

## **DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

The aim of the project is the determination of the dependencies existing in teams who take strategic decisions on company development, covering four main elements: psychological mechanisms of team members, interpersonal relationships among them, their behavior in knowledge sharing as well as the dimensions and characteristics of the taken strategic decisions. The project has an interdisciplinary nature, as it is dedicated to the cognitive (knowledge sharing mechanisms), emotional (emotions felt by the team members and the defensive mechanisms applied to cope with emotions) and relational (the characteristics of interpersonal relationships) determinants of team decision-making in companies. This also corresponds precisely to the new trend in management studies i.e. 'behavioural strategy' that links cognitive and social psychology with the theory and practice of strategic management. It is aimed at the development, i.e. strengthening of the strategic management theory with the consideration of the realistic assumptions on human cognition, emotions and social interactions. That is why, the core of the research team encompasses researchers specializing in organizational behavior, psychology and strategic management, who represent three different academic institutions.

The process of strategic decision-making in companies is one of the key problems analysed in management studies. However, the knowledge on this is still normative, and several accepted assumptions are still not confirmed. Nonetheless, there is the need to undertake the research explaining the nature, mechanisms, and determinants of strategic decision-making. In management theory, two basic models of decision-making process are the rational and behavioural models. Although, in management there are some theories grounded in the findings of psychology and sociology, most of them are founded on the assumptions that behaviours in a decision-making process are rational. Besides the fact of how much the organizations are trying to be seen as rational, we cannot deny the fact that they are 'motivated' by the emotions and desires of its members, i.e. by the behavioural factors. The recent research on leadership, changes and organizational identity support the argument that 'emotional competencies' of organisational members may lead to the explanation of 90% of its success, whereas the 'intellectual competencies – to less than 10%. Hence, the need to abandon the assumptions of the decision-makers rationality, which means the necessity of considering the impact of bias on their decisions, resulting from, among others, felt emotions, experienced social processes or political conflicts in and organisation on the decision-making-process.

The described dependencies will be examined primarily on the basis of qualitative research preceded by a preliminary quantitative survey. The subsequent research steps will include a questionnaire survey with CATI technique, the Delphi method, and a case study with the use of research questionnaires, an ethnographic method and focus group interviews. The research will be conducted in the companies of one sector selected at the beginning of the project realization. The reason for choosing one sector is the possibility of assuming that all the determinants of strategic decision-making are homogenous, with the exception of the examined ones. An initial analysis shows that the furniture industry may meet the expectations as companies are implementing very diverse development strategies, what makes them a perfect object of the research taken.

The choice of strategic decisions regarding company development as our object of an analysis is due to the assumption that those are the decisions with a greater weight to the company, taken in higher uncertainty, i.e. a stronger stress in comparison with the decisions concerning e.g. the strategy of the business units. That makes those decisions more vulnerable to bias, and the emotional, cognitive and group processes become particularly important factors influencing the process of decision-making.

Among many reasons why the realization of the described research project is worth doing there are two principal ones: (1) the impact of individual defense mechanisms, as ways of coping with emotions, on the process of strategic decision-making has not yet been the subject of scientific research; what is more, their relations with interpersonal relationships and the knowledge sharing process are still unclear; (2) the significance of relationships at work for functioning and development of an organisation has never been in main stream of management studies.

The originality and innovativeness of our project is comprised in the fact that (1) the issues, that have not yet been explained empirically, are connected with a new trend in strategic management, (2) it encompasses the interdisciplinary approach with diverse research methods and experience of scientists representing three academic institutions.