

Impact of Managerial Staff on Creativity of Public Sector Employees

Marta Juchnowicz

Institute of Human Capital, Warsaw School of Economics

Creativity of employee is a prerequisite of efficiency of public sector. To a significant extent its level is determined by the model of organizational management. Therefore, inspiring are the ways of creativity building in public sector institutions. In the opinion of the Author, management style plays a significant part in supporting the development of the competence of creativity. Thus, the article presents the analysis of the influence managers have on shaping creativity of their employees in public sector in Poland. Researching the opinions of 346 employees of public sector has been the basis of drawing conclusions that enable both evaluation and identifications of impediments to the impact of managers on creativity of employees.

Keywords: creativity, public sector, management style

Introduction

Nowadays human capital is a key factor of socio-economic development. This is an objective consequence of the third industrial revolution and resulting from its characteristics of industry 4.0, demographic trends and new social phenomena (i.e. emergence of precariat). A significant reason for special importance of human capital is insufficient innovativeness of Polish economy. The total indicator of innovativeness for Poland (0.313) constitutes 56.4% of the EU countries average indicator (0.555) (Nowicka, 2017, p. 87). In case of Poland the indicator levelled off within 2006–2014, showing a minimal upturn. Such a situation need to be reached to and, hence, it is the development of creative economy and – linked to it – creative society that could improve such a situation. Developing the economy that would be competitive in terms of innovations and not in terms of low cost of Labor requires a proper quality of human capital whose creativity could be the added value. Many researchers prove that there is a direct correlation between employees'

creativity and innovativeness. Creativity is the prerequisite, the very outset of an innovation process and it also determines the effectiveness of the process (Strychalska-Rudzewicz, 2017, pp. 10–11). The requirement of innovativeness concerns notably the public sector¹ that employs about 23% of the working population in Poland. And it is creative branches e.g. schooling, education, health care, culture and public administration (6.5% of polish workforce) that dominate the public sector. Therefore, the Author is of the opinion that creativity is a key competence of public sector employees and is the condition of the sector efficiency.

Table1. Employees of selected areas of public sector in Poland
(as of 31 December 2015)

Item	Area	Number of employees	Share % in total workforce
1.	Total	14 829 792	100
2.	Public sector	3 343 566	22.5
3.	Education	977 119	6.6
4.	Public administration and national defense	970 395	6.5
5.	Health care and social assistance	529 097	3.6
6.	Activities connected with culture, entertainment and relaxation	111 576	0.75
7.	Professional, scientific and technological activities	73 709	0.5

Source: Author's own based on: Pracujący w gospodarce narodowej w 2015. Central Statistical Office in Poland, 2016, pp. 26–37.

Characteristics and ways of developing creativity of public sector employees

Creativity is a personal competence of an employee and constitutes one of socio-psychological competences. Its development needs the synchronization of three factors: knowledge and specialist abilities, capabilities of creative thinking and employee motivation to creativity (Amabile, 1996). Creativity is enhanced

¹ Public sector in Poland includes state-owned, communal and mixed ownership entities with majority stake held by the state or municipalities; they operate within legal and organizational framework as: organs of government, administration and state control, justice system, state treasury companies, central and regional funds, state enterprises, communal enterprises, local government entities and the ones with control stake of either a state or a commune.

in the situation when all the factors occur together and the level of each of them is high (Strychalska-Rudzewicz, 2017, p.18). People who have this competence are characterized by permanent development, flexibility of thinking and acting, intellectual abilities, need for cognition, emotional assets, persistence in reaching a success, independency of opinion, self-confidence, freedom of thinking and acting, courage while taking risky undertakings, ability to think in a holistic way, willingness to break the binding paradigms, openness to change (Wojtczuk-Turek, 2014, p. 90). This set of qualities is extended by Gilda Waisburd with several features of working style: fluency (having many idea of problem solving), attention to detail (investigating the details of the task delegated), holistic perception, inquisitiveness, being action-oriented, systematical work and understanding the need of the others as well as involvement (Waisburd, 1996). These are the characteristics that determine a relatively long-term ability of an employee to create new ideas, concepts, solutions and products, i.e. behaviors that determine the emergence of new, unique ideas in each area of organizational activity at each level of organizational hierarchy. Therefore, creativity is an integral part of an entrepreneurial attitude.

Creativity, just like entrepreneurship, is a competence desired in all fields associated with the need for creation. It is also required and welcome in all the posts within an organizational structure. In development of creativity in public sector organizations requires consistency in applying the model of New Public Management and its evolutions towards New Public Governance (Morawska, Banasik, 2015, pp. 42–44). Functioning in compliance with their assumptions implies the application of adequate organizational forms, e.g. project teams, flexible procedures, pro-innovative organizational culture as well as suitable instruments of human capital management that combine the specifics of public sector and its activities not linked to generating profit as well as the arguments regarding hardly-measurable results that do not restrain their application (Zieliński, 2011, p. 28). This is also proven by the human resources management standards used in civil service, however, used in formal and restricted way. The efficiency of public sector relies on organizational culture open up to suggestions from the outside, facilitating experiments and likely mistake-making, and the culture (Szymańska, 2016, p. 127). The significant attributes of the culture and elements of human capital management that could support creativity are such motivational systems that consider open and non-linear career paths, awards for ideas and for qualitative results of work, e.g. bonuses for the accomplishment of objectives and the programs of development of professional competences, e.g. talent management.

It is worth emphasizing here that the management style supporting employees' creativity plays a major role in its development. This special role is not only the

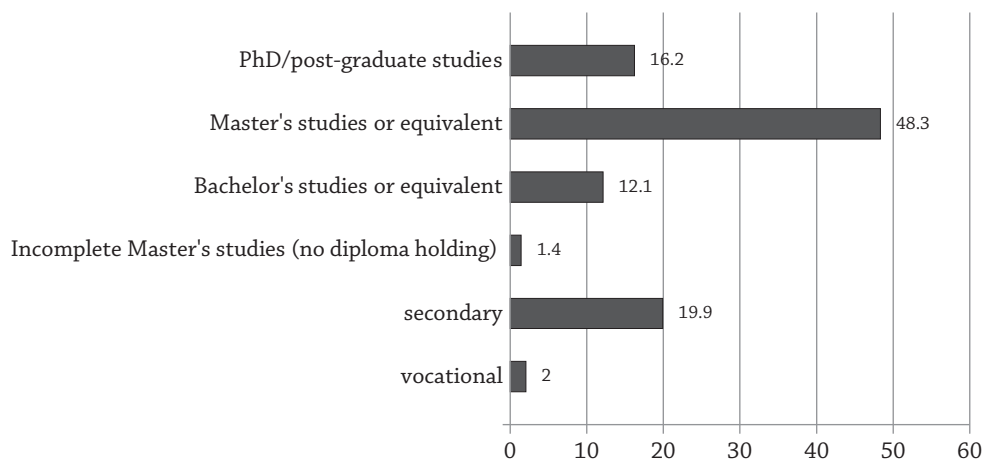
effect of the “first front line”, but it also results from the fact the style of impacting employees reflects norms and values of an organizational culture as well as it determines the solutions applied within the system of human capital management in organizations.

Researching Polish reality, findings and conclusions

The subject of the research was management style in public sector and the analysis of the managers’ impact on shaping creativity of employees was the research objective. To examine the situation in Polish public sector, a part of the research conducted by a team of employees of the Institute of Human Capital at the Warsaw School of Economics (in October 2016) was used. The research was done basing of CAWI method, using a survey questionnaire including 59 research questions and 5 age questions. It covered sample population of 800 employees in Poland, out of whom 346 worked in public sector. Among them women constituted 59% and men – 41%.

The structure of the respondents considering the level of their educational background indicates high level of formal qualifications of employees. 62% of the respondents were the employees – holders of the first and the second degree university diplomas. Additionally, 16% of the respondents were PhD diploma holders or they completed post-graduate studies.

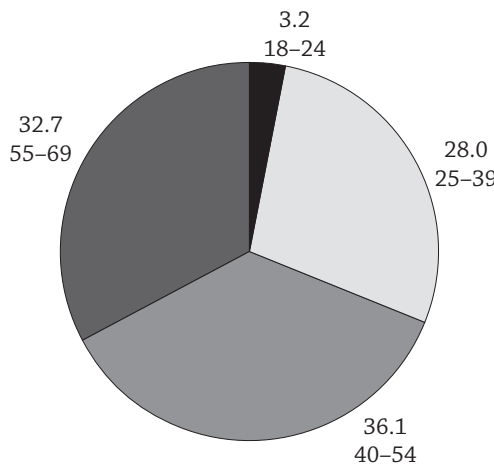
Figure 1. Structure of respondents and their educational background / in %, N = 346/



Source: Author's own.

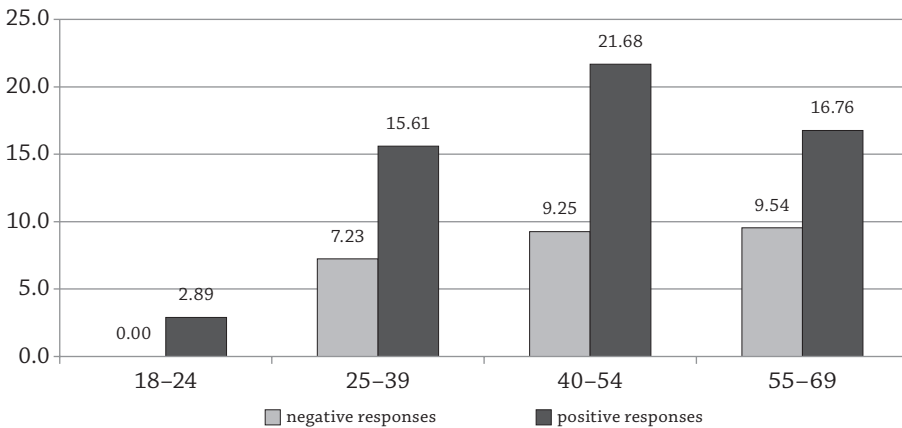
The conclusion – hardly optimistic – result from the age criterial differentiating the respondents. Within the sample surveyed almost 70% constituted employees over 40 years of age, among whom 30% were aged 55+. Generation Y representatives accounted only for 28% of the respondents. It might seem that such age structure of the employees might hinder creativity development in public sector. Therefore, there is a challenge to managers of public sector organizations to apply solution enabling cross-generation knowledge transfer, e.g. project teams or team work.

Figure 2. Structure of respondents and their age / in %, N = 346/



Source: Author’s own.

Figure 3. My superior encourages me to decision-taking

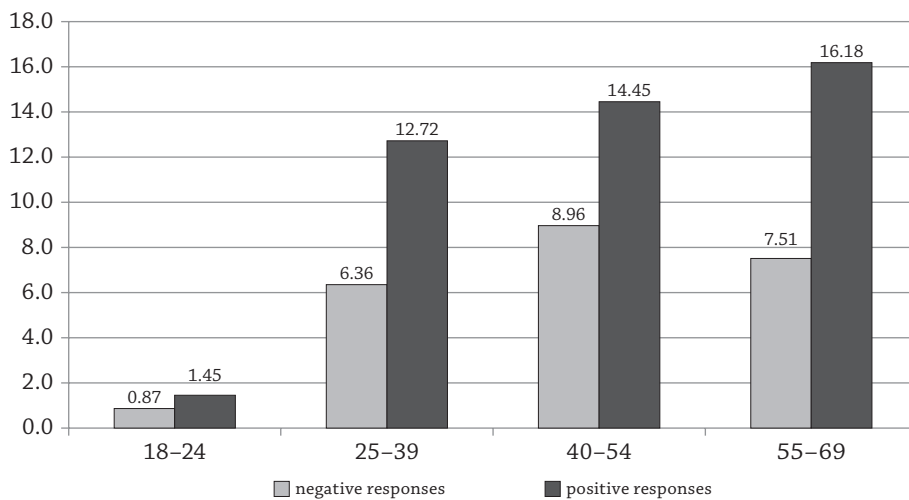


Source: Author’s own.

The research finding justify the statement that the public sector managerial staff are encouraging the employees to take decisions, which has been confirmed by 57% of the respondents. About one fourth of the employees were of a negative opinion. Positive responses dominate in all age groups and length of seniority.

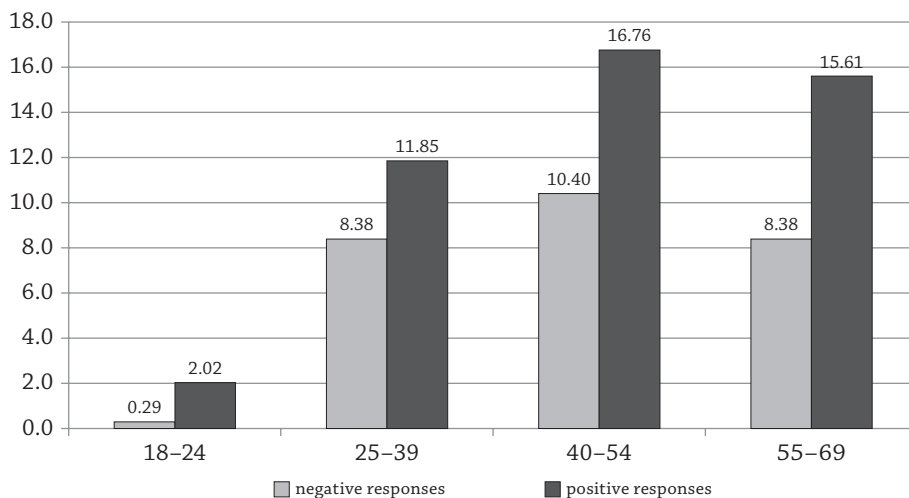
Much more cautiously the respondents the respondents assessed their approval for non-standard actions and experiments. Positive responses have been provided by 45% of the surveyed.

Figure 4. My superior approves non-standard actions and experiments



Source: Author's own.

Figure 5. My superior facilitates exchange of ideas and experience

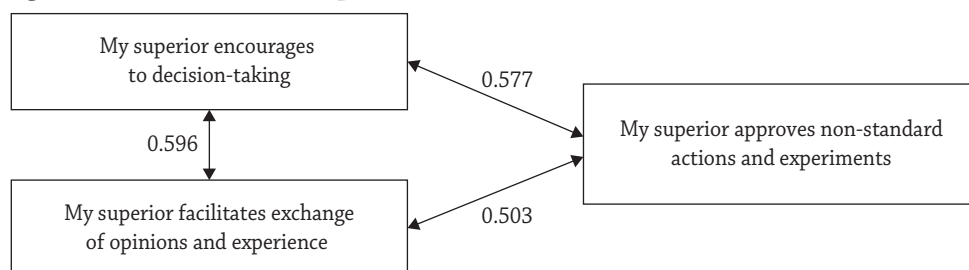


Source: Author's own.

In the opinion of respondents their superiors create conditions to develop creativity through knowledge-sharing, exchange of ideas and experience. They also take care of the development of their employees. Such an attitude of the superiors has been positively assessed by 48% of respondents, whereas negatively – by 27%.

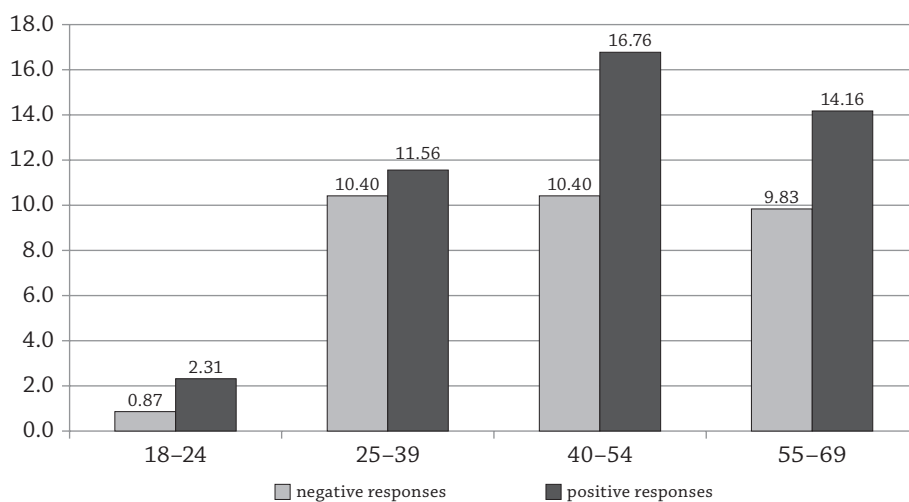
On the basis of the employees' opinions on incentives to take decisions, exchange ideas and experience as well as to accept non-standard actions it could be stated that the managers in public sector facilitate the shaping of creativity in a moderate way. The value of rho-Spearman correlation coefficient points to a significant positive correlation between the analyzed variables, which proves that they were rightly chosen to verify the above statement.

Figure 6. Correlations (rho-Spearman) N= 346



Source: Author's own.

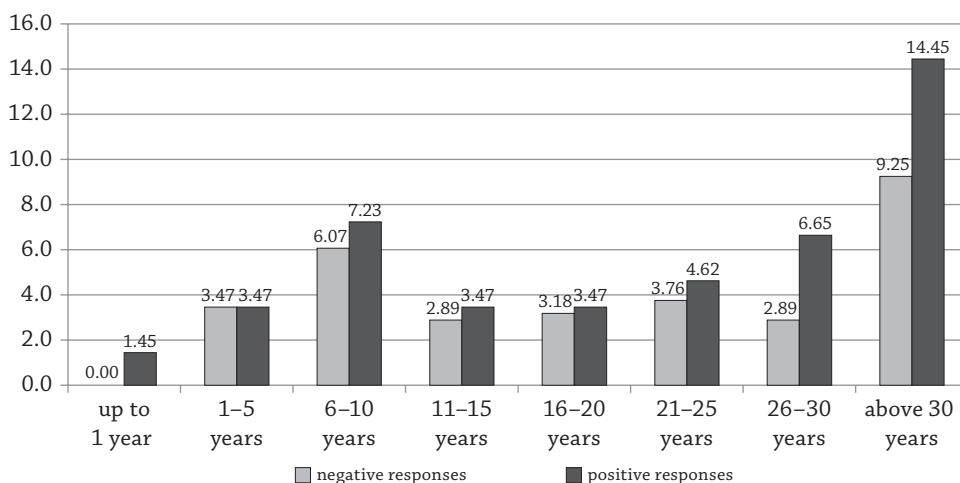
Figure 7. My superior supports employees in reaching objectives (aged based responses)



Source: Author's own.

The assessment is also confirmed by the respondents' opinions concerning other involvement of their managers. Regardless of the age and seniority, the employees surveyed claim that their superiors support them in reaching the objectives.

Figure 8. My superior supports employees in reaching objectives (based on seniority)



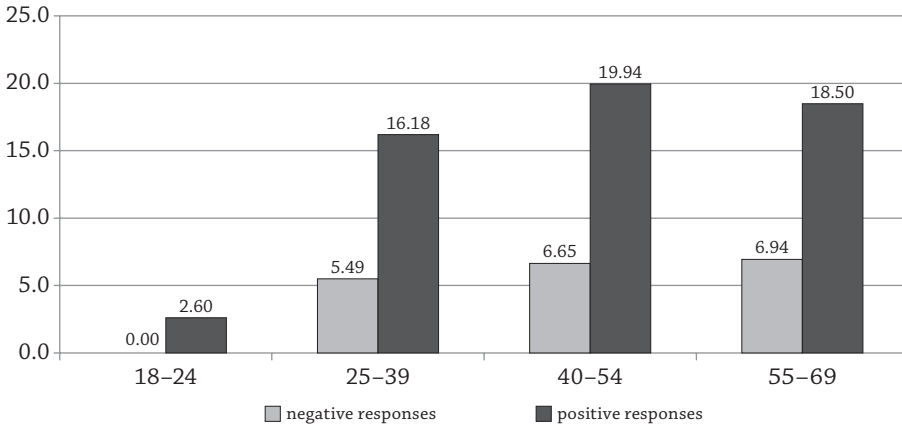
Source: Author's own.

Positive responses have been provided by 45% of the respondents, whereas 32% of them responded negatively. On the basis of the responses it can be stated that there are still some reserves within the impact of managers on building employees' creativity. This is especially noticeable in the age group of 25–39 and in case of seniority ranging from 1 year to 25 years. The above is also proven by the objections of the employees to the appraisal of their performance. In the employees' opinion their managers know the assets and positive qualities of the employees. This is the opinion of 57% of the surveyed. However, the respondents claim (37% responded negatively) that they are not appraised fairly by their superiors. Negative responses dominate among the employees aged 25–39, with seniority ranging from 1 year to 15 years. Positive opinions have been expressed by 36% of the surveyed.

The results of the researches indicate that reserves in creativity building are rooted in competences and attitudes of managers. Such a conclusion is justified by moderate grades of the analyzed behaviors. Average results of the variables, examined on the 1 to 5 scale, are presented below (Table 2). The ability of

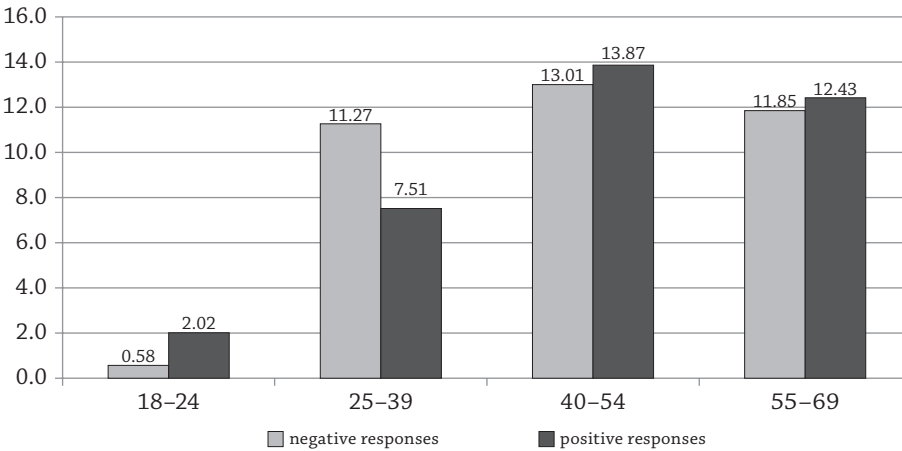
fair appraisal and solving problems creatively as well as being a role-model in professional and moral terms have scored the lowest.

Figure 9. My superior knows employees' strengths (based on age)



Source: Author's own.

Figure 10. My superior fairly appraises employees (based on age)



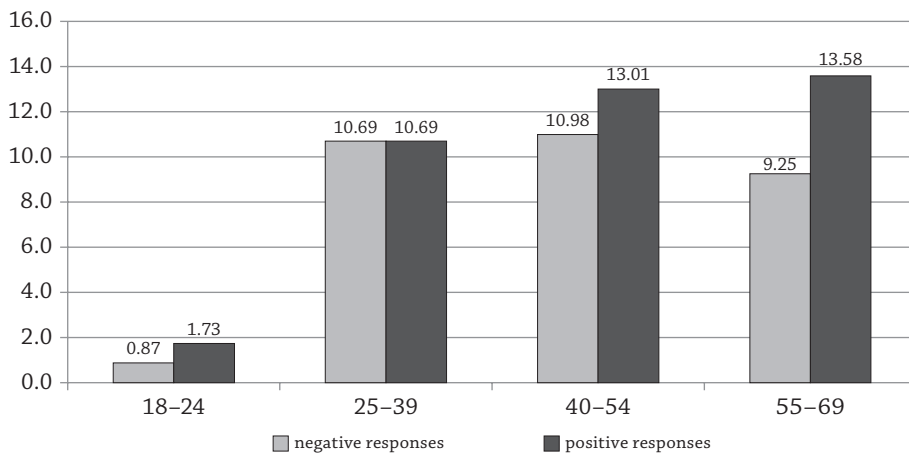
Source: Author's own.

39% of respondents are positive about abilities of managers to behave in a creative and original way – therefore in an innovative one. 32% of the surveyed are of a contradictory opinion. Such behaviors are negatively assessed by employees with seniority ranging from 11-25 years and aged 25-29.

Table 2. Average grade of analyzed behaviors of public sector managers

Item	Content	Average grade
1.	Encourages to taking initiatives	3.39
2.	Facilitates exchange of opinions and experience	3.30
3.	Approves of non-standard actions and experiments	3.25
4.	Approves employees' in reaching objectives	3.22
5.	Knows employees' strengths	3.51
6.	Is capable of problem-solving in a creative and innovative way	3.14
7.	Appraises employees fairly	3.12
8.	His/her behaviors are worth following and imitating	3.10
9.	Is moral role-model for others	2.97

Source: Author's own.

Figure 11. My superior is able to solve problems in creative and innovative way

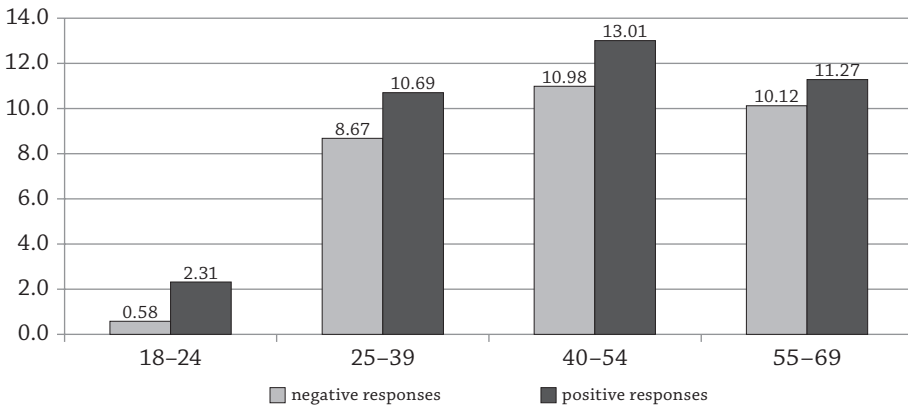
Source: Author's own.

In the opinion of a large proportion of the employees (30%) managers are not role-models to follow. 37% are of contradictory opinion. Among employees, whose seniority ranges from 16 to 30 years the share of positive and negative opinions is the same.

The critical opinion on managers is exacerbated by the assessment of ethical behaviors of managers (average grade is 2.97 in a 5-grade scale). In this case there are 32% of positive responses and exactly the same percentage of negative ones and even in the group of employees aged 25–54 the negative grade exceeds the

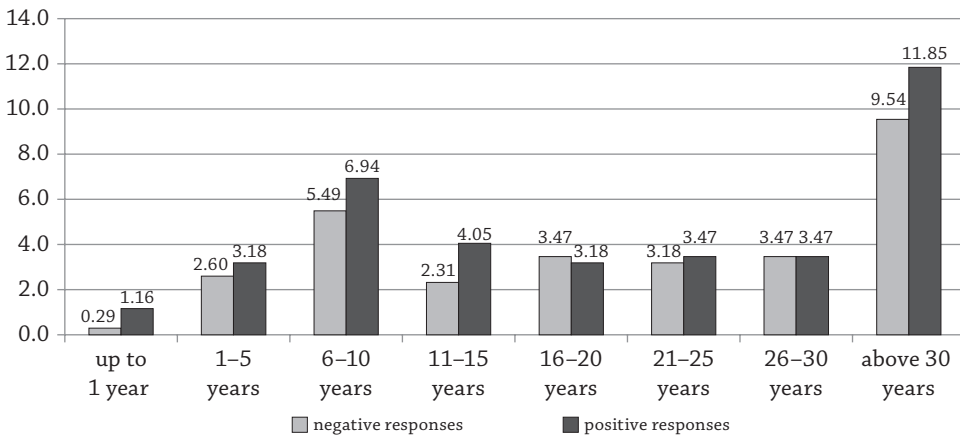
positive one. It dominates among the employees, whose seniority ranges from 1 year to 10 years and from 16 to 25 years.

Figure 12. My superior is characterized by such behaviors that are worth following (based on seniority)



Source: Author’s own.

Figure 13. My superior is characterized by such behaviors that are worth following (based on seniority)

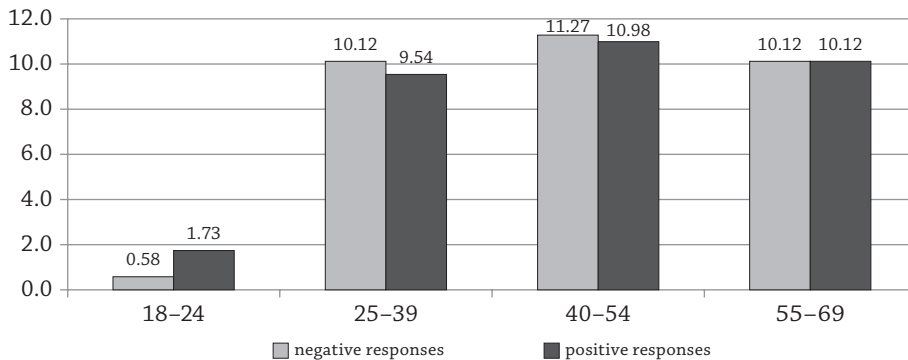


Source: Author’s own.

The opinions of employees on moral attitudes result from the low level of confidence in managers and the low level of their trustworthiness. Such a situation triggers various kinds of pathology within an organization. The pathology is reflected in bureaucracy, corruption, nepotism, abuse of power,

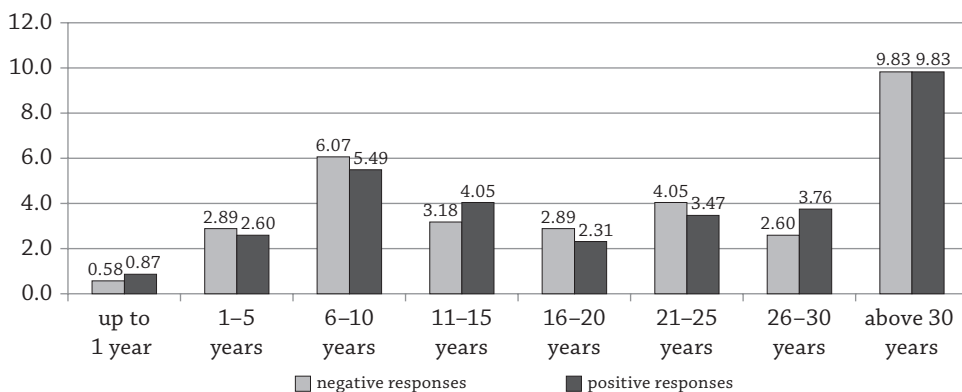
which – consequently – leads to numerous dysfunctions within the public sector (Konopka, Sitniewska, 2011, pp. 34–35).

Figure 14. My superior is moral role-model for the others (based on age)



Source: Author's own.

Figure 15. My superior is moral role-model for the others (based on seniority)



Source: Author's own.

Conclusions

The contemporary challenges that the public sector in Poland is facing up to, make employees' creativity the key competence. The researches conducted within the sector prove that the employment structure – in terms of the level of educational background – satisfies the first condition of creativity. The fulfillment of other conditions requires such a model of management that would combine flexible organizational forms and pro-innovative corporate culture with the

suitable instruments of human capital management. To this end, the management style supporting creativity should be implemented. The analysis of the impact of managers acting in the Polish reality justifies a moderately positive evaluation as well as it identifies numerous barriers to employees' creativity building. The sources of reserves include competences and attitudes of managers concerning – first of all – abilities of solving problems in a creative way, for appraising employees' performance fairly and being a role-model in professional and moral terms.

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Prof. Marta Juchnowicz

Director of the Institute of Human Capital at the Warsaw School of Economics, editor-in-chief of “Education of Economists and Managers” periodical, member of the Board of the Committee of Labor Sciences and Social Policy of the Polish Academy of Sciences, professor-consultant at the Institute of Labor and Social Affairs in Warsaw.