

ELIŠKA ŽUPOVÁ: SOCIAL COMPETENCIES OF MAYORS IN SLOVAKIA¹

Pavol Jozef Šafarik University in Košice, 2018, 112 p.

As the title indicates, the scientific monograph presented by its author focuses on social competencies of mayors of Slovak municipalities. The competencies of mayors have been gaining increasing attention also due to the fact that mayors not only represent their municipalities, but they also manage them and thus affect internal and external municipal environments. In this scientific publication, the author, PhDr. Eliška Župová, PhD., presents primarily a comprehensive survey of the interpersonal (social) competence that is characterized by a set of interpersonal abilities and skills and includes also the levels of comfort experienced by mayors in various social situations occurring within their everyday work. The scientific monograph integrates pieces of knowledge from various scientific disciplines and that is why it may be called interdisciplinary.

The structure of the scientific monograph complies with chronology and logic criteria. It consists of four main chapters divided by the author into several meaningful subchapters. The author has succeeded in achieving the objective of the scientific monograph, i.e., to establish the extent to which selected interpersonal competencies have been successfully applied and to analyse the relationship between selected interpersonal competencies of mayors and the social and demographic characteristics of municipalities in Slovakia. The recommendations formulated by the author based on research results represent a great contribution of this scientific monograph and may serve for the benefit of both direct and indirect stakeholders.

In the first chapter, the author focuses primarily on a full-scale assessment of the current level of theoretical knowledge and defines a mayor and his or her position as a manager. Another positive contribution of this chapter is the legal definition of mayors in view of not only Slovak but also European legislation and assessment of the work performed by mayors from a management point of view. The second chapter of the scientific monograph presents the research focusing on interpersonal competencies carried out using the questionnaire entitled “Dotazník interpersonálnej kompetentnosti starostov obcí (DIKSO) - Interpersonal Competencies of Mayors of Municipalities Questionnaire) intended for mayors of

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all 2 753 municipalities in Slovakia. The author divided the chapter into five well-arranged subchapters that contain, inter alia, also statistical analyses and research organization issues.

The third chapter kind of “reflects” the preceding chapter and in that chapter, the author presents and describes in detail the results of the nationwide research carried out directly in the target group environment. The author has assessed the research results and interpellated them according to partial objectives and hypotheses in three logically interlinked subchapters.

The last chapter of the scientific monograph is entitled “Discussion and Proposal of Social and Technical Measures”. This chapter may be deemed to be the greatest contribution in my opinion as the author presents aptly formulated recommendations applicable at both theoretical and practical levels. The recommendations should ultimately lead to enhancement of the interpersonal competencies necessary to achieve the required work performance level and the level of social behaviour assumed within professional performance of duties of a mayor as a municipality manager.

As concerns formal and graphical features, the presented scientific monograph contains all necessary particulars, which fact contributes even more towards its positive assessment, and several graphs and tables improving the clarity and arrangement of this valuable work. Generally, we can say that the author has paid great attention to the Slovak spelling and grammar, as the work contains no grammar or language mistakes, which makes reading of this publication a pleasant experience.

The originality of the scientific publication is reflected by the fact that the author presents, based on actual research results, both a theoretical definition of the issues dealt with and a description of the current situation and levels at which mayors of Slovak municipalities apply their interpersonal competencies.

Although the title of the scientific monograph defines the subject of the research, I can imagine extension of the study to cover also the regional level, i.e., heads of self-governing regions in Slovakia, which may be followed by a comparison of the research results with the results concerning regional self-governments. Opinions of mayors on this scientific monograph and its practical contribution may be of interest as well.

The focus on “only” social competencies within this nationwide research addressing 2 735 municipalities and their mayors may be deemed to be a lost opportunity but I respect the extent of executed research activities and available human resources. In future, the author may consider extending the publication scope to cover also other competencies.

Finally, the sad fact is that the questionnaire response rate reaches only 28.5 % (787 out of 2 753 municipalities have participated) and generally speaking, such low rates and disinterest on the part of self-governments are to the detriment

to both the entire scientific and research community and self-government representatives but affecting this situation is beyond the author's reach.

Mgr. Matúš Novák
Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava,
Department of Public Administration
Bučianska 4/A, 917 01 Trnava, Slovakia
maatus.novak@gmail.com