competencies, the highest self-evaluation competency scores belong to top managers in the hierarchy, the ones, who have the lowest education degree, the age-group over 50 years and those who live in the Eastern Hungarian region.
- Analyzing the values of competency – quadrants in the total sample, the results prove, that the greatest expectations develop in the quadrant of *behavioral skills* (factors of *Goal-setting, Action* and *Initiative*), they're followed by *Interpersonal skills*, Information, then *Analytical skills*.
- As an improvement of Boyatzis' competency-measuring questionnaire, I elaborated the summarized *competency-index*, with which each and every member of the company can be characterized along all competency factors,
- Analyzing the results of the total sample, all factors have negative sign, except the factor of *Help*, i.e. competency-deficit manifests. The greatest deficits (most important areas to develop) are in factors of *Action, Goal-setting, and Technology*.
- Getting up higher in the managerial hierarchy, the competency indexes got higher values; same as if we go from younger to older. Managers with secondary school, and managers with less than one-year practice produce competency-deficit in most factors.

PRACTICAL EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS

- With help of the *complex managerial position-evaluating index* that I worked out, we can typify the managerial satisfaction level of persons, organizations, regions, or compare them. This index can be applied in development plans aiming to enhance the satisfaction level of organizations.
- As an improvement of Boyatzis's competency-measuring questionnaire, I worked out the „*summarized competency-index*”. This index is effectively utilizable in numerous fields of human resources: recruitment – assessment, training, management development, and career management. It can be stored as informative data, in the personal information system. This index can be modeled for persons but for any kind of aim group (organization, region) as well.
- My research proved, that for the sake of improvement of low level of financial and moral motivation, which characterizes the agricultural organizations, there needs a proper motivation- and performance management-system. With the help of this system, both the performance of employees or managers could be adjudged objectively, to support bonus and promotions.
- Besides the introduction of mentoring system and knowledge-management, it essential to find a solution for the problem of carrier-management, because this is the only way to recruit and retain the young qualified professionals in the agrarian sphere.
- The goal to achieve in the future is: the process of interiorization of competencies into the operation of agricultural companies.
- In order to minimize competency-deficits, establish innovative company atmosphere and keep up an up-to-date professional standard, requires the modernization of the training system of agrarian company
- As an improvement of the managerial position-evaluation index and competency-index, a compatible index-system has to work out, this would enable the evaluation of certain positions and persons with the help of standard competencies. This index could base an inland and international comparison or benchmark of agrarian specialists.

PUBLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF THE THESIS

Reported/contributed scientific articles:

1. **Barta Á.**: A kompetenciaelmélet és a vezetői kompetenciák mérése. (diplomadolgozat), KLTE BTK, Pszichológiai Intézet, Debrecen, 1997. 87 p
2. **Barta Á.**: A vezetői elégedettség vizsgálata egy mezőgazdasági szervezetben. Agrártudományi Közlemények 2002./1. Acta Agraria Debreceniensis ,Debrecen, 2002. 77-81. p.
3. **Barta Á.**: A vezetőtámogatás lehetőségei és eszközei a vidékfejlesztésben. Agrártudományi Közlemények – Különszám, Acta Agraria Debreceniensis Debrecen, 2002. 6 -9. p.
4. **Barta Á.**: Munkahelyi elégedettség és vezetői kompetenciák összehasonlító vizsgálata a mezőgazdaságban. Agrártudományi Közlemények – Különszám, Acta Agraria Debreceniensis Debrecen, 2002. 10 -12. p.

Planned reported/contributed scientific articles:

5. **Barta Á.**: Tanulmány a mezőgazdasági vállalatoknál végzett vezetői helyzetértékelés és munkahelyi elégedettség vizsgálatok eredményeiről. Humánpolitikai Szemle 2004. október
6. **Barta Á.**: Tanulmány a mezőgazdasági vállalatoknál végzett vezetői kompetenciavizsgálatok eredményeiről. Humánpolitikai Szemle 2004. október

Reported/contributed conference presentations:

7. Dienesné K. E. – **Barta Á.**: The usage of competency-models in human resource management. Economics of Agriculture on the Treshold of the Third Millenium, Nitra, 1999. Szeptember Management and marketing section: 70. p.
8. **Barta Á.**: A vezetői kompetenciák fontossága napjainkban. (poszter), „Mezőgazdasági vállalkozások és a vidékfejlesztés ökonómiája”, Debrecen DAB Székház, 1999. 37. p.
9. **Barta Á.**: A vezetői kompetenciák fontossága a vidékfejlesztésben. „Tavaszi Szél” ’99 Fiatal magyar tudományos kutatók és doktoranduszok III. világtalálkozója, Budapest, 1999. Utókiadvány 42. p.

10. **Barta Á.**: A magatartástudományi szervezetfejlesztés, mint új eszköz a mezőgazdasági vállalatok vezetőinek támogatására. Erdei Ferenc emlékülés – Tudományos Konferencia; Kecskemét, Kecskeméti Főiskola, Kertészeti főiskolai kar 2001. Vezetés – szervezés szekció 407 – 410. p.
11. **Barta Á.**: Munkahelyi elégedettség és vezetői kompetenciák összehasonlító vizsgálata a mezőgazdaságban. Az Észak-alföldi Régió mezőgazdasága és vidékfejlesztése – Regionális tudományos tanácskozás és konferencia, Debrecen, DAB Székház, 2001. Október 30. 34. p.
12. Dienesné K. E. – **Barta Á.** – Juhász Cs.: Human - Management Investigation in Agriculture. Medzinarodné vedecke dni Nyitra, 2001. 21-24. p.
13. Dienesné K. E.– **Barta Á.** – Berde Cs. – Berki S. – Juhász Cs. – Gályász J.: Competency-models in rural development. Tartamkísérletek tájtermesztés, vidékfejlesztés Nemzetközi Konferencia kiadványa, Debrecen-Nyírlugos-Livada, 2002. június. II. kötet 95-99. p.
14. Dienesné K. E. – Berde Cs. – Berki S. - **Barta Á.** – Juhász Cs.: Human resource development advising. Tartamkísérletek, tájtermesztés, vidékfejlesztés, Nemzetközi Konferencia, Debrecen-Nyírlugos- Livada, 2002. 318 – 321. p.
15. **Barta Á.**: Vezetői kompetencia-analízis a mezőgazdaságban. Agrárgazdaság, vidékfejlesztés és agrárinformatika az évezred küszöbén (AVA) nemzetközi konferencia kiadványa. DE, Agrártudományi Centrum, Agrárgazdasági és Vidékfejlesztési Kar, Debrecen, 2003. április 1-2. 237. p.
16. Dienesné K. E. – **Barta Á.** – Keréky G.: Az attitűdök kialakulása és hatása a szervezetekben. AVA nemzetközi konferencia kiadványa. DE, Agrártudományi Centrum, Agrárgazdasági és Vidékfejlesztési Kar, Debrecen, 2003. április 1-2. 383. p.
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