
Magistratus Publicus: The Competences of a Local Government Official and the Expectations of External Stakeholders

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Abstract:

Purpose: The aim of this article is to assess the extent to which the professional competences of local government officials correspond to the expectations of external stakeholders operating in the local public sphere.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The analysis focuses on three key areas of competence—knowledge, skills, and social competences—which collectively determine the quality of public administration and its relations with the external environment. Empirical research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, combining questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. The study encompasses both the self-assessment of local government officials and evaluations formulated by external stakeholders.

Findings: The results reveal significant discrepancies between officials' self-assessments and stakeholder expectations, particularly with regard to social competences and selected practical skills. At the same time, the study confirms a high level of substantive and professional knowledge among local government officials, which constitutes a stable foundation for the effective performance of public tasks.

Practical Implications: The findings justify the need to implement an integrated and holistic model of professional competence development in local government administration, one that systematically incorporates the perspectives and expectations of both administrative actors and external stakeholders.

Originality/Value: The article contributes to the literature on public administration and competence management by offering a multidimensional and stakeholder-oriented assessment of local government officials' competences. By juxtaposing internal self-evaluations with external expectations, the study provides novel empirical insights that may support evidence-based human resource development policies in local public administration.

Keywords: Competence management; municipal official competences; professional competences; social competences; knowledge; skills; external stakeholders.

JEL codes: H83, J24, M12, M54.

Paper type: Research article.

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1. Introduction

The issue raised by the authors is, on the one hand, an interesting and important issue in the functioning of local government³, affecting the quality of life of the average citizen.

On the other hand, the value and competences of officials are underestimated in everyday discourse. Is this justified? This is precisely the aim of this publication: to focus research interest not only on opinions about officials, but also on examining the level of their competences.

The following research problem was adopted for the purposes of these considerations: To what extent do the professional competences of municipal officials meet the needs of external stakeholders?

The authors based their considerations on the 7P marketing mix model⁴, which includes the so-called elements of traditional marketing, enriched with pro-social and process elements. The aspect of the variability of marketing mix factors, i.e., people (the human team) in terms of professional and social competences, as well as the processes taking place in the organisation that are related to the tasks assigned by external stakeholders, was considered particularly important.

2. Model of Relations between Civil Servants and the External Environment

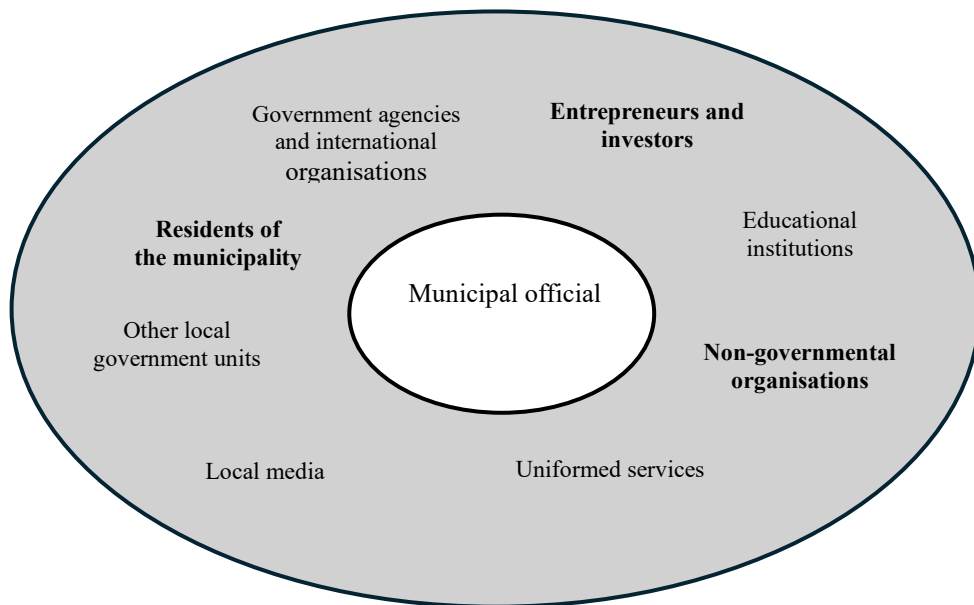
Based on an analysis of literature and documentation, the authors have constructed the following model of relations between external stakeholders cooperating with local government officials at the operational level.

In public administration terminology, the term ‘petitioner’ is often used to refer to a person who interacts with a public administration body in order to settle a matter, obtain information or obtain a decision based on legal provisions, whereby the relationship is formal and not based on market principles⁵.

³M. Kmak (2020), *The Municipal Council in the Polish Local Government Structure: Selected Aspects*, *ROCZNIK ADMINISTRACJI PUBLICZNEJ* 2020 (6), *Administracyjne prawo ustrojowe*, s. 128-143.

⁴A. Kuchciński, T. Konopka (2021), *Polska i świat w kryzysie wywołanym Covid-19 – aspekty ekonomiczne, społeczne i prawne*, *Oficyna Wydawnicza Staropolskiej Szkoły Wyższej w Kielcach*, Kielce, s. 39.

⁵D. Jendza (2021), *Petent, Klient czy Obywatel - jak postrzegani są przedsiębiorcy przez pracowników jednostek inspekcyjnych*, [w:] *Narzędzia i rozwiązania wykorzystywane w kreowaniu sukcesu organizacji w warunkach gospodarki cyfrowej*, red. P. Walentynowicz, W. Machel, *Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego*, Gdańsk, s. 161-178.

Figure 1. Model of an official's relationship with the external environment

Source: Own study.

A common feature of a customer⁶, consumer⁷ and petitioner⁸ is the fact that each of these persons enters into a relationship with a specific institution or organisation in order to satisfy their needs, pursue their interests or obtain a specific result, regardless of the nature of that relationship. Each of these groups acts as a recipient of goods, services, information or decisions, and their actions are associated with the expectation of a specific standard of service, reliability and compliance with applicable rules or regulations.

Customers, consumers and petitioners have specific rights arising from the relationship they enter into and may also be subject to specific obligations, the scope of which depends on the legal or organisational context. In each of these roles, a person may experience an assessment of the quality of service, timeliness, transparency of procedures and manner of communication, which influences their perception of the institution or entity with which they are dealing.

⁶H. McLaughlin (2009), *What's in a Name: 'Client', 'Patient', 'Customer', 'Consumer', 'Expert by Experience', 'Service User'-What's Next?*, *British Journal of Social Work* 39 (6).

⁷R. Sheaff (2025), *Towards a realistic view of consumer behaviour*, *Journal of Institutional Economics*, Volume 21, Cambridge University Press.

⁸I. Sokhan, L. Jiren, K. Kandahura, N. Hoi, P. Matkovskiy (2024), *Innovative Solutions in Administrative Management: Trends and Prospects*, *Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología – Serie de Conferencias*, 3, 655, p. 1-12.

It was important in the constructed model to determine which of the selected groups are important and urgent in accordance with the criteria adopted according to Eisenhower's matrix⁹. In order to determine which groups of entities are most important for the local government office, formal interviews were conducted with representatives of all organisational units in two municipal offices.

Table 1. *Results of the study on the importance and urgency of tasks performed for external stakeholders*

	Important	Urgent	Average value
Government agencies and international organisations	4,1	2,5	3,3
Entrepreneurs and investors	4,3	4,0	4,15
Educational institutions	3,2	3,4	3,3
Non-governmental organisations	4,0	4,0	4,0
Uniformed services (e.g. police, fire brigade)	4,2	2,5	3,35
Local media	2,6	3,9	3,25
Residents of the municipality	3,8	4,4	4,1
Other local government units	4,0	2,2	3,1

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

Based on the results, the authors selected stakeholder groups whose average value for both assessment criteria (important and urgent tasks) was above 4.0. These were three groups (municipality residents – 4.1, entrepreneurs and investors – 4.15, and non-governmental organisations – 4.0), which were further analysed in the research process.

3. Research Process

In order to achieve the research objective, the authors began by conducting a literature review, using the following priority keywords in the scientific text they were creating. These were: job or professional competences, local government official, needs of external stakeholders of local government offices, local government office.

As a result, the knowledge gathered made it possible to define the structure of the official's competency profile based on the diagnosed needs of external stakeholders and the tasks performed by local government officials. Next, the generic structure of the group of external stakeholders at the municipal level was defined.

In the next step, primary research was conducted. The authors assumed that, due to the purpose and scope of the research, a survey method was used both for collecting data from external stakeholders and for surveying local government officials. The selection of research groups was non-random, the selection was random, and the

⁹M. Krogerus, R. Tschappeler (2017), *The Decision Book. Fifty models for strategic thinking*, Kein & Aber AG Zurich, Zurich.

researchers only had to obtain consent from the respondents. Of course, this affects the representativeness of the research, but the process is an important step in preparing the younger researcher for further, more complex and in-depth research and scientific analysis in her research activities. In turn, an experienced co-author provided support in terms of content and research methodology.

In the group of external stakeholders, 55 people were surveyed, 30 of whom were residents of the municipality. Another group consisted of 15 people who were representatives of entrepreneurs or business owners. The last group consisted of 10 representatives of non-governmental organisations who participated in the study. The collected research results were intended to indicate which of the competence characteristics selected by the authors were of the highest priority in the eyes of external stakeholders.

The group of internal stakeholders in the case of local government units consisted of 20 civil servants who held employee positions. The collected data was used to build a model for civil servants to assess their own professional competences. It can be said that the research activity served to determine how civil servants perceive themselves, their skills, knowledge, and the effectiveness and efficiency of their social competence characteristics.

Table 2. *Structure of external stakeholders participating in the survey*

	Women (20-40 years old)	Women (40-60 years old)	Women (over 60 years old)	Male (20-40 years old)	Male (40-60 years old)	Male (over 60 years old)
Entrepreneurs or representatives of entrepreneurs	1	3	0	7	3	1
Residents of the municipality	2	5	4	9	2	8
Non-governmental organisations	2	5	1	1	1	0

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

Researchers analysing all three groups indicate that women predominate among local government officials (60% of respondents) and the average age is 49.4 years. In the case of the other two groups, men predominate, accounting for 66.7% of respondents among external stakeholders, of which 73% are entrepreneurs and 63% are residents of municipalities.

The average age of men and women participating in the study was 49.9 and 48.3 years, respectively. Table 4 presents the age structure of individual groups that participated in the study. The youngest group consists of representatives of non-governmental organisations (45.4 years), while the oldest are entrepreneurs, whose average age is 50.3 years.

Table 3. *Structure of local government officials participating in the survey*

	Women (20-40 years old)	Women (40-60 years old)	Women (over 60 years old)	Male (20-40 years old)	Male (40-60 years old)	Male (over 60 years old)
Local government officials	4	6	2	2	3	3

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

Table 4. *Mean and median age in the study groups*

Sex	Local government officials	Entrepreneurs	Residents of the municipality	Non- governmental organisations
Average age				
Women	44,0 lat	45,0 lat	49,9 lat	46,7 lat
Male	51,8 lat	52,3 lat	47,8 lat	40,0 lat
Average age in the group	48,6 lat	50,3 lat	48,6 lat	45,4 lat
Median age	Local government officials	Entrepreneurs	Residents of the municipality	Non- governmental organisations
Women	50,0 lat	49,0 lat	54,0 lat	51,0 lat
Male	58,0 lat	59,0 lat	55,0 lat	40,0 lat

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

The median age in the research groups indicates that in three out of four groups, male representatives are older than female representatives. Only in the case of non-governmental organisations do male representatives have an average age of 40.

4. Research Results

The survey of selected stakeholder groups and civil servants was conducted between 3 March and 25 April this year in three randomly selected municipalities in the Wielkopolska Province, two of which are urban-rural municipalities and one is a rural municipality.

The survey involved 30 residents (15 in Municipality X, 15 in Municipality Y), 15 entrepreneurs and investors (10 – X, 5 – Y) and 10 non-governmental organisations (6 – X, 4 – Y).

As for the group of local government officials, 20 people took part in the study (12 – X, 8 – Y).

Based on the literature on the subject and formal documents concerning the requirements for officials, the researchers proposed seven areas, which were diagnosed during the survey using prepared questionnaire forms.

In each of the assessed areas, the selected competency characteristics were rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, based on the principles adopted in the development of a competency profile for any job position.

This research methodology allowed the researchers, first, to assess individual characteristics by the respondents. Secondly, to compare the competency traits with each other, with the ultimate goal of this process being to select the 12 most important areas or traits for the competency profile of a municipal official.

In order to determine their satisfaction¹⁰, the respondents chose from four criteria: timeliness of handling matters, clarity and consistency of information provided, waiting time for a decision or response, and transparency of procedures.

Table 5. *Level of satisfaction with cooperation with officials by selected external stakeholder groups*

	Residents of the municipality		Non-governmental organisations		Entrepreneurs and investors	
Timeliness of handling matters	2,7	-0,3	3	0	2,4	-0,6
Clarity and consistency of information provided	3,5	-0,5	4	0	2,8	-1,2
Waiting time for a decision or response	3,2	-0,3	3,5	0	2,2	-1,3
Transparency of procedures	3	0	3	0	2,2	-0,8

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

The results presented in Table 5 show that the level of satisfaction of external stakeholders with cooperation with civil servants varies depending on the criterion, and the ratings are usually low or at best average.

The least satisfied group with the work of civil servants are representatives of entrepreneurs and investors. On the other hand, representatives of non-governmental organisations assess cooperation with civil servants most positively.

This situation may result from the specific nature of the issues addressed by both groups, as well as from previous experiences with public authorities, which are usually positive for non-governmental organisations, while in the eyes of entrepreneurs and investors, civil servants are representatives of a bureaucratic institution with too many procedures and little business knowledge.

¹⁰G. Issenova, B. Bokayev, M. Nauryzbek, Z. Torebekova, A. Kosherbayeva, A. Amirova (2024), *An Examination of Civil Servants' Assessment of the New Civil Service Reforms in Kazakhstan*, *Central European Journal of Public Policy*, 18 (2).

In the case of personal culture¹¹ and the attitude of civil servants towards applicants, researchers identified the following criteria: respect for stakeholders, empathy on the part of civil servants, savoir-vivre (the behaviour of civil servants in direct contact with applicants), objectivity in dealing with matters, and lack of prejudice towards the interlocutor.

Table 6. *Assessment of personal culture and attitude of civil servants towards external stakeholders*

	Residents of the municipality		Non-governmental organisations		Entrepreneurs and investors	
Respect for stakeholders	2,4	-0,5	2,9	0	1,8	-1,1
Empathy	2,5	-0,5	3	0	2,3	-0,7
Savoir-vivre	2,1	-0,4	2,5	0	2	-0,5
Objectivity and lack of prejudice	2,3	-0,3	2,6	0	1,8	-0,8

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

The second area assessed concerned personal culture and the attitude of municipal officials towards applicants. According to entrepreneurs and investors, the worst-rated aspects are respect for the interlocutor, objectivity and lack of prejudice on the part of officials.

For the above-mentioned group, these are qualities that cannot be associated with officials. These two competence traits are not rated much better by residents. Only representatives of non-governmental organisations rate the competence traits listed in Table 6 as average or even above average.

The ratings for selected social competence traits are the result of the respondents' satisfaction with their cooperation with municipal officials.

The third area concerned civil servants' respect for civil rights¹² and compliance with the letter of the law in their dealings with external stakeholders.

The following assessment criteria were adopted for this purpose: legality of action, equal treatment, respect for the dignity of the party and proportionality.

¹¹L. Liukineviciene, L. Buivydienė (2017), *Assessment of Civil Servants' General Competencies while Implementing the Civil Service Competency Model in Lithuanian Municipalities*, *Socialiniai tyrimai*, Vol. 39 (2), 16–27.

¹²P. Webb (2012), *Human Rights and the Immunities of State Officials* (chapter 5), [w:] *Hierarchy in International Law: The Place of Human Rights*, King's College London, p. 114–147.

Table 7. *Assessment of compliance with the law and principles of equal treatment by an official in relation to an external stakeholder*

	Residents of the municipality		Non-governmental organisations		Entrepreneurs and investors	
Legality of action	3,0	-0,7	3,7	0	2,6	-1,1
Equal treatment	2,8	-0,5	3,3	0	2,5	-0,8
Respect for the dignity of the party	2,2	-0,7	2,9	0	2	-0,9
Proportionality	2,2	-0,8	3	0	1,9	-1,1

Source: Own study based on primary research.

In general, external stakeholders divided the criteria in Table 7 into two subgroups. The first subgroup contains two criteria that received higher ratings than the others: legality of action and equal treatment.

Features such as respect for the dignity of the other party and proportionality were rated lower. The higher scores for the first two criteria may be the result of legal provisions that officials must respect and comply with in an appropriate manner, while the next two features are more a result of the official's personality traits than systemic solutions.

The fourth area covers skills related to active listening¹³ by local government officials. Researchers identified four criteria that allowed for a more in-depth diagnosis in this area. These are the following characteristics: asking clarifying questions, refraining from judgement, non-verbal listening cues, and feedback.

In the researchers' opinion, these specific elements of active communication made it possible to determine the level of efficiency of the communication apparatus of a local government official.

Table 8. *Assessment of active listening skills by civil servants in relation to external stakeholders*

	Residents of the municipality		Non-governmental organisations		Entrepreneurs and investors	
Asking clarifying questions	3,0	-0,5	3,5	0	3,0	-0,5
Refraining from judgements	2,4	-0,5	2,9	0	1,8	-1,1
Non-verbal listening cues	2,1	-0,5	2,6	0	1,9	-0,7
Feedback	2	-0,9	2,9	0	2	-0,9

Source: Own study based on primary research.

¹³A. N. Kluger, G. Itzhakov (2022), *The Power of Listening at Work*, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 9 (1), p. 1-40.

Non-verbal body language is an important component of effective communication. According to stakeholders, this is a skill that civil servants have at a low level, and the respondents are certainly not satisfied with it. The highest rating was given to the verbal skill of asking clarifying questions, which was rated at least average or good in all groups. Entrepreneurs and investors gave the lowest rating to civil servants' communication skills.

Another skill that was assessed by stakeholders is the ability to draft official letters¹⁴. Researchers listed the following criteria to clarify their view of this skill. These are: compliance with legal regulations and procedures, linguistic correctness, adequacy and completeness of information, as well as the aesthetics and legibility of the document.

Table 9. *Assessment of an official's ability to draft official letters*

	Residents of the municipality		Non-governmental organisations		Entrepreneurs and investors	
Compliance with legal regulations and procedures	3,8	-0,2	4	0	3,4	-0,6
Linguistic correctness	3,4	-0,4	3,8	0	3,2	-0,6
Adequacy and completeness of information	2,3	-0,5	2,8	0	2	-0,8
Aesthetics and legibility of the document	3,2	-0,3	3,5	0	3,1	-0,4

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

One of the most important skills of every civil servant should be efficiency and effectiveness in drafting official documents. In the opinion of external stakeholders, this skill is rated as good or even very good in three criteria. Only the rating for the adequacy and completeness of information is lower. This may be the result of the subjectivity of the assessment of documents by stakeholders. This is a consequence of the negative perception of the personality traits of municipal officials.

The sixth area concerns the ability to use modern technologies¹⁵. The following criteria were identified, which researchers used to deepen their diagnosis in the area under study. These are the following skills: use of basic IT tools, electronic communication, information security and data protection, and stakeholder support in digital channels.

¹⁴T. Piekot (2021), *W poszukiwaniu uniwersalnej metody upraszczania pism urzędowych i decyzji administracyjnych*, *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne, Seria Językoznawcza*, Vol. 28 (48), nr 1, p. 109-122.

¹⁵Y. Bilan, H. Mishchuk, N. Samoliuk (2023), *Digital Skills of Civil Servants: Assessing Readiness for Successful Interaction in e-society*, *Acta Polytechnica Hungarica*, 20(3), p. 155-174.

Table 10. *Assessment of civil servants' skills in using modern technologies*

	Residents of the municipality		Non-governmental organisations		Entrepreneurs and investors	
Basic IT skills	3,9	-0,3	4,2	0	3,8	-0,4
Electronic communication	3,7	-0,3	4,0	0	3,8	-0,2
Information security and data protection	3,5	-0,3	3,8	0	3,5	-0,3
Stakeholder support in digital channels	3,5	-0,2	3,7	0	3,2	-0,5

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

Table 10 presents stakeholders' assessments of their perception of municipal officials' IT skills¹⁶. The researchers point out that, apart from the ability to draft official letters, these skills are well rated by external stakeholders. The worst-rated aspect is the use of IT skills by municipal officials to support stakeholders in understanding and explaining individual digital channels.

The respondents indicate that officials are reluctant to assist them in this regard. This may be the result of formal restrictions on the part of officials, as well as a lack of open access to IT infrastructure in local government units.

Table 11 presents assessments of civil service management. Researchers listed four criteria: work planning, effectiveness, self-sufficient and responsible at work, and workplace organisation.

Table 11. *Assessment of the level of work management by civil servants*

	Residents of the municipality		Non-governmental organisations		Entrepreneurs and investors	
Work planning	2,4	-0,8	3,2	0	2,1	-1,1
Effectiveness	1,8	-1,0	2,8	0	1,6	-1,2
Independent and responsible at work	2,1	-0,9	3	0	2	-1,0
Workplace organisation	2	-0,9	2,9	0	1,8	-1,1

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

The seventh area concerned the civil servant's competences related to the management and organisation of work in their position¹⁷. The highest rating was given to work planning by civil servants, which, in the opinion of stakeholders, is carried out in an appropriate manner, 'gives the impression' of being methodical and conducted

¹⁶M. Kowalczyk (2025), *Nowoczesne technologie wykorzystywane w jednostkach samorządu terytorialnego na przykładzie gminy Zabór w latach 2018-2022*, *Discourse of Law and Administration* 1/2025, p. 75-96.

¹⁷B. Hysa, B. Grabowska (2018), *Wiedza, umiejętności oraz potencjał pracowników administracji publicznej na przykładzie wybranej jednostki ZUS*, *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej, Seria: Organizacja i Zarządzanie*, Z. 113, p. 109-123.

according to an agreed plan. The adjectives 'independent and responsible' are perceived much less favourably, as external stakeholders do not consider them to be applicable to the position of a municipal official.

According to the respondents, officials are not independent employees, but rather carry out the instructions of their superiors in accordance with applicable legal regulations. In the analysed scope, responsibility is not individual in nature, and any objections may only be pursued by appealing against the decision through administrative proceedings.

Assuming the creation of a job profile¹⁸ for a municipal official, in addition to collecting assessments of individual competency traits among a group of external stakeholders, the researchers conducted a survey among the interested parties themselves, i.e., officials whose duties in their current position require contact with external stakeholders.

In this way, the researchers wanted to compare the assessment of the competences possessed by local government officials with the assessment of the competences desired by external stakeholders.

The tables below contain the results of the survey in selected areas of competence, which were self-assessed by civil servants. During the survey, 20 civil servants assessed their own competences divided into three areas: social competences, knowledge and skills^{19,20,21}. In total, the respondents assessed their competence characteristics on a Likert scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest rating).

Tables 12a and 12b show the age distribution of local government officials participating in the survey. The presented distribution shows differences in the self-assessment of competences. It is noteworthy that there is often no correlation between the length of professional experience and the level of declared competences. In the case of IT skills, this lack of correlation is understandable.

¹⁸ F. P. Morgeson, M. T Brannick, E. L. Levine (2020), *Job and Work Analysis: Methods, Research, and Applications for Human Resource Management*, SAGE Publications, Inc., New Delhi.

¹⁹ M. Kim, S. Youn, M. Park, K.-Oh Song, T. Shin, J. Chi, J. Shin, D. Seo, S. Hong (2007), *A review of human competence in educational research: Levels of K- 12, College, Adult, and Business Education*, *Asia Pacific Education Review*, Vol. 8, No.2, p. 343-363.

²⁰ N. Shobikah (2020), *Competences in English*, *Journal of Research on English and Language Learning*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 23-36.

²¹ J. Winterton, F. Delamare - Le Deist, E. Stringfellow (2006), *Typology of knowledge, skills and competences: clarification of the concept and prototype*, *Centre for European Research on Employment and Human Resources Groupe ESC Toulouse, Toulouse*.

The reasons for this can be found in the mature age of some of the respondents, who did not use advanced information technologies when they started their professional careers and did not update these skills later on, or the process of improving them was insufficient or difficult.

Table 12a. *Self-assessment of local government officials' competences*

	Personal culture	Respect for stakeholders	Communication effectiveness	Equal treatment	Electronic communication	Preparing official documents and letters
Local government officials aged up to 30	4,4	3,9	4,3	4	4,5	4,1
Local government officials aged 30–40	4,2	3,9	4,3	4	4,4	4,2
Local government officials aged 40–50	4,1	4	4,2	3,9	3,8	4
Local government officials over the age of 50	4,1	4,2	4,2	4	3,3	4,1

Source: *Own study based on primary research.*

On the other hand, assessments of personal culture, communication effectiveness and respect for stakeholders are higher among civil servants under the age of 30 than in other groups. The reason for this may be the age of the people who, based on this criterion, belong to Generation Z, which is defined as the digital generation, ‘internet’ generation, very flexible, accustomed to quick access to information and change²².

On the other hand, the group of civil servants over 40 years of age belongs to Generation Y or X, which has consequences for their approach to their duties at work or their perception of themselves through the prism of personal development.

Table 12b. *Self-assessment of local government officials' competences*

	Planning and organising the workplace	Improving professional skills	Legal knowledge	Position-specific knowledge	Knowledge of IT tools	Communication and ethical knowledge
Local government officials aged up to 30	4,3	4,2	4,2	4,3	4,5	4,3
Local government officials aged 30–40	4,4	4,2	4,2	4,1	4,2	4,3
Local government officials aged 40–50	4,2	3,8	4,1	4,5	3,7	4

²²N. Hockly (2011), *The digital generation*, *ELT Journal* 65(3), p. 322-325.

Local government officials over the age of 50	4,2	3,5	4,2	4,5	3,5	4
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Source: Own study based on primary research.

Overall, civil servants themselves rate their knowledge as good or even very good. The exception to this are the results for civil servants over 40 years of age in terms of their knowledge of IT tools. The other three characteristics are rated very highly.

The researchers point out that civil servants gave themselves high marks in the self-assessment of their professional competences, with only five cases receiving a rating below very good. For the group of civil servants over 40 years of age, these were: (1) knowledge of IT tools, (2) improvement of professional competences, and (3) ability to use electronic communication. In the case of people under 40, they are less developed in the area of social competences, namely (4) building respect for stakeholders. Civil servants aged 40-50 are less developed than others in terms of equal treatment of stakeholders.

Table 13 presents a summary of the results in terms of determining the level of existing and desired competences of municipal officials. The summary consists of 12 characteristics divided into three areas (social competences, knowledge and skills).

Table 13. *Structure of competency traits possessed and desired in the position of municipal official*

Competency characteristic	A	B	Difference (A-B)
	Average self-assessment of the official	Average rating by external stakeholders	
SOCIAL COMPETENCES			
Personal culture	4,2	2,7	-1,5
Respect for stakeholders	4,1	2,4	-1,7
Effective communication	4,2	3,3	-0,9
Equal treatment	4,0	2,9	-1,1
SKILLS			
Ability to use electronic communication	3,9	3,8	-0,1
Preparation of official documents and letters	4,1	3,2	-0,9
Planning and organising the workplace	4,3	2,3	-2,0
Improvement of professional skills	4,1	4,0	-0,1
KNOWLEDGE			
Legal knowledge	4,3	3,5	-0,8
Job-related knowledge	4,0	3,8	-0,2
Knowledge of IT tools	3,8	3,7	-0,1

Communication and ethical knowledge	4,1	3,8	-0,3
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Source: Own study based on primary research.

An analysis of the competence assessments of municipal officials by the officials themselves and external stakeholders shows that there are significant differences in the area of social competences, which are assessed by officials as very high, while stakeholders assess these characteristics as average or high.

In the case of professional skills necessary to perform duties resulting from the specific nature of the tasks performed, the assessment of both groups is generally similar, with only a significant deviation in the area of workplace planning and organisation skills, which officials rate as very high, while stakeholders rate as low.

Assessments in the area of competency traits related to civil servants' knowledge show the least variation, which clearly confirms the high level of substantive preparation of persons performing this function.

This demonstrates the well-established and consistent competence base necessary to perform tasks in public administration, which by its nature requires a holistic and multidimensional approach to professional training.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the importance of formal and legal knowledge, which is the foundation for the proper functioning of the office and for making decisions in accordance with applicable regulations. Equally important is information literacy, which enables efficient navigation in the area of information flow, access to data and its proper use.

Ethical knowledge, which shapes attitudes of responsibility, impartiality and transparency in action, also remains an indispensable element of civil service professionalism. These competences are complemented by communication skills, which are essential for effective cooperation within the organisation and building partnership relations with citizens.

The relatively small differences in the assessments therefore indicate not only the high level of substantive preparation of civil servants, but also the consistency of competence standards in this area, which can be considered an important asset of public administration and a solid basis for further development of the quality of its functioning.

The results of the analysis and the survey are reflected in Table 13 and, above all, in the job description for a municipal official, in which the red line indicates the so-called competencies possessed and the blue line indicates the competencies desired by the stakeholders of the system.

Figure 2. Job profile of a municipal official as assessed by themselves and stakeholders



Source: Own study based on primary research.

5. Recommendations

The authors of the publication sought to familiarise readers with the following issue: To what extent do the professional competencies of municipal officials meet the needs of external stakeholders? To this end, they used surveys and interviews. In this section, the researchers presented their conclusions based on the analysis of the data.

It should be noted that, to a large extent, the competencies possessed (self-assessment of officials) differ from the desired competencies (assessment of external stakeholders). This is particularly noticeable in the area of social competencies and, to some extent, professional skills. In the area of knowledge, the competencies possessed largely correspond to the desired competencies.

The researchers recommend the following measures to improve the professional competencies of municipal officials:

- implementation of regular training courses and workshops on interpersonal communication, customer service, empathy, assertiveness, conflict management and building relationships based on trust,
- use of active methods (simulations, case studies, role-playing) to compare declared competences with actual behaviour in professional situations,

- introducing feedback mechanisms, including anonymous stakeholder satisfaction surveys, enabling civil servants to better understand the expectations of those around them and identify areas for improvement,
- promoting a culture of self-assessment based on objective criteria and evidence (e.g. analysis of complaints, requests, residents' opinions),
- supporting mentoring and internal coaching, especially in the area of soft skills,
- updating knowledge in response to legislative and organisational changes,
- integrating substantive knowledge with practice through training courses combining legal aspects with communication and social skills.

Overall, it is recommended to adopt a holistic model of competence development for municipal officials, combining knowledge, skills and social competences. This model should take into account both the perspective of administration employees and the expectations of external stakeholders, treating them as key partners in the process of improving the quality of public administration.

The implementation of the indicated measures may contribute to reducing the competence gap in the position of municipal official, which in turn will increase public trust, the efficiency of municipal offices and the quality of public services provided.

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