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## **Leadership Styles Identification – Case of the Company from an Industrial Installations Sector**

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**Abstract:** The thesis focuses on the topic of leadership, including the definitions and characteristics of leadership and its styles. The study was aimed to diagnose the dominant leadership style in a medium-sized Polish company from the industrial installations sector. The research sample completed the survey related to Goleman's leadership styles. Respondents used a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate the questions. The affiliative leadership style turned out to be the most dominant one in the organisation. The knowledge of the leaders' behaviour was used to correlate the survey results with the actual state, and it turned out that the results reflect the actual frequency of using specific styles in the organisation. The results were also compared with other existing studies on leadership based on the six Goleman leadership styles, which allowed for noticing there is a style that was dominant or meaningful in each of these studies, and that is the affiliative style.

**Keywords:** leadership, leadership styles, Goleman

## **1. Introduction**

The study touches the topic of leadership, where, based on the literature review, descriptions of leadership styles were introduced. Each of the descriptions includes characteristics of a leader with such a dominant leadership style, prediction of their behaviour, and both, advantages and disadvantages. The descriptions also introduce the consequences of using specific leadership styles. As is noticeable in the section dedicated to the concept of leadership, the definition of the leadership may be formulated in different ways (Stogdill, 1974).

In this study, the concept of leadership introduces the 6 Goleman leadership styles (Goleman, 2000): (1) commanding (also known as coercive), (2) visionary (also known as authoritative), (3) affiliative, (4) democratic, (5) pacesetter, (6) coaching.

A research gap concerns the lack of research that would inform what potential dominant leadership style may be present in one of the Polish medium-sized companies in the field of industrial installations. The research aimed to identify the dominant leadership style among leaders employed in such a company based on the 6 leadership styles introduced by Goleman. Leaders in the chosen company were asked to fulfil the questionnaire with the use of the CAWI method which consists of 6 questions for each leadership style of Goleman and metrics questions.

The study is composed as follows: Section 2 is the theoretic part related to leadership, in Section 3 the research problem, aim, procedure, design, methods, techniques, measurement tools, sample selection and sample description are described. In Section 4 the data are collected and compared with already existing similar studies. In the end, the thesis brings conclusions, where the main findings, discussion, research directions, and research limitations are described.

## **2. Leadership and Leadership Styles**

### **2.1. The Concept of Leadership**

Leadership is one of those terms which is not easy to define. According to Stogdill (1974, p. 7), "there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept". Furthermore, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bennis and Townsend (1995) estimated at least 650 definitions of leadership in literature. McCleskey (2014), citing B. M. Bass and R. Bass (2008), claims that the research of a single definition of leadership may have no sense because the proper definition of leadership depends on the researcher's interest and the type of problem or problem situation being studied. Despite the difficulty, it is important to determine a good definition of leadership, especially since it is one of the most widely used terms in many areas of human activity. In the 1990s researchers started to pay attention to followers in the leadership process. Bass (1990) noticed that leadership is not only the influence of the leader upon others, but it is also an interactive process in which leadership occurs when even one person modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group, what is more, any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership. Owusu-Bempah (2014) claimed that some other authors stood for a "follower-centric" approach, highlighting followers' contributions and roles in the leadership process. Kellerman views leadership as an equilateral triangle where the three sides are: (1) the leader, (2) the follower(s), (3) and the content (Volckmann, 2012), which means she recognises the importance of the leader, at the same time she expresses that the followers are as important as the leader, and finally, she puts the context as an equally important component of the leadership process.

## 2.2. Overview of Leadership Styles

Regarding the words of Goleman (2000), the most effective executives use a combination of different leadership styles but each of them is used at the right time and in the right measure. Such flexibility is difficult to implement but it positively influences performance. What is more, it can be learned. Leaders mistakenly assume that leadership style is a part of the personality, not a strategic choice. Regarding Goleman's words, the most successful leaders exhibit such emotional intelligence competencies as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Those create a part of the leadership styles presented by Goleman. Each of them consists of the listed emotional intelligence competencies, works best in a specific situation, and may impact the organisation in a different way. According to Goleman, there are 6 leadership styles: (1) commanding (also known as coercive), (2) visionary (also known as authoritative), (3) affiliative, (4) democratic, (5) pacesetter, (6) coaching. At that point, I suggest looking at each leadership style by Goleman in detail.

- (1) The commanding leadership style, also known as coercive, is considered the least effective style of all presented by Goleman. It is associated with coercion, where the top-down decision-making process kills new ideas and verve among the team members. People are less willing to share ideas, because of the fear of rejection. Additionally, their sense of responsibility is decreasing, because they do not act on their own initiative. Most high-performing workers look for the sources of motivation other than money, which is the satisfaction of work well done and the coercive style disturbs this reward system. Further, the style also undermines a leader's prime tool: motivating people by showing them how their work fits into a shared mission. Based on the description it may be assumed that such a style should never be applied but there are a few cases where it works. For sure it would be a good choice to follow the coercive style in a crisis, at the beginning of changes, or during problems with employees. It is important to remember that it hurts an organisation's overall climate and in the long-term perspective will be ruinous.
- (2) The visionary leadership style, also known as authoritative, is characterised by enthusiasm and clear vision. For such a leader it is important to explain subordinates their vision of the organisation and how their work fits into this vision. Thanks to that the team is aware of the importance of their input, which increases commitment to the organisation's goals and strategy. The authoritative leader defines the frames of work and allows the team to find their solutions, which means the leader gives people the freedom and space to create innovative ideas, to experiment, and to take rational risks. The authoritative style brings positive results, especially when the business is drifting, because the leader will introduce a new direction for the organisation and a new long-term vision.

- (3) The affiliative leadership style is connected with emotions. Followers of this style value individuals and their emotions more than tasks and goals. For an affiliative leader, it is important to create harmony between co-workers and keep them happy. Thanks to that strategy strong emotional bond is built, which affects loyalty among employees. Additionally, the style has a positive impact on communication, because in a team where everyone likes each other members are more open to sharing ideas and inspirations. As a consequence of affiliative leadership, workers are more flexible, and members trust one another. Employees also are given the freedom to work, which means they get their work done in the way they find the most effective. Daily, most employees do not receive individual feedback on their efforts – if they do, it is mostly negative information, whereas the affiliative leader practices a recognition and reward system of work by offering ample positive feedback, which creates another system of motivation. Furthermore, affiliative leaders are masters at building a sense of belonging, which marks them as natural relationship builders. The affiliative style should be employed in the process of building team harmony, increasing morale, improving communication, or repairing broken trust. Despite its advantages, the affiliative style should not be used alone, because focusing solely on praise may result in poor performance not being corrected and employees may conclude that mediocrity is tolerated. Additionally, affiliative leaders rarely offer constructive advice on how to improve, so the affiliative style leaves them without a rudder. Perhaps that is why the affiliative style very often is combined with the authoritative style.
- (4) The democratic leadership encourages each team member to participate in decision-making by sharing their opinions. A democratic leader encourages open conversation and helps their employees set goals, evaluate their own performance and motivates them to grow. People operating in the democratic system tend to be good listeners, they listen to peoples' concerns and learn how to hold up morale. Moreover, a democratic leader tends to be realistic about what can and cannot be achieved. Besides advantages, there are also some disadvantages of the democratic leadership style. One of those disadvantages is endless meetings that rarely end up with any meaningful results. Nevertheless, this approach is ideal when a leader is unsure about the best direction to take and needs some ideas and guidance from team members. It proves that the democratic style is good to generate fresh ideas.
- (5) In the pacesetting leadership style the leader sets high standards for their team and expects them to exceed with minimal management. The leader is obsessive with continuous improvement and demands it from others. People operating in the pacesetting style tend to discontinue the services of poor performers (contractors). If they do not meet the challenge, the leader replaces them with someone better. Such an approach destroys the climate, employees feel overwhelmed by demands, and finally, their morale drops. In the beginning, it

would be assumed such an approach may improve results, but it is not going to happen. The pacesetter-style leaders expect people to know what to do even without clear instructions. The element of discussion is missing. When it comes to the reward system, pacesetter leaders do not share feedback with employees on how they are doing, but instead they take charge when they think others are not handling it. Finally, commitment decreases under the regime of pacesetter leaders because people have no sense of how their effort is important to the general outcome. This style works in cases when all employees are self-motivated, highly competent, and just need slight direction or coordination.

- (6) The coaching leadership style is the last one described by Goleman. Coaching leaders help employees identify their unique talents and weaknesses and match them with their career aspirations. They encourage employees to set long-term development goals and help to reach them. In the coaching leadership style, followers are masters at delegating and giving challenging assignments, even if the impossibility of quickly accomplishing task exists. These leaders are also willing to go with short-term failure because they believe it is a part of future long-term learning. Despite those arguments, many leaders do not use the coaching leadership style because of a lack of time in this high-pressure economy to implement the technique of teaching people and helping their growth. Those, who do not use and trust the coaching leadership style give up this powerful tool because its impact is clearly positive on business performance, which is an interesting paradox. After all, coaching focuses primarily on personal development, not on immediate work-related tasks. Thanks to the ongoing dialogue of coaching, employees know what is expected of them and how their work fits into the whole system, which affects responsibility and clarity. The coaching style works well in situations when employees are already aware of their weaknesses and want to improve their performance. Similarly, the coaching style works well when they realise how the improvement of new abilities can help them advance. Shortly speaking, the style works best for people who want to be coached. By contrast, the use of the coaching style will not have sense with employees who are resistant to learning or changing their work-life habits. Many leaders are unfamiliar with coaching that requires giving ongoing performance feedback that motivates rather than creates fear or apathy.

Interestingly, only a few leaders apply all 6 styles, and even fewer know how and when to use them. Generally, one person consciously or unconsciously uses only a part of the presented styles and such a state is understandable but at some point it may create problems. The solution is to use different leadership styles at specific times. The leader's role is to adapt the leadership style to the situation.

### 3. Research Methodology

A research problem may concern a difficulty, problem or conflict to be solved, something to be improved, a troubling question, or a theoretical or practical controversy which may be seen as a gap that exists in the literature. Creswell (2012, p. 60) defined a research problem as “a general educational issue, concern, or controversy addressed in research that narrows the topic”. The research problem in the hereby paper was formulated as a question: “What is the dominant leadership style, according to the six leadership styles introduced by Goleman, in a medium-sized Polish company in the sector of industrial installations?”, on the basis of research gap that was noticed during the literature review. The mentioned gap is the lack of information on the dominant leadership style, according to the 6 leadership styles introduced by Goleman, in the medium-sized Polish company in the field of industrial installations.

A research aim often refers to the main objective or general purpose of a research project. In this thesis, the research aim is to identify the dominant leadership style, out of the six leadership styles introduced by Goleman, among leaders employed in medium-sized Polish companies in the sector of industrial installations.

The research procedure was designed as follows.

- Step 1. Literature review – the topic of leadership itself was broadened and the leadership styles were described.
- Step 2. Formulating the research problem – the research gap was noticed and based on that the research problem in the form of a question was formulated.
- Step 3. Formulating research aim – focused on the determination of the research aim and its objectives.
- Step 4. Survey design – the purpose of the survey was to collect data that analysis helps to investigate which of the chosen leadership styles is the dominant one in the chosen company.
- Step 5. Survey investigation – the survey was investigated with the use of the CAWI method.
- Step 6. Collecting data – the data collection consisted of downloading the data and sorting it out in a desired way.
- Step 7. Results and discussion – a file with the results was made.
- Step 8. Data analysis – presentation of the results and its more detailed discussion.
- Step 9. Conclusions, research limitations, and future directions – therefore after the analysis stage, it was necessary to look at the results from another angle.

After identifying the research problem, it is worth considering whether it should be a more of quantitative or qualitative approach – ultimately the quantitative design was chosen. Quantitative research is a structured type of research in which results are determined numerically or statistically.

A survey was implemented as the research method, where the availability of respondents was taken into account, and based on that the decision about

implementing the CAWI technique was made. Some of the respondents did manage projects abroad, and thanks to the CAWI, the process of collecting data from them was possible. Additional advantages of the technique are low costs of research conduction, quick data obtaining, and the discretion of fulfilment of the survey by respondents (any date, any time, and individual time scale), which is important as the research sample consists of workers from the organisation's top, medium, and lower levels of management and their calendars are full of meetings, phone calls, conferences, etc. It was also taken into account that the printing of each questionnaire is needless, which is beneficial for the environment. From the insider's point of view, there was a need to conduct the research anonymously to avoid the risk of respondents' distrust of the researcher, to ensure respondents' comfort, and to protect their sensitive data.

Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of two main parts: (1) questions about the styles studied – 36 questions, and (2) survey metrics – 4 questions. Questions no. 2-37 concerned the 6 styles of Goleman, where the respondents' task was to choose one answer to each question according to their opinions and feelings. Respondents could choose from the following answers according to the Likert scale:

- always affects me (5 points),
- usually affects me (4 points),
- sometimes affects me (3 points),
- rarely affects me (2 points),
- never affects me (1 point).

The respondents were presented with a list of statements for real or imagined events and by using a metric scale, they were asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the provided statement. What is more, "each response is assigned a point value, and an individual's score is determined by adding the point values of all of the statements" (Gay et al., 2009, pp. 150-151).

Questions 2-37 are assigned to one of the 6 Goleman leadership styles. Based on the numerical values of answers the calculation was carried out consisting in summing up the response values separately for each of the 6 styles. The results make it possible to identify the respondent's dominant style (the higher the value, the more dominant the style is).

The second part of the survey consists of questions 38-41, which was a metric to gather data about the respondents' group for the better analysis (Figs 1-4). Questions about gender and position were omitted to maintain the anonymity of the survey.

The group of interviewees consisted of leaders from a Polish company which employs 350 people on average. The company specialises in the industrial installations sector and realises projects in Poland, in the European Union, and in other countries all around the world. The history of the company starts in 1995 and it has provided services in such industries as, e.g., food, brewing, dairy, processing,

environmental protection, biotechnology, energy, chemical. The respondents belong to the organisation’s top, medium, and lower management levels from different departments of the company.

The sample size was limited by the fact that only people in managerial positions could participate and the researcher had to obtain from the CEO official permission for the research. As a result, the size of the research sample was 30 people.

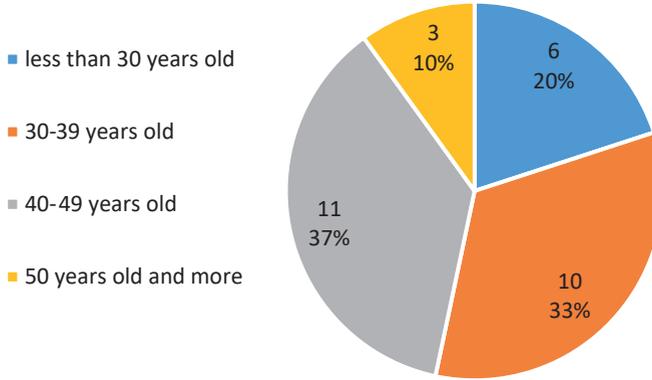


Fig. 1. Age of respondents

Source: own elaboration.

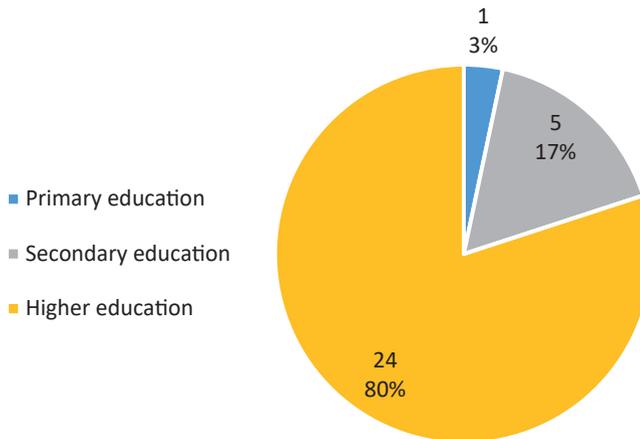
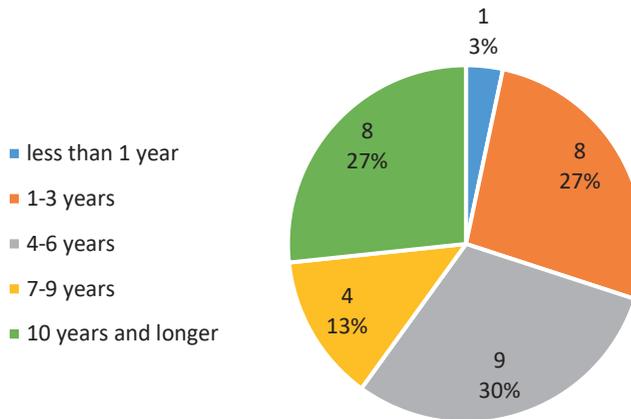


Fig. 2. Educational background of respondents

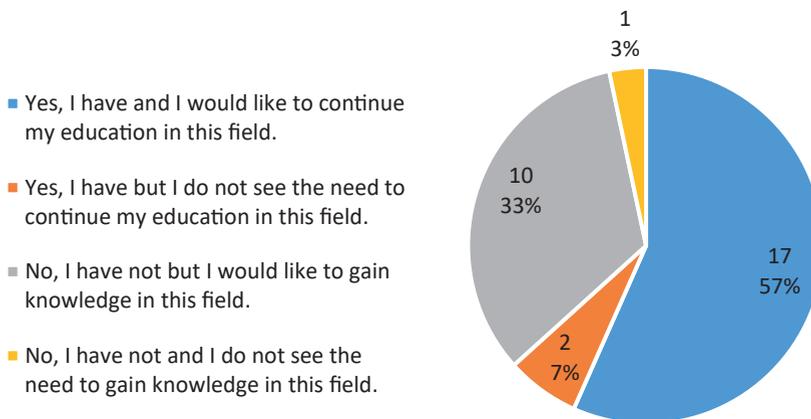
Source: own elaboration.



**Fig. 3.** Length of service in the current position

Source: own elaboration.

Respondents also were asked: have they ever participated in courses or extra classes related to leadership and the role of a leader in teams?



**Fig. 4.** Have the respondents ever participated in courses or extra classes related to leadership and the role of a leader in teams?

Source: own elaboration.

## 4. Reporting Survey Results and Data Analysis

### 4.3. Data Analysis and Its Findings

Table 1 presents the number of points awarded by respondents to each of the 6 management styles according to Goleman.

**Table 1.** The number of points awarded by respondents for each of the 6 Goleman leadership styles

Respondent	Commanding	Pacesetting	Democratic	Coaching	Affiliative	Visionary
1	22	25	25	24	24	22
2	21	22	25	26	26	25
3	18	22	25	22	24	21
4	24	23	26	27	26	26
5	22	22	24	25	24	24
6	17	20	23	23	22	22
7	22	22	28	28	26	29
8	22	16	22	19	22	24
9	20	25	22	23	24	23
10	29	26	26	24	24	25
11	22	22	23	22	25	25
12	24	22	19	25	22	24
13	23	24	23	24	26	24
14	23	24	23	23	24	24
15	22	28	25	17	29	29
16	24	27	24	27	24	27
17	24	24	22	23	21	20
18	20	18	25	26	24	25
19	23	25	21	22	26	25
20	19	19	18	18	21	19
21	18	22	26	24	24	25
22	27	23	23	25	24	26
23	25	24	24	24	24	25
24	18	22	25	30	27	28
25	20	20	26	24	28	19
26	22	23	21	23	24	23
27	27	24	23	21	20	24
28	22	24	21	23	23	16
29	25	29	28	25	30	28
30	23	21	26	25	24	27

Source: own elaboration.

In most cases, there is more than one dominant leadership style or there is no big difference in points between the dominant one and the next one in decreasing order. It can mean that the company's leaders use different leadership styles and tactics depending on the situation and the employee. Taking into account the size of the company it is possible for each leader to know each employee from their department. Having that in mind, leaders can lead those employees on an easier basis because they already know their characters, habits, etc. The tendency with a low difference between points is observed when it comes to the analysis of individuals' results. In the case of pointing out the one dominant leadership style in the organisation the points from each leadership style were added. The dominant leadership styles in the company were arranged in the following order.

1. Affiliative = 732 points.
2. Visionary = 724 points.
3. Democratic = 712 points & Coaching = 712 points.
4. Pacesetting = 688 points.
5. Commanding = 668 points.

As presented, the dominant style in the researched company is the affiliative style. Affiliative leadership is attached to emotions and for such a leader it is important to create an atmosphere full of harmony between co-workers. The affiliative leader also takes care of the freedom to work where employees may find their way to fulfil the task. In the company whose leaders took part in the research, it is noticeable that meetings of leaders for discussions about team members, their outcomes, complaints, propositions, etc. are conducted daily. Each worker at the low level of the organisation's pyramid of management spends part of the day chatting with subordinates to ensure they feel good and that there is nothing that could negatively influence their outcome at work. The work in the company is task-oriented and every project differs from the previous one. Having that in mind employees are informed about the specification. As is noticed in the theoretical part, the affiliative leadership style should not be used alone and very often it is combined with the visionary one. The visionary style is the second most frequently occurring in the organisation. Leaders who took part in the research define frameworks of work for subordinates. The democratic and coaching styles received the same number of points. In the company, which took part in the research, there are some decisions made on a team basis, but generally speaking, this style is not the most commonly used in the organisation. Surprisingly the use of the coaching style may be noticed more frequently, e.g., young employees of the organisation are sometimes assigned challenging tasks, which is a part of their long-term self-development in the organisation. The pacesetting leadership style is in fourth place. The only component of the style that is noticed in the company is continuous improvement which occurs in the form of courses for employees. The following components are not part of the leadership strategy in the organisation: expecting employees to do something without instructions, elements of discussion, and not sharing opinions on how employees are doing their work. The coercive style

is considered the least effective of all and at the same time it got the least points from the respondents. People are afraid to propose their ideas for fear of rejection or criticism, which, in turn, makes them feeling the lack of a sense of belonging and influence on the organization.

#### 4.4. Results and Discussion

The research may contribute to the knowledge of the typologies of leadership and its future research. Interestingly, lots of different studies in the field of leadership already exist but three of them were chosen in case of comparison with the research that I conducted. The comparison is presented in Tab. 2.

**Table 2.** General insight into different leadership studies

Authors of the research	Research sample	Research aim	Research methods, techniques, tools	Findings
1	2	3	4	5
Ann L. N. Chapman, David Johnson, and Karen Kilner (2014)	Leaders from medical and clinical sectors	Determination of the predominant leadership styles that are used by leaders in the medical and clinical sectors and the factors that influence the choice of the leadership style that they use	Questionnaire and in-depth interviews	The dominant styles were: <b>affiliative</b> and <b>democratic</b> . The least frequent were: coaching and commanding
Abubakari Abdul-Razak (2017)	Teaching and non-teaching staff (e.g. with administrative responsibilities) from the polytechnics in Ghana	The study examines the leadership styles used by staff from the polytechnics in Ghana	Descriptive survey	The <b>democratic</b> leadership style is the most frequently used in the Ghanaian polytechnics but other styles such as <b>pacesetting</b> , <b>affiliative</b> , and <b>coaching</b> also play an important role
Wojciech Cwalina and Milena Drzewiecka (2019)	Polish and Georgian people	Checking the voters' perception and preference when it comes to political leadership style, regarding the true and ideal president in Poland and Georgia.	Questionnaire	Both Polish and Georgian voters prefer leaders who use <b>authoritative</b> , <b>affiliative</b> , <b>democratic</b> , and <b>coaching</b> styles over coercive and pacesetting leadership styles

1	2	3	4	5
Olivia Czech	Leaders from a Polish medium-sized company from the industrial installations sector	Identification of the dominant leadership style in the company	Questionnaire	The results show that the <b>affiliative</b> is leadership style is the dominant one. The second one is <b>visionary</b> , also playing an important role

Source: own elaboration.

**Table 3.** The frequency of presence of the six Goleman's leadership styles in all four studies

Item	Leadership style					
	Commanding	Pacesetting	Democratic	Coaching	Affiliative	Visionary
Number of occurrences	0	1	3	2	4	1
Position	5	4	2	3	1	4

Source: own elaboration.

As is presented in Table 3, the affiliative leadership style is the one that occurs in all of those studies as the dominant one or the one that plays an important role. The second place belongs to the democratic style with the number of occurrences equal to 3 out of 4 studies which were taken into account in the comparison. The third most frequent was the coaching – occurs 2 times. Pacesetting and visionary leadership styles are simultaneously in the fourth position with the number of occurrences equal to 1 per each of them. The commanding leadership style did not occur as the dominant in any of those four studies.

## 5. Conclusions

The research purpose concerned the dominant leadership styles in a Polish medium-sized company from the industrial installations sector. In the quantitative research CAWI method interviews were conducted. The research presented the dominant leadership style in the organisation, in addition, it demonstrated that each individual may use more than one leadership style. Based on the results, each of the Goleman's six styles of leadership was ranked from the most dominant to the least dominant, and then the results were compared to the reality in the company. The comparison confirmed the accuracy of the results. The main limitation of the research process was the low involvement of leaders in completing the questionnaire, which means that encouraging them to complete the questionnaire was a challenge. At the end of the research, a satisfying number of completed questionnaires was achieved. The aim of the research was met as

the dominant leadership style in the organisation was found, in addition, it was confirmed thanks to the knowledge of how the work in the organisation looks like. The whole research process with the results at its head may bring an extra piece of knowledge to the field of leadership. Such an extra may get the attention that individuals may have more than one dominant leadership style and also the choice of the leadership style may be influenced by the whole organisation structure and characteristics of the company, as it was noticed in the research that the dominant style fit into the general state in the company.

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## **Identyfikacja stylów przywództwa – przypadek firmy z branży instalacji przemysłowych**

**Streszczenie:** Artykuł dotyczy tematu przywództwa, w tym definicji i cech przywództwa oraz jego stylów. Badanie miało na celu zdiagnozowanie dominującego stylu przywództwa w średniej wielkości polskiej firmie z branży instalacji przemysłowych. Próba badawcza wypełniła ankietę dotyczącą stylów przywództwa Golemana. Do oceny pytań respondenci wykorzystali 5-stopniową skalę Likerta. Afiliacyjny styl przywództwa okazał się najbardziej dominujący w organizacji. Znajomość zachowań liderów posłużyła do skorelowania wyników badania ze stanem faktycznym i okazało się, że wyniki odzwierciedlają rzeczywistą częstotliwość stosowania określonych stylów w organizacji. Wyniki porównano również z innymi istniejącymi badaniami nad przywództwem opartymi na sześciu stylach przywództwa opisywanych przez Golemana – w każdym z tych badań dominuje lub ma znaczenie wspólny styl, a jest nim styl afiliacyjny.

**Słowa kluczowe:** przywództwo, style przywództwa, Goleman