

Decisions taken by Polish and Chinese managers in managing an international shipping company

Keywords: management decisions, management, entrepreneurship, human resources, shipping industry

Code JEL F23

Introduction

According to the data of the International Chamber of Shipping, the shipping market, served by fifty thousand ships, is responsible for 90 per cent of the transport volume in the global scale (Simbulman 2010 p. 26). In the international markets social and cultural conditions have a special impact on taken decisions. The culture of the western civilisation based on Christianity, Roman law and Greek philosophy differs from the Chinese culture based among others on Confucianism, legalism and Maoism. On the basis of the research of one of the most frequently quoted anthropologists, Geert Hofstede, the following dimensions of national cultures, affecting decision-making, were specified. They are: power distance, collectivism and individualism, masculinity and femininity, avoiding uncertainty, long-term orientation and being understanding (Hofstede 2000). According to Hofstede's typology, the Chinese culture is more masculine than the western one, with larger power distance and hierarchy as well as it features a higher degree of collectivism. In turn, for explanation of cultural differences Schwartz's typology uses seven dimensions: conservatism, intellectual autonomy, emotional autonomy, egalitarian involvement, harmony, mastery and hierarchy. Other typologies were applied by Baumgartner and Marcus, and Lewis (Guseva 2013 p. 11-12).

The purpose of the article is to specify determinants of management decision-making in the shipping industry in the international perspective. It consists of introduction, five chapters and summary. In the first chapter decisions in management of a company are described. In the second chapter specificity of decision-making in international shipping companies is presented. The third chapter outlines methodology of scientific research. The next, fourth chapter presents the results of scientific research obtained on the basis of direct interviews with managers working in international shipping companies that concern determinants of decision-making. In the final, fifth chapter, similarities and differences in decision-making by Polish and Chinese managers were analysed. The reason for the analysis of the subject of management decisions in management of an international shipping company is the professional experience of the author of the work.

The effectiveness of operation of international companies from the shipping industry is determined by decisions of managers. The following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the determinants of taken management decisions?
2. What are the key areas affecting management decisions?
3. What are similarities and differences in behaviours of Polish and Chinese managers?
4. What solutions will cause an increase in efficiency of taken management decisions?

The article was created on the basis of in-depth studies of the literature and an analysis of data acquired based on direct interviews of the author with managers from the shipping industry from Poland and China, working in international shipping companies.

1. Management decisions in managing a company

Taking decisions is described as “the heart of management processes in companies and the most important management activity (Shenghua, Reb, Gigerenzer 2019, p. 3). According to Max Weber, action is defined as sensible behaviour, hence, behaviour including a substantive goal. The smallest particle of action is “simple act”, that is basic movement caused by one free impulse (Zieleniewski 1969, p. 167). When taking decisions it is recommended to break them down into basic elements (Fletcher, Wagner, Bourne 2020). The following stages of a decision may be distinguished: classification of a problem; defining a problem; formulating assumptions concerning solution of a problem; specifying the best method of action leading to meeting boundary conditions; linking a decision to a specific action enabling the implementation; verification of rightness and efficiency of a decision on the basis of data on the current development of a situation (Jakubowska and Grabowska-Powaga 2016, p. 317). In line with many studies, the main issue in the decision-making process is the selection of one from among many variants. Decision-making is equated with solving problems and looking for optimal solutions (Brockmann and Anthony 2016, p. 436). In decision-making it is important to analyse the hierarchy of goals in terms of their usefulness for a company. Often it is profitable to bear even a considerable cost of preparation of a decision to reduce the risk of an error. On the other hand, some key decisions require incurring a risk due to dynamically changing circumstances of making them. Decision-making methods may be divided into intuitive and analytical methods (Dane, Rockmann, Pratt 2012). An assumed standard of taking management decisions is frequently economic or logical rationality (Highhouse, Dalal, Salas 2013). However, rationality should be complemented by management intuition (Matzler, B. Uzelac, F. Bauer 2014, p. 31). Both in qualitative research (Bingham Eisenhardt, 2011, p. 1437), and simulation research (Davis, Eisenhardt 2009, p. 413) it was confirmed that using simple principles for taking strategic decisions is very effective. Decision planning should take into account set goals and expected circumstances in which they will be taken. It is necessary to obtain and properly organise required resources. It is important to acquire team members and allocate actions and resources to them which are necessary to fulfil a plan, and to organise the structure of a company, ensuring the attainment of goals. The implementation stage is often the most significant in the entire management process. It is paramount that a team understands and follows goals, and that it is properly motivated. When acting in an international team whose members come from various cultures, open communication and building trust are of particular importance to eliminate barriers. Additionally, it is important not to take everything too seriously and approach issues with some degree of humour (Terry 2007, p. 42). The last stage is controlling, that is comparison of the implementation with a relevant model and drawing conclusions from the comparison. In general, in decision-making getting the so-called “feedback” is of significance. Furthermore, decisions should be transparent and if needed consulted with appropriate experts (Fletcher, Wagner, Bourne, 2020).

2. Specificity of decision-making in international shipping companies

The market of transport of investment, oversized cargoes and the market of transport of bulk cargoes is closely correlated to the state of the world economy. Transport of investment cargoes is characterised by a slowed down pace of reaction to changes such as a crisis or economic growth. It results from specificity of investments which preparation requires specific time for decisions, acquiring funding, manufacturing and transport. Another crucial feature, having a direct impact on the shipping market, is the price of petroleum. The price of petroleum translates into cost-effectiveness

of an investment and transport. An example from 2020 is the fall of oil prices by about 100% compared to 2019, in relation to the situation caused by the coronavirus epidemic. In the consequence of the fall of fuel prices and in relation to a change of characteristics of orders, many shipping companies generated in 2020 considerable extra profits. The market of container transport grew. Companies undertake construction of ships. Another long-term trend in the shipping market is related to environmental protection and reduction of emissions (Weintrab, 2018, p. 1). According to the estimates to 2050, 60% of energy powering ships will come from low-emission sources (Orbeck-Nilssen, 2020, p. 12). Trends related to environmental protection affect types of transported cargoes and the laws in the field of shipping transport. More and more ships powered by LNG fuel are built (Hine 2018, p. 29). In experts' opinion, changes in the fuel market will make heavy fuel oil (HFO) the cheapest available fuel (Hine 2018, p. 29) (Kock 2018, p. 11). Presently, growing technological capabilities allow to choose sea lanes that very previously hard to reach, e.g. the northern route, significantly shortening voyage of a ship. Voyage of a ship from the Yamal Peninsula to China is shortened to 38 days compared to 65 days by the route through the Suez Canal. In the period of the first three quarters of 2020 the Northern Sea Route Administration (NSRA) recorded 900 applications for transit, from which 845 was granted permission (Hine 2020, p. 23). To be able to sail by the northern route, a ship should have a certificate of a relevant Classification Association indicating that it is adequately prepared to such a travel, e.g. it has reinforced hull structure, the ship contains relevant equipment, crew underwent a specialist training, etc. As regards market trends affecting specificity of decision-making in the shipping market, reduction of trade of the USA with China may be observed. China choose for trading partners countries with a population and raw material potential, able to absorb Chinese products. As examples in the geographic area of both Americas one can indicate Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Peru and Venezuela. Having in mind China's long-term strategy expressed among others in documents concerning the "New Silk Road", there will be an increase in international cooperation of China, including most of all Asian countries, Middle East and Africa. As regard the European Union, the current concept of its development focuses on development based on "clean technologies". Many investment cargoes currently transported to Europe concerns the renewable energy sector. Economy of India has been dynamically growing recently. In view of still very low costs in India and undertaken investments in new technologies and development of human resources, it is a highly prospective market for the shipping industry.

When identifying key areas of taking decisions in shipping companies, the following are indicated: the area of management and administration, finance, area of technology, shipping area, safety, computerisation. Table 1 presents key decision-making areas in international shipping companies and features of conditions.

Decision-making areas in international shipping companies	Features of conditions
Area of management and administration	issues of human resource management, strategic plans, organisation of activities, administration, strategic decisions concerning development of transport technologies, such as mass, container tonnage, cargo projects
Area of finance	ensuring and service of credits, ensuring financial service of ships as well as administration and management
Area of technology	ensuring technical inspections, repairs, new constructions of ships, service of fleet

Area of shipping	analysis of the market, including competition, acquisition structure, acquisition of new freight markets, customer finding and service, logistic issues, monitoring of new technologies
Area of safety	ensuring all matters related to safety
Area of computerisation	ensuring IT service, monitoring of IT systems

Table 1. Key decision-making areas in international shipping companies and their features. Source: Own study on the basis of own professional experiences of the author

3. Scope and methodology of scientific research

Empirical research necessary for the attainment of the objective of the article was conducted with use of the method of direct interview. The author of the article carried out interviews with 16 managers from Poland and China, working in 3 international shipping companies. The respondents were aged 33 to 65. 16 men and one woman, including 6 Poles and 10 Chinese, took part in the interviews. Table 2 presents a list of respondents divided by nationality.

Sex and nationality	Number of respondents
Poles men	6
Chinese men	9
Poles women	0
Chinese women	1

Table 2. Sex and nationality of respondents. Source: Own study

The group of respondents contained 4 general managers of shipping companies, 9 directors of departments in shipping companies and 3 managers of departments in shipping companies. General managers were persons managing a company. Directors of departments were responsible for operation of a department, including they took personnel and financial decisions. Managers of departments were directly subordinated to directors of departments and they were responsible for areas assigned to them. Table 3 presents a list of respondents divided by level of management.

Level of management	Number of respondents
General managers	4
Directors of departments	9
Managers of departments	3

Table 3. Respondents' level of management. Source: Own study

Respondents were asked the following questions: What is the most important in making a management decision and what are the determinants of making it in international shipping companies?

4. Decision-making determinants on the basis of interviews with managers from the shipping industry in Poland and China

Responses of managers are as follows:

1. When making decisions one should take into account the conditions of the area in which a relevant manager works. It is important to know the mentality of people from a given culture. A manager must adapt his/her decisions to the place where he/she works. Must have an understanding of the industry. Everyone works for the end result. Decisions are balanced, discussed which allows to avoid problems. It is also necessary not to react

too emotional. Emotions can be exposed at home, within four walls, being alone. You need to be flexible to a certain extent at work. Often conflicting interests must be skilfully reconciled in order to avoid problems. Difficulties are eliminated through discussion, through analysis. It is important that a manager is equable and does not raise his/her voice. (Polish general manager of a company from the shipping industry working in China, previously in Germany and Singapore)

2. An in-depth analysis, which is the basis for making decisions, and well-thought-out risk are the foundation of manager's decisions. One can say in one sentence “Nec temere nec timide” – Without fear but with caution. It is important to take into account the fact where the given international business is located and how dependent it is on the environment, e.g. the sea element. The North Atlantic is dangerous especially in winter. So is the South Atlantic. There is a saying that below 40 degrees the so-called “roaring forties” start because there is no land there and the waves flow practically around the world. A kind of a snowball effect occurs. Manager's experience and education are important when making decisions. The degree of freedom to make decisions also depends on the form of ownership. Private business can give you more freedom. There are more regulations and rules in a state-owned one. It is also important whether the decision is made in the circumstances of financial difficulties, or there is a large financial reserve. Luck also plays a role, but it can also be the result of the above-mentioned factors. When preparing a SWOT analysis, one should consider marine risk as a distinguishing factor. The conditions under which a manager makes a decision contribute to the emergence of a situation of uncertainty. The margin of freedom also affects this. The nature of a manager is a factor that is important from the perspective of made decisions. It is important that a manager is self-confident and that there is a good selection of the crew. A good selection of the crew will have a positive impact on made decisions. A manager should have leadership qualities. (Polish managing director of a company from the shipping industry. Director of the shipping department in a shipping company working in China, previously in Syria)
3. Employees implementing a manager's decision should feel the manager's decisions are certain, unambiguous and good.. If the decisions turn out to be wrong, you should take responsibility for them. You never make a decision without doubt, but neither should you blame others for your decisions. If the boss gives you a direction and you feel that he made the decision without fear, it reduces your stress, and you also know that he will take responsibility for his/her decision. A manager should, as far as possible, give decision-making freedom to his/her employees and at the same time support them. Support from the team is essential. Even a very intelligent and smartest manager will lose to a mediocre team because the team has the majority.
(Polish director of a technical department in a shipping company in China)
4. In decision-making it is crucial to take into account its relevant and analysable aspects. A decision should be made with strategic goals in mind and with respect for values. An analysis, experience and, if necessary, consultations with experts are helpful in decision-making. It is important to leave decision-making freedom to employees consistent with their competence. Employees' greater decision-making freedom will translate into an increase in their motivation. The lack of experience, insufficient analysis of the situation, injustice, characterological shortcomings will negatively affect made decisions. (Polish director of a management and administration department at a shipping company in China)

5. The most important thing is to prioritise tasks. To achieve a goal, you need to effectively manage a team. Taking into account the competence of employees, it is necessary to delegate tasks in an appropriate manner and monitor the fulfilment of tasks on an on-going basis as well as support the team. You should ensure that decisions are implemented on time. Taking care of everything instead of the most significant things can negatively influence the decisions you make. (Polish financial director in a company from the shipping industry in China)
6. Openness is important when making management decisions. Listening to what people have to say. It should not be that I know best. You need to be flexible. Creativity and the ability to sell ideas are of importance. It is vital to win people over. It is important to be goal-oriented through motivation. Imbalance can make you fail. Good relationships should be maintained. I do not have any problems with making decisions. (Polish manager of a department in a shipping company in China)
7. The issue of making decisions is a highly complex matter. The plan is important when making a decision. First of all, I consider a company's strategy. On this basis, I then work out plans. We have short-term plans, that is from one to two years. Medium-term plans ranging from three to five years and long-term plans ranging from five to ten years. In the next step, in relation to the plan, I issue decisions to all departments of a company. I am like a designer. I pay attention to teamwork. When building a team to implement a plan, I first look for key specialists inside a company, and when we do not have such specialists, I am looking for people on the market. One of the crucial issues relevant for growth is the issue of innovation. Here, passion is important. Motivation is essential. Employees should be provided with a fundamental base. Good living conditions for them and their families. People get into a routine after working for a long time, which does not favour their innovation. When I worked for 19 years as the boss of my previous company, key employees had shares in it. This had a positive impact on their motivation as they treated the company as their own. It created passion. The results of work should be linked to the income of employees. The better the result, the higher the salary. In order to avoid problems in making decisions, I analyse facts and details related to made decisions. I convince the team to do what I want without fear. (Chinese managing director of a company from the shipping industry working in China)
8. The first is the need to build a hierarchy. Values are of the utmost importance for a company's success and made decisions. I would divide them into two groups. Company values and the values of all employees. When making each decision, I take into account company values and the values of employees. Concerning company values, they are: long-term development, company's "health" and harmony. Concerning building "healthy" companies, it is about good rules and regulations that are followed, and about transparency and fairness. Profits generated by a company should be shared with employees. In private companies, the boss often does not share profits with employees. As regards harmony, I mean that there is sun and stars in the sky, grass on earth – that everything has its place and order. A company is good for employees and employees are good for a company. If a small river flows somewhere, it must not be littered. In terms of employee values, I would mention the following: employee development, self-esteem and self-confidence, being fair to them, ensuring equal treatment. Employees should be happy, relaxed. Each week, I invite one employee for a coffee and devote two hours of my

time. I ask about his/her family, problems, personal matters, ideas. I have strength so I can help with various matters. This makes employees more relaxed. A motivated employee works more eagerly. A motivated employee works more eagerly. Regulations are significant. Various crisis scenarios, regulations for various situations. It is important to enforce the work. It is not just about an employee being relaxed, but he/she should perform the tasks entrusted to him/her. Each employee may call me at any time when he/she has a problem. If someone works well and deserves bonuses, I grant bonuses. I am not a man who is afraid despite the fact that I have a lot of “pressure” at work and a lot of “on my mind”. I look at the team, not at myself. I believe in my capabilities and skills. If I am afraid, it means I do not have appropriate skills. If a young employee replaced me, he/she would be afraid because he/she would not know what to do. Experience, knowledge and management skills lessen difficulties with decision-making. Let me give you an example. Every year you should earn more than you spend. Profits must exceed costs. So in the years when there are higher profits, we save and have funds for “hard times”, when, for example, the year is not good and I have only 80% coverage of costs. Crisis procedures are highly important. For example, if a customer does not pay for a long time. There are procedures regulating working conditions and the need to collect receivables. Young managers do not like regulations. They are the bosses themselves, that is, they regulate matters, but with time, along with the development and growth of a company, regulations become necessary. A vital aspect of management decisions is taking care of company's creativity. There are two rules ensuring creativity. Firstly, mechanisms promoting creativity should be ensured. Employee incentive mechanisms should be implemented. I create their needs themselves. I tell them, for example, what car model is good, what country is interesting. They later also want such a car, they also want to visit a given country. This motivates them to develop themselves. Bonuses for good work, promotions and trainings are of importance. Secondly, it is important to be fair. Ensuring equal treatment of employees without nepotism in promotions and remuneration. Innovation and hard work give a company's result. You can learn from everyone, including young people. Knowledge of the prevailing rules is important because it introduces certainty. At my place everyone knows how much I earn. I run my company in such a way that I deserve this remuneration. And if someone thinks otherwise, I tell him/her to sit in my chair for a week and run the company. Openness and informing employees about matters are a condition for equal treatment and it is a key issue. The lack of knowledge and withholding information from employees in various respects may only cause a “feeling of equality”, but it is not equality. (Chinese President of Management Board of a company from the shipping industry working in China)

9. An analysis is the basis of a decision. An analysis is significant from the perspective of achieving a goal. It is important to act as a group, not alone. The first element is to establish the goal of company's development. An analysis precedes planning and is its indispensable element. Good preparation eliminates difficulties in decision-making.

(Chinese director of a management and administration department of a Chinese shipping company in China)

10. Decision-making depends on the details of a situation. Thus, the details should be identified. It is difficult to say unequivocally what is the most important as there are many circumstances and factors influencing a decision.

Knowledge and understanding of the situation will have a positive effect on made decisions. (Chinese manager in an administration department of a shipping company in China)

11. It is important to listen to the ideas of subordinates, implement practical experiences and check the circumstances related to a decision as well as consult experts. It is necessary to distinguish between decisions made jointly and those made individually. Effectiveness can be increased through consulting and team's acceptance for manager's decisions. Inner peace and good disposition are important. You do not need to make every effort to participate in absolutely everything. (Chinese director responsible for relations in a shipping company in China)
12. A manager's decision should be consistent with a company's long-term strategy. It is important to get employees' support for decisions. If there is no such support, efforts should be made to explain all circumstances of the decision to employees and obtain the greatest possible support. Adequate resources are needed to make decisions. A safe financial situation of the company and good relations at work will help reduce difficulties in making decisions. (Chinese financial director of a shipping company in China)
13. There should be decision-making order consistent with the structure of a company and the scope of duties. If it is missing, there is chaos. It must not be the case that there are no clearly assigned people responsible for certain scopes of activities. They should not be overlooked by other people and other departments. There is a mess then. Regulations and rules as well as separating the private from the corporate is of significance. It is important to tailor resources to needs. A clear working framework and order inside a company facilitate decision-making. Everyone knows what to do, what they are responsible for and how everything should be arranged. You should ensure that there is no chaos in a company. (Chinese retired manager of driver department in a shipping company in China)
14. The basis of a decision is an analysis of what will be its effect. It is crucial to choose from all available decision options. It is necessary to calculate and compare different scenarios of how to manage cargoes. You should analyse the market and competitors on an on-going basis. Concerning people, it is important to consider their needs. Different people work in different fields of business and have different experiences. You should listen to their opinions and make your own individual decision at the end. It is also important to build relationships with some people. The political situation should be taken into account in decision-making. An analysis, experience and a cheerful disposition are important as regards elimination of difficulties in decision-making. (Chinese shipping director of a shipping company)
15. Different levels of decision-making have different requirements. A company's managing director should take into account the company's strategy. The economic issue, i.e. profit, has the second-highest priority. Risk and technical issues must be assessed. Check availability of resources. Whether there are enough of them or not. Human resources are essential. A managing director should balance individual departments of a company in terms of bonuses and remuneration. If he/she does not, cooperation in the company will not be good. Concerning the technical position, safety comes first. Then, budget control. Shipbuilding, for example, should be controlled at every stage. Bonuses and remuneration should be adjusted so that people do not fight each other. Training plays a vital role. Every year I formulate goals; what must be done. Next, we work out a plan and

implement it. Human resource management is paramount. As a priority, we should manage people, organize the structure and devise a plan. In order to achieve a goal, costs must be controlled. Make sure the right people are on the right positions and are up to the job. We evaluate employees in our company every quarter. There is an appropriate point system. For example, points are awarded for whether the employee carries out instructions, whether the budget is correct, whether there are problems, whether he/she is hard-working or lazy. I always protect my department. I utilise and manage the company's resources. A managing director should maintain good relations with the authorities and banks. He/she should also reduce friction and bring balance to a company. You should not worry too much about matters beyond your control. It is important to maintain self-distance and detachment to many issues. Many things are not as serious as they seem at first glance. (Chinese technical director in a shipping company in China)

16. When making a decision, it is important to listen to the ideas of others. I choose the best out of the ideas of other people. I also consult decisions with a managing director. On the basis of a worked out decision, you can start acting. I try to adjust my employees' work based on their capabilities. Problems may be consulted with other departments. Decisions are supported by others. Generally, cooperation is of cardinal importance. Good relationships and the absence of problems help avoid difficulties in decision-making. (Chinese corporate relationships manager in a shipping industry in China)

5. Similarities and differences in decision-making by Polish and Chinese managers

The research showed differences in the decision-making of Polish and Chinese managers arising out of different culture and nationality. The differences also resulted from the fact that the respondents belonged to different management levels as well as to different departments of companies. Senior managers are more likely to give longer responses than middle managers. They seemed to enjoy sharing their experience and seemed confident in what they were saying. It also correlates with higher self-confidence of senior managers than junior, which was confirmed by other additional research conducted by the author of the paper. Managers of technical divisions from the shipping industry paid more attention to the rules and regulations and the need to secure resources in a company. This tendency was also noticeable among senior managers. Managers from financial divisions pointed to, in their opinion, the greater significance of decisions affecting the company's financial result and the control of employees and costs. General managers to a higher degree spoke about strategic decisions and were more willing to share anecdotes and examples from their professional lives. On the other hand, managers of divisions dealing with relationships were more likely to point out that when making decisions, it is important to discuss and agree your decisions with others. General managers from the shipping industry often indicated that it is important to convince the team of their decisions. They also mentioned that the function of general managers consolidates and integrates individual departments through, for example, fair distribution of profits in the form of bonuses and elimination of conflicts within the organisational structure, and also indicated the motivational function. Some general managers also indirectly referred to values and virtues such as moderation, prudence, justice, bravery, and industriousness as key in management decision-making.

When analysing cultural differences in decisions made by managers from Poland and China, it was found that Chinese managers more frequently indicated the importance of acting in accordance with a plan, strategy and guidelines. There are economic plans in China, the so-called 5-year plans, covering the entire country, as well as

industry long-term plans, and plans for individual provinces and companies. Chinese managers indicated that their companies from the shipping industry work out annual plans and five-year plans, and multi-year development strategies. In Chinese culture the long-term perspective of taken decisions and actions plays a prominent role. Chinese managers mentioned that when making a decision, one should take into account the political situation and conditions in the world. They mentioned that various aspects and determinants related to decisions should be analysed as well. They also often indicated the aspect of conflict avoidance and the essence of team harmony and good cooperation. Harmony (Hexie) is one of the foundations of Chinese culture. Chinese managers also referred to the issue of linking the workload of individual employees and departments, and the financial results achieved by a company with a bonus system. As indicated by some Chinese managers, the disturbance of equality in the company, also in terms of remuneration, with respect to activities performed within positions, will result in a decrease in the effectiveness of a team and a company. Chinese managers mentioned that you should be flexible as well as try not to think too much about things that are insignificant and beyond your control.

Polish managers, in turn, often pointed out the issue of the proper implementation of tasks from the perspective of made decisions. They emphasised the importance of setting priorities in tasks and decisions. They noted the need to analyse facts and circumstances related to made decisions. They referred to the importance of achieving good financial results. In their opinion, decisions should be concrete and justified. They pointed to the essence of directness and openness in relationships. I would like to mention that the essential features of a manager are: composure, courage, prudence, orientation on results, self-confidence.

One can get the impression that both Chinese and Polish managers, acting in the conditions of global competition, make decisions under great pressure of the necessity to achieve good financial results. Both Polish and Chinese managers emphasized the importance of substantive preparation of decisions and appropriate personality traits of decision-makers. The personality traits mentioned by both Chinese and Polish managers that favour decision-making effectiveness are balance and emotional control, courage and self-confidence. They indicated that consultations with others will serve to increase decision-making efficiency.

Summary

The shipping industry has its own specificity, which influences the management decisions made. Key areas of taken decisions are the area of management and administration, area of finance, area of technology, shipping area, safety area and computerisation area. Proper selection of human resources, strategic planning as well as supervision of the implementation of a plan as well as organisation of activities, observation of external conditions and following development of technology are of importance. It is necessary to ensure funding for activity, repair and construction of ships. You must analyse the market on an on-going basis and acquire freight markets. Manager's experience and character are important. It is vital that decisions are planned and prepared. Employees' greater decision-making freedom will translate into an increase in the level of their motivation. Prioritising and delegating tasks will increase decision-making efficiency. Similarly, transparent procedures and good relations will ensure the safety of employees and a company.

As the research showed, personality traits mentioned by both Chinese and Polish managers that favour decision-making efficiency are balance, courage and self-confidence. Polish and Chinese managers emphasized the need for a

thorough analysis of the facts and circumstances, which is beneficial for decision-making efficiency. Chinese managers relatively more frequently indicate that acting in line with a worked out long-term plan is important in efficient decision-making. They mention that avoiding conflicts and good cooperation are both the result and the condition for taking efficient management decisions. Chinese managers seem to be used to action that is planned and related to the long-term perspective. Polish managers, in turn, more often refer to the importance of achieving good financial results. They also to a higher degree point out decision-making freedom of employees as a motivating factor.

As was shown by the research, there are cultural differences between managers from Poland and China which manifest in taken decisions. In spite of this, similarities in effective action between managers are the determinant of their successes.