

THE MANAGER'S AUTOCRATIC STYLE OF MANAGEMENT AND THE TRUST OF EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Background and purpose: The purpose of this paper is to identify the relationship between autocratic management style and employee trust. Furthermore, the article aims to explore the correlation between autocratic management style and employee turnover.

Design/Materials and research methods: The theoretical part of the paper presents the essence of the autocratic management style and describes the importance of trust in organizations. The study was conducted using the case study method with respect to a selected company specializing in the production and sale of confectionery products, which has a high rate of employee turnover.

Results: The paper presents the results of the study on the manager's preferred management style and the results of an employee survey assessing, among other things, the level of trust and control in the relationship with the owner.

Practical implications: This study was conducted to highlight the relationship between management style and the existing level of employee trust in the owner.

Conclusion and summary: The conclusions drawn from the study highlighted the existing relationship between the management style used by the manager and the level of trust and control, which consequently translate into high employee turnover.

Key words: autocratic management style, trust, empowerment, control, employee turnover.

JEL classification: M14

Type of work: case study

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1. Introduction

Effective employee management does not have to be based on actions such as imposing punishment, exercising control, blackmailing, imposing specific actions, and manually controlling individual team members (Sasin, 2015). This does not necessarily mean that employees should not bear consequences or be monitored. Nor does it mean that they should be trusted and all their actions should be authorised without reservations. Striking the balance between control and trust with subordinates is still a challenge for managers. Moreover, due to the fact that generation Y representatives, who are particularly sensitive to control measures, appeared in the labor market, managers, wishing to develop their enterprises, had to face a new challenge, namely intergenerational management (Podlewska, 2016). This type of management involves, among other things, eliminating existing patterns and biases that can consequently hinder the development of the team through emerging conflicts.

The technical and technological development, changes in behavioral patterns, and related changes in organizations have a direct impact on management styles in companies (Stawowy, 2018; Podlewska, 2016). They determine the new way of perceiving the role of employees who are now integrated into management and made business partners who can influence the development of the company and become part of it. This management strategy, referred to as empowerment (Nauman and Khan, 2009), is based on trust between all team members, which is the main pillar. It is the behavior and conduct of managers who want to “delegate power and authority to increase employee self-efficacy” (Budgol, 2006). In such conditions, the greatest potential of employees and their motivation to act for the benefit of the company can be unleashed. The factor that determines the strength of motivation is the style that managers use to manage subordinate teams. Therefore, the decision-making process in an organization should involve appropriate management methods and techniques that should be based on knowledge, information, and experience (Palucha, 2012).

The purpose of this paper is to identify the relationship between autocratic management style and employee trust. Furthermore, the article aims to explore the correlation between autocratic management style and motivation to work in a company. The above-mentioned objectives were achieved using the case study method, including a survey, interviews, and participant observation. This study was conducted in a company operating in the food industry, dealing with the production and sale of its own confectionery products, in a particular time and environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The primary research questions included:

1. What is the level of employee trust in a company managed by a person characterized by the autocratic management style?
2. How does the autocratic management style affect employee motivation?
3. What keeps an autocratically managed company going for many years despite a high employee attrition rate?

The article consists of four parts. The introduction is followed by the description of the autocratic management style and its impact on employee attitudes. The next part analyzes the importance of trust in organizations and its impact on the creation of an atmosphere in the organization and examines the conditions that are necessary for the management of trust and that determine its high level. The author also presents the concept of empowerment, according to which employees are involved in the process of making decisions and take responsibility for them. Then, the methodology of the study was presented, followed by its results. The conclusions drawn from the analysis are described in the last part of the article.

2. The essence of autocratic management style and employee attitudes

In general, management style is a practically formed and relatively permanent way of exerting the manager's influence on subordinates so that their behavior leads to the achievement of a predetermined goal (Olechnowicz-Czubińska, 2014; Żukowski and Galla, 2009). By using the right leadership styles, managers can influence the commitment of employees, their performance and job satisfaction. Management style can be seen in multidimensional managerial attitudes, which can manifest themselves in behavior, skills, the expression of organizational values, the reliability of employees in different situations, and leadership interests (Mosadegh Rad and Yarmohammadian, 2006). Current leadership theories characterize managers based on the power of influence used to achieve their goals (Zuchowski, 2018). According to these criteria, using feature-based descriptions, leaders can be divided into autocrats, democrats, bureaucrats, or charismatics (Srivastava, 2016).

The first classifications of management styles were presented by K. Lewin, R. Lipitt and K. White in the 1930s, who proposed three leadership models: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire (Oleaszewska-Porzycka, 2015). In the autocratic model, also known as the directive model, decisions are imposed by the leader. Autocratic managers retain all the power and define the goals and how to achieve them. Their decisions are communicated to employees most often in the form of orders, and subordinates are rarely given the authority to make them. This model is based on obedience, supervision, discipline, and low levels of trust. Communication in such a team is usually one-way, „top-down”. The advantages of this style include the order and the predictability of the results of actions, while the disadvantage is the paralysis of initiatives and independent thinking of employees (Dukaj, 2008).

In the democratic model, the will of the majority matters, and the manager refers to the general opinion. The leader takes the opinion of the team into account, encourages feedback, and cares about the well-being of team members. In the democratic style, the manager delegates a significant amount of authority without avoiding responsibility. Contacts with employees are open, and two-way communication

dominates in a team managed by a democratic leader. Leadership is based on belief in team members and trust, which, in turn, provide a strong basis for the development of collaboration skills (Jasińska, 2009). In the laissez-faire model, also known as non-interfering or liberal style, the leader gives team members a lot of autonomy in the decision-making process for the sake of peace and quiet. They make no decisions, avoid judgment and shirks responsibility (Oleaszewska-Porzycka, 2015).

Another classification was introduced by R. Likert and R.F. Bales, who distinguished two leadership styles: consultative and participative (Wojnarowska and Winiarska, 2011; Żukowski and Galla, 2009). In the consultative style, the manager makes decisions after discussing (consulting) the issue with employees and seeking their opinions. The leader takes into account some degree of employee activation in the entire management process but makes final decisions on his/her own. The participatory style is characterized by friendly and open interpersonal relationships based on mutual trust. Employees set goals and make decisions themselves, the manager only approves them. Employee participation in leadership is a powerful and primary motivator that develops cooperation and commitment within the team. The characteristic feature of the above-mentioned management models is whether the manager's primary focus is on tasks or on employees. They can be distinguished on the basis of interactions between managers and subordinates aimed at:

- defining tasks,
- assessing tasks,
- controlling tasks,
- expressing negative emotional reactions,
- conveying positive emotions.

Task-oriented managers are mainly characterized by interactions related to task assessment and control and by negative emotional reactions, whereas interactions that trigger positive emotions are typical of people-oriented managers (Żukowski and Galla, 2006).

The classifications of management styles, known and described in the literature, also include the theory of managerial grid developed by R. Blake and J. Mouton in 1964 (Farey, 1993; Mroziwski, 2005; Żukowski and Galla, 2009). They described two factors, such as concern for people and concern for production, on two axes scaled from 1 to 9. Based on these two criteria, they created a grid of 81 boxes (Figure 1), which helps to define five management styles (Żuchowski, 2018, p. 353; Oleaszewska-Porzycka, 2015, p. 36).

Concern for People	Box 1,9 Country Club Style								Box 9,9 Team Style
					Box 5,5 Middle-of-the- -Road Style				
		Box 1,1 Impoverished Style							Box 9,1 Produce- -or-Perish Style
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Concern for Production									

Figure 1. Blake and Mouton’s grid of management styles

Source: Own study based on (Farey, 1993; Mroziwski, 2005; Żukowski and Galla, 2009).

Box (1,1) in Figure 1 indicates the Impoverished Style. Persons using this management style are characterized by low concern for employees and for work. They do not want to take responsibility for the team and do not like subordinates to approach them with problems. They also make the minimum effort to maintain any status on the team. Box (1,9) means the Country Club Style. Such managers consult employees before making a decision. They pay a lot of attention to people’s needs, hoping their well-being will make their work more effective. The needs of employees come first, the completion of tasks second. Box (9,1) means the Produce-or-Perish Style. It is the opposite of the Country Club Style; such managers primarily focus on the performance of tasks, and employees are seen as a means to an end. Focusing mainly on efficiency and tasks, such leaders manage teams with a heavy hand. They make all important decisions without empowering employees to act independently. Box (5,5) means the Middle-of-the-Road Style. In this case, managers care about both employees and tasks. Their effectiveness is satisfactory, they achieve it by performing work well and taking care of people’s morale. It is an intermediate style between the Country Club and Produce-or-Perish ones.

Box (9,9) means the Team Style. Such managers are as much focused on tasks as on employees. They are committed to creating an atmosphere that fosters interpersonal communication and making employees feel a part of the organization.

Harmonious relationships within the team coincide with company goals and lead to high performance at work. According to Blake and Mouton, this is the best leadership style.

All management styles mentioned above were analyzed by Żuchowski at the end of 2016 and the beginning of 2017 on a group of several hundred small and medium business managers. The study, which aimed to identify relationships with subordinates and to analyze management styles in the context of entrepreneurial attitudes of managers, revealed that such styles have an impact on how managers are assessed by employees. The analysis showed that democratic managers were most often characterized by the highest level of entrepreneurship (Żuchowski, 2018, p. 354). Employees' evaluation of managers' entrepreneurship mostly concerned their efforts to use ideas, implement them quickly, and encourage employees to create new business ideas.

3. Trust and its importance in an organization

Management models are based on the values that drive the managers. One of them is trust (Bugdol, 2010). It is seen as a valuable social capital and an important factor facilitating cooperation in achieving goals. According to P. Lencioni, trust „lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. Without it, teamwork is all but impossible” (Lencioni, 2016). Therefore, trust is a multi-component construct with several dimensions, the nature of which depends on the context, relationships, tasks, situations, and people (Hardy and McGrath, 1989).

In the context of organizations, Castaldo defines the process nature of trust (Castaldo et al., 2010), in which a person characterized by qualities such as competence, benevolence, and sincerity will take actions that will have a positive effect on the entity, even though such a situation would involve some risk (Krawczyk-Bryłka, 2012). The above definitions of trust demonstrate that there are various interpretations of this concept in the literature related to management and quality sciences. Examples of other definitions of trust are shown in Table 1.

Based on the information presented in Table 1, it may be concluded that trust is a significant element that co-creates the management mechanism and creates an atmosphere of openness within the team. It is also the foundation on which team members can constructively resolve conflicts, make decisions, plan activities, take responsibility for the implementation of plans, and focus on achieving goals together (Lencioni, 2016). An open climate of communication, fairness and equality in organizational policies and procedures, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction, career opportunities, and psychological security are the most significant determinants of trust in managers (Callaway, 2007). W. Grudzewski, I. Hejduk, A. Sankowska and M. Wańtuchowicz (Grudzewski et al., 2010) argue that the most important prerequisites for managing trust in an organization are:

- fulfilling promises,
- transparency of rules,
- respecting secrets,
- networking,
- willingness to share profits,
- setting common goals and establishing ways of working.

Table 1. Examples of definitions of „trust” in management and quality sciences

Authors	Definition of trust
Giddens, 2002	Trust is a reliance on individuals or abstract systems that balances ignorance or lack of information
Sztompka, 2007	Trust is a belief plus an action based on it. It is a bet made on uncertain future actions of other people
Fakuyama, 1997	Trust is a mechanism based on the assumption that other members of a community are characterized by honest and cooperative behavior based on the professed norms
Lencioni, 2002	Trust is the confidence among team members that their peers' intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group

Source: Own study based on (Fakuyama, 1997; Giddens, 2002; Lencioni, 2002; Sztompka, 2007).

The importance of trust for organizational performance is receiving increasing attention also due to the observed inclinations (Zeffane and Connell, 2003):

- the decline in trust in the workplace is the result of inappropriate approaches to employees,
- lack of trust is the reason why cynicism spreads among employees and why they resign from work,
- lack of employee support degrades the effectiveness and performance of the organization,
- the number of employees who trust their supervisors decreases significantly (Wyrębek, 2013).

The elements that have a key impact on building trust in the organization are based, among other things, on a clear and understandable vision of the organization providing support to employees, organizational values (especially trust) promoted by the top management, setting an example in preserving and respecting such values, a transparent remuneration system, in which decisions concerning remuneration should be based on objective data, and organizational climate without discrimination or lack of tolerance. Decisions about development, career paths, and succession are

equally important, and they should be made objectively, taking organizational values into account. A marginalized or over-exploited employee may leave the organization or withdraw from relationships (Grudzewski et al., 2009). Both the decisions themselves and the way they are made are equally important; the development of trust will not be possible if there is a deficit in taking initiatives enabling the delegation of tasks or authority. This is one of the key elements in developing employees and giving them a sense of contributing to the organization.

Trust, therefore, requires commitment and personal responsibility. Its absence builds the belief that the other party must be controlled (Stankiewicz-Mróz, 2015). Control aimed at improving processes is developmental, ensures that tasks are carried out according to the adopted assumptions and makes it possible to correct irregularities by providing feedback on the performance of activities (Grudzewski et al. 2007). Its scope mainly depends on the organizational culture, the management style, and the practices used. They result from the level of competence of managers, their personality traits, as well as the maturity level of employees (Stankiewicz-Mróz, 2015). However, abusive supervision of employees leads to the so-called „trust paradox” (Budgol, 2006). It is described as a situation in which surveillance is used as a result of mistrust, but, at the same time, surveillance and control destroy trust. The trust deficit thus creates a foundation on which excessive control exercised by the manager is built, creating significant barriers to the development of employees and the organization itself. These mechanisms have also been widely described in the concept of psychological safety, in which the psychologically safe atmosphere in an organization directly contributes to an increase in employee engagement (Steinerowska-Streb, 2020). The study carried out by A.C. Edmondson (2004) identified the links between psychological safety and trust and their impact on the organization.

The concept of empowerment is the answer to the development of organizations based on behaviors that encourage employees to develop and take responsibility for their own actions. This is a concept that was introduced after 1990 and is believed to be the best method for building effective and intelligent organizations (Nauman et al., 2009). The essence of this concept is the multidimensional process of delegating the right to control operations and make decisions to employees (Zeffane and Zarooni Al M.H., 2012), as well as strengthening their autonomy and independence (Nauman et al., 2009). The result of operating and developing an organization according to this concept is an increase in employee engagement and performance, an increase in motivation and a sense of belonging (Cheong M, Yammarino F.J, Dionne S.D, Spain S.M. and Tsai Chou-Yu, 2019). The environment in which it is developed requires, in particular, an organizational climate based on mutual trust. Empowerment is a targeted managerial tool that aims, among other things, to delegate power and authority to subordinates (Krawczyk-Bryłka, 2012). To build such an organizational culture, managers should encourage open commu-

nication, share strategic information, openly communicate evaluations and feelings, and encourage employees to participate in the decision-making process (Callaway, 2007). Over the past two decades, empowerment has emerged as a distinct form of leadership (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014), which has been defined as a combination of four behaviors such as enhancing the meaningfulness of work, promoting participation in the decision-making process, expressing confidence in high performance, and ensuring independence from bureaucratic constraints (Kundu S.C. and Kumar S., 2018). The main emphasis is put on the psychological area and the condition of employees, i.e. whether they experience psychological power over their work (Menon, 2001). G. Spreitzer defined psychological empowerment as: „a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact” (Spreitzer, 1995). Leadership empowerment, on the other hand, refers to actions taken by the manager. It includes the delegation of decision-making authority to employees and the improvement of psychological competence in terms of how employees respond to this authority.

4. Research methodology

The research objectives were achieved using the case study method. It is a research method that involves a broad description of a given phenomenon to ensure its in-depth analysis and evaluation. It allows researchers to collect a very large amount of data and information using various tools and, consequently, to analyze the situation or problem under study from a broad perspective. It enables them to see different reactions to one stimulus. As a result, this method helps to solve problems in similar situations and develop a plan of action in response to the appearance of analogous ones. In didactics, it also shows how to use the acquired knowledge in practice (Głowacka, 1986). However, the case study method also has some limitations. It may involve factors such as the lack of openness of subjects, their neutrality or low communicativeness. There is also a risk of misinterpreting the information obtained. Moreover, if the scale of the study is too small, a sampling error may occur, which may result in a too narrow subjective scope - too few cases may affect the authenticity of the results (Mielcarek, 2014).

Given the advantages of using the case study method in this research, it was decided that employees would give anonymous answers to questions in a survey concerning their cooperation with the manager and that they would participate in interviews to gain a deeper understanding of work atmosphere and their individual motivation.

The case study was conducted in a company employing 26 people and took place in 2021. The company has been present on the market since 1991. In the best years of its operations, it employed 58 people. The company operates in the food industry and conducts activities related to the production and sale of its own confec-

tionery products. The anonymous survey was completed by 19 out of 26 employees, who were also interviewed about the atmosphere in their workplace. The scope of the study also included the identification of the manager's leadership style using the NL and NZ leadership style self-assessment test in accordance with the procedure presented by S. Tokarski (Tokarski, 1997). The specific feature of the company is a high employee turnover rate, which has been observed for the past five years. Therefore, the study was conducted with respect to the high attrition rate. In 2019 and 2020, this rate was 30.7%.

The tool used in the study was a survey questionnaire with 26 questions relating to areas such as trust, control, communication, and motivation. The questionnaire was prepared based on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 meant definitely no, 2 – rather no, 3 – hard to say, 4 – rather yes, 5 – definitely yes. There were also 5 open-ended questions, which allowed the respondents to give a more detailed answer. The results were presented in the form of pie charts and histograms.

5. Study results. Management style of the manager in company X in the light of the test results according to Blake and Mouton

The test completed by the business owner showed a strong focus on the autocratic management style. The result of the Blake and Mouton's test was coordinates 9.2 (Figure 2.). The fact that the manager uses this style was also confirmed by the employees, who speak of their supervisor in a distanced manner in daily communication.

The manager's autocratic management style is evidenced by a strong task orientation. It is confirmed by the answers he gave in the interview. When the owner created the company (in the early 1990s), he followed his own plan and carried out his idea. He has exercised control and custody over every area of the company's operations from the beginning. In the course of the company's development, the owner did not want to use management methods other than those in which he/she would have a dominant position over employees. He/she believed, and still believes, that a sufficient motivator for employees is the stable workplace he/she creates as an employer and the related financial factor in the form of salary for work. The brand that the owner created gives him/her a sense of prestige that makes him/her recognizable with the business community. When talking about the company, the owner uses words such as: „my company,” „my employees,” „I created,” „I invented,” „I produced” despite the fact that, according to what the employees said, a significant part of the confectionery products produced and sold are made by the production staff. The owner is aware of the competence of the employees and knows that it would be difficult to run the business without key employees who are familiar with product formulas. However, this is a very narrow group of people who have been associated

with the company the longest. However, awareness of these competencies does not result in the expression of appreciation to employees.

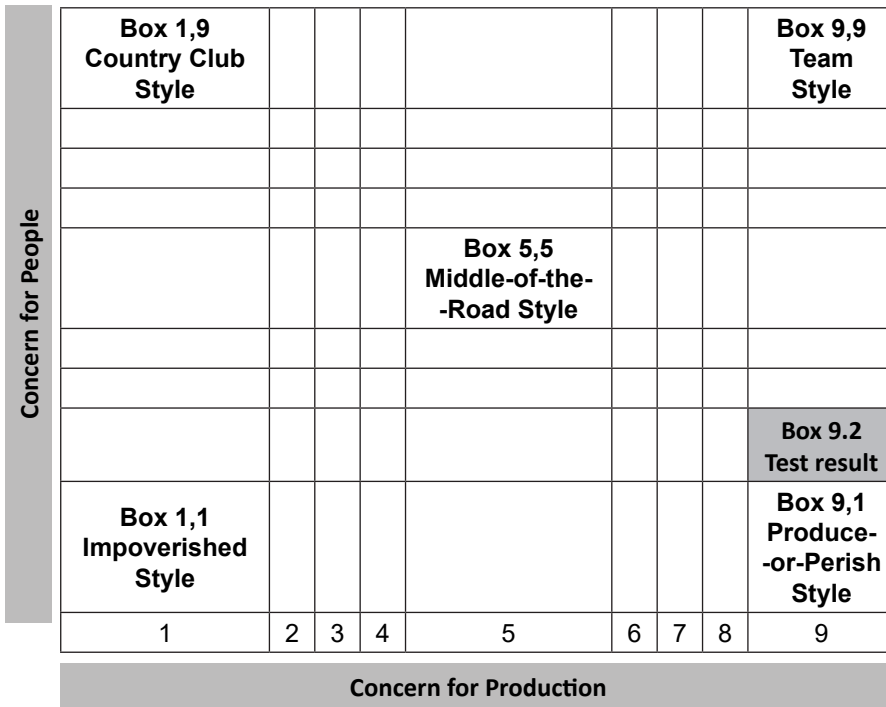


Figure 2. Blake and Mouton’s managerial grid presenting the result of the test completed by the manager

Source: Own study based on the manager’s self-assessment test.

6. Employees’ trust in the organization – results of questionnaire research conducted among employees

Interviews with employees and self-observations, taking place at different periods of the company’s operations, confirmed the owner’s use of an autocratic style. The accuracy of this observation can be indicated by the responses of employees presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows that when expressing their opinions on management style, 68% (13 employees) chose the autocratic style and 32% (6 employees) chose the passive style. The result of the dominant two styles also indicates that the owner, according to employees, does not even minimally use any other model, which is characterized by a greater focus on people rather than tasks.

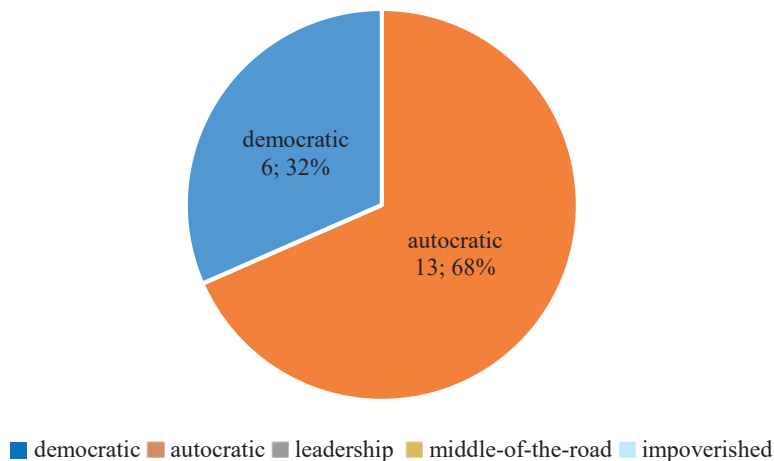


Figure 3. Management style used by the business owner in the evaluation of employees
Source: Own study based on the questionnaire.

A sign of the owner's autocratic management style is, among other things, the existing control system in the enterprise. Participatory observation as well as interviews with employees confirmed that the owner, according to employees, uses methods perceived by them as unprofessional, arousing negative emotions among them. As an example, the owner, through some of the employees who have worked in the company for the longest time, acquires knowledge about both the quality of work and private life of other employees, which the owner often uses to enforce them to perform some activities. Some employees, accustomed to this style of cooperation, agree to such actions, but the vast majority do not accept it. Thus, there is a division in the team that is not conducive to building trust and commitment.

Figure 4 indicates that 16 out of 19 employees evaluate the level of control applied by the owner as high. The interviews also confirmed that, among other things, the mechanisms used by the owner in this regard were one of the most common reasons for employees leaving the company.

According to employees, their relationship with the owner is not sincere. The owner communicates and demonstrates externally to third parties (e.g., in the business community) that employees are most important, but this information contradicts the actions that the owner carries out in day-to-day work by „invigilating work and overstepping the boundaries of human behavior” (quoted by one employee). Ultimately, employees evaluate the level of trust in the manager as low, as shown in Figure 5.

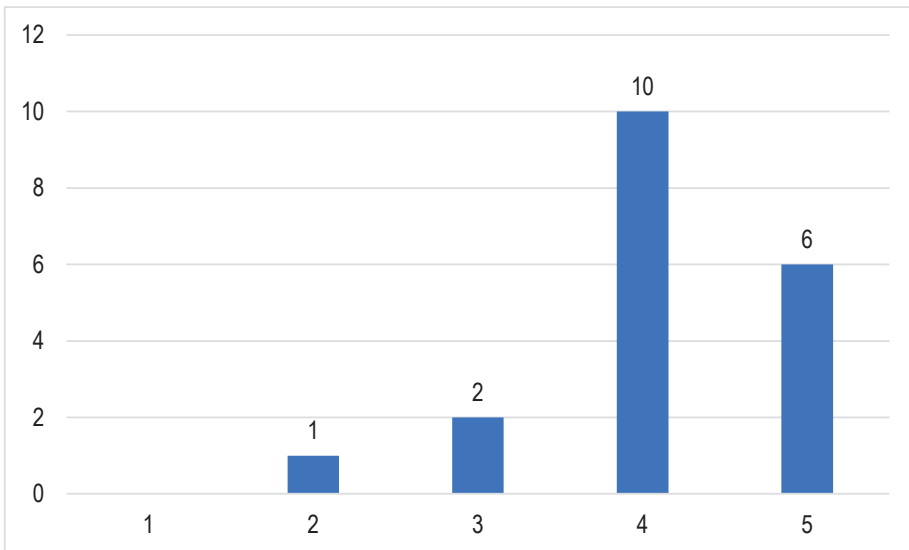


Figure 4. Evaluation of the owner's level of control from the perspective of employees
Source: Own study based on the questionnaire.

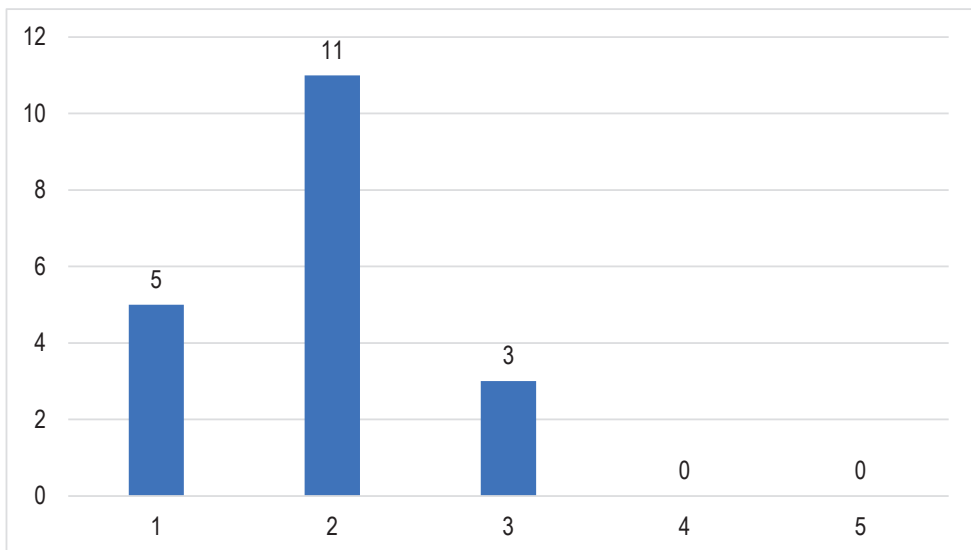


Figure 5. Evaluation of the level of trust of employees in the owner
Source: Own study based on the questionnaire.

Figure 5 indicates that the vast majority of employees do not trust the owner and only three people referred to the evaluation neutrally. According to the information gathered from the study, the level of trust is significantly affected by the attitude of the owner demonstrated most often by: high control (84% of respondents), failure to keep contracts (73% of respondents), materialism - defined by employees as focusing on material things and not on employees (52% of respondents). According to employees, improving the relationship with the owner would definitely be influenced by such factors as appreciating the team (79%), entrusting them with more freedom of action (71%), showing respect and expressing appreciation or gratitude for their work (69%), keeping contracts (57%), showing sincere interest in employees (55%).

The level of trust is also expressed in the employees' subjective evaluation of the employer's trust in their own competence (Figure 6). None of the employees questioned feel that the owner has trust in the employee's skills or competence. Excessive control and lack of expressed appreciation by the owner make employees do not feel sufficiently motivated.

On the other hand, according to interview responses, 16% of employees believe that 100% of their competencies are being used, 66% of employees believe that they are used to 70% and 11% of employees believe that they are used to 50%. However, none of the employees performs work inconsistent with their skills or competencies. This indicates an appropriate selection of employees for the job. On the other hand, the data may indicate significant untapped potential of the employees, which the employees themselves are aware of. However, due to the fact that the owner uses only financial motivation, it is impossible to reach the potential of employees and develop their commitment. 89% of those questioned believe that the company lacks any feedback on employees' performance or informing them about the company's performance, the rewards they receive in the business environment, the company's strategy or the company's direction. According to employees, this is demotivating and has a significant impact on planning their professional future. The structure of employees in terms of the prospect of their future cooperation is shown in Figure 7.

Of the 19 employees questioned, only four see the prospect of working at the company for more than two years. Based on interviews, it was determined that these are people over the age of 58. In turn, 16 employees intend to work at the company for no longer than two years. In this group, however, employees are under 34 years old. Thus, this is a group of employees of a different generation for whom changing jobs is not a significant barrier. Responses from the questionnaires in terms of the length of employment indicate the challenges facing employees in the near future in terms of further job resignations.

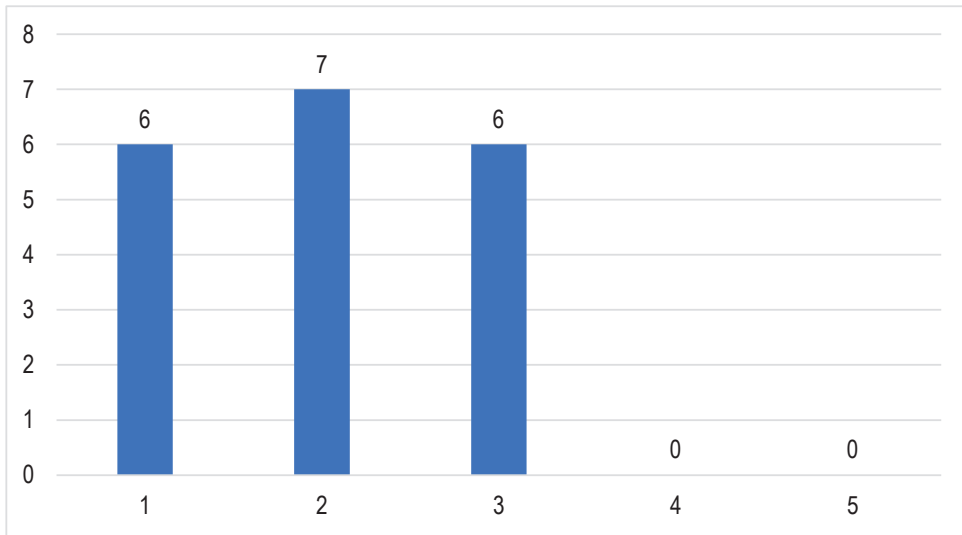


Figure 6. Evaluation of the owner's level of trust in the competence of employees according to employees

Source: Own study based on the questionnaire.

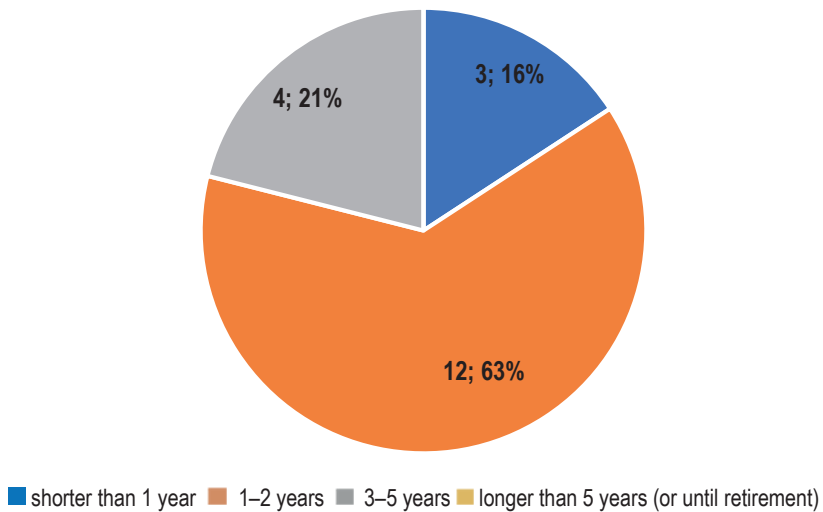


Figure 7. Perspective of cooperation time in the evaluation of employees

Source: Own study based on the questionnaire.

7. Conclusions

Analyzing the results of the study conducted, it can be concluded that the autocratic style used is the opposite of the trust and cooperation approach. The management style test showed a strong focus of the owner only on tasks. The analysis of questionnaires and interviews with employees as well as participant observation additionally showed that distrust in the owner is created as a result of high control, which inhibits cooperation, contributes to the creation of an environment related to high employee turnover. Moreover, this style combined with the mechanisms functioning in the company, such as lack of motivation to share ideas, indifference to the development of broader cooperation, lack of giving feedback on the work performed, depreciate the commitment of employees.

Despite the autocratic style used, there is a small group of employees in the enterprise who have been associated with the owner for many years. These employees do not want to influence the development of the enterprise, the most important thing for them is the stability associated with employment security. Since their work experience dates back to the previous political system, in which the autocratic style of management was the dominant, widely used style, they are accustomed to authoritarian mechanisms in which, as rank-and-file employees, they did not have to take responsibility or make any decisions. In the opinion of these employees, the most important thing is the so-called stability of employment resulting precisely from the owner's management style. This small group of employees does not aspire to promotions, obediently performs assigned tasks, provides – relevant from the owner's point of view – information on the work of other employees.

Considering that the company “defended” itself in terms of business and survived the difficult period associated with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which had a direct impact on reduced production and sales, this is not a positive outlook for the owner and other team members. However, interviews with employees confirmed that for the younger part of them, the reason for staying with the company during this time was the general lack of job prospects in the food service industry. Nevertheless, the situation showed that the difficult economic times for the company did not result in layoffs, for example. The owner retained the employment positions with the conviction that the employee costs, which he would not compensate for during that time with sales income, would still be less than the cost of getting new employees to work, in case they were laid off.

8. Summary

A study conducted at a company managed in an autocratic way revealed a relationship between management style and the level of trust. It also indicated that the relationship affects the level of employees' motivation to work and their further prospects for cooperation, bonding with the company. The motivation of employ-

ees to work is closely related to the management style of the manager. In this case, specific external factors related to the pandemic that limited business execution and development, from the manager's point of view, were important determinants in the manager's autocratic management model. However, employee retention was influenced not by employees' motivations related to their personal development and positive motivation for cooperation, but by a calculation related to the possible costs associated with recruiting new employees in the future. Thus, in difficult conditions where decisions or risks must be taken quickly, this style certainly works. However, these are incidental situations.

As indicated by the concept of empowerment presented earlier, the essence of a manager's action is to take every opportunity to communicate with employees, motivate their efforts, give them support or delegate authority and responsibility in order to bind employees to the company. In today's world, in the face of both social and technological changes, the paradigm of management has changed, where the basis of the traditional style was to command, coordinate and control. Such elements as command, power, control, authority or detailed instructions were characteristic of this style. The new style focuses on demanding, supporting and binding actions on a feedback basis. Participation of employees in management, consultation, delegation of authority or supporting them is characteristic for this style. This fundamentally different approach, therefore, requires managers to move away from the usual, established mechanisms of managing people and enter the roles of partners, mentors, coaches, who can flexibly use their competencies depending on the level of development of the employee. A style that involves employees in decision-making is mutually beneficial. On the one hand, this style makes it possible to make employees business partners, on the other hand, it allows the manager to focus on other matters related to, for example, the implementation of the company's development strategy for future years.

Due to the study area, the specificity of the environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the size of the study sample, the results of the study cannot be generalized. However, it was a sample that can certainly provide a basis for further analysis. One direction for further research could be the value system that provides the foundation for the development of a company's vision or mission.

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Streszczenie

Cel: Celem artykułu jest rozpoznanie relacji pomiędzy autokratycznym stylem zarządzania a zaufaniem pracowników. Ponadto artykuł ma na celu poznanie związku pomiędzy autokratycznym stylem zarządzania a fluktuacją pracowników.

Materiały i metody badawcze: W części teoretycznej artykułu zaprezentowano istotę autokratycznego stylu zarządzania, a także opisano znaczenie zaufania w organizacjach. W przeprowadzonym badaniu zastosowano metodę *case study*, w wybranej firmie specjalizu-

jącej się w produkcji i sprzedaży wyrobów cukierniczych, która charakteryzuje się wysokim wskaźnikiem rotacji pracowników.

Wyniki: Przedstawiono wyniki badania dotyczącego preferowanego stylu zarządzania przez menedżera oraz wyniki badania ankietowego przeprowadzonego wśród pracowników oceniające m.in. poziom zaufania i kontroli w relacji z właścicielem.

Wnioski praktyczne: Badanie to przeprowadzono w celu zwrócenia uwagi na zależność pomiędzy stylem zarządzania a istniejącym poziomem zaufania pracowników do osoby właściciela.

Wnioski i podsumowanie: Wnioski wyciągnięte z badania pozwoliły na zwrócenie uwagi na istniejącą relację pomiędzy stosowanym stylem zarządzania menedżera a poziomem zaufania i kontroli, które w konsekwencji przekładają się na dużą fluktuację pracowników.

Słowa kluczowe: autokratyczny styl zarządzania, zaufanie, empowerment, kontrola, fluktuacja pracowników