

Streszczenie pracy w języku angielskim

The dynamic social, technological, and organizational transformations of recent decades have significantly increased both the frequency and complexity of crisis situations confronting primary schools. Educational institutions have become arenas in which multiple tensions converge, arising from students' mental health challenges, peer violence, environmental hazards, and sudden epidemic or geopolitical crises. In this context, school principals occupy a central position as key decision-makers, bearing responsibility not only for the safety of students and staff but also for the wider school community. Despite the critical importance of this role, existing literature and empirical research reveal that the competencies required for effective crisis management remain insufficiently defined and lack a coherent theoretical framework. The absence of systemic approaches and standardized procedures highlights the necessity of the present investigation.

A thorough review of academic sources indicated a pronounced conceptual gap regarding primary school principals' crisis management competencies, both in Poland and internationally. This gap provided the foundation for the dissertation's main hypothesis: that school principals are inadequately prepared for crisis management within postgraduate and professional qualification programs in educational administration. Empirical evidence supports this hypothesis, demonstrating that the majority of principals do not acquire systematic knowledge or skills necessary for anticipating risks, responding to emergencies, or conducting effective crisis communication. Complementary hypotheses examined the influence of professional experience and the contextual environment on competency development. The analyses revealed that principals with over ten years of experience exhibit demonstrably higher effectiveness in managing crises than less experienced colleagues, while those working in urban environments benefit from greater access to training and more diverse organizational experiences. The auxiliary hypotheses were not contradicted by the collected data, confirming the significance of both tenure and institutional context.

The study further revealed that although crises occur across all surveyed schools, principals' capacities to identify, classify, and manage such events vary considerably, reflecting theoretical knowledge gaps and inconsistent procedural practices. The COVID-19 pandemic exemplified these challenges, imposing responsibilities that exceeded traditional managerial duties. Principals also emphasized emerging social and technological pressures, particularly those associated with students' engagement in digital environments, which generate novel behavioral

and emotional crises. Analysis of school documents confirmed the absence of uniform crisis management procedures, while survey responses indicated near-universal support for incorporating crisis management into formal leadership training programs.

The dissertation is organized into six chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Chapter One provides a theoretical overview of crisis management, defining crises, examining their types and complexity, and identifying affected stakeholders. Chapter Two explores crisis management in primary schools, considering legal, organizational, social, and technical determinants, and comparing crisis types in Poland and selected EU countries. Chapter Three addresses competencies, reviewing definitions, classifications, and models, distinguishing competencies from qualifications, and comparing Polish principals' skills with those of EU counterparts. Chapter Four outlines the methodological framework, detailing research objectives, hypotheses, sampling strategies, and data collection methods, including literature review, quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and document analysis. Chapter Five presents quantitative findings on principals' competencies and training, assessing key skills, self-evaluations, and correlations with variables such as experience, school type, and location. Chapter Six reports qualitative findings, including principals' assessments of required knowledge, skills, attitudes, and the impact of professional experience, culminating in an original model of crisis management competencies and recommendations for educational programs.

Based on these findings, several strategic recommendations emerge. First, crisis management should be incorporated as a dedicated module in postgraduate and professional qualification programs, integrating theoretical knowledge, practical exercises, and competency assessment. Second, the development of standardized national procedures is necessary to ensure consistent, professional responses to crises. Third, specialized professional development opportunities—workshops, simulations, and interinstitutional collaboration exercises—should enhance skills in crisis communication, coordination, and operational management. Finally, ongoing research on principals' competencies is essential to refine and validate the proposed competency model.

Given the increasing frequency and complexity of crises, contemporary primary schools demand that principals possess not only pedagogical and organizational expertise but also a high level of readiness to act under conditions of uncertainty and pressure. The findings of this dissertation underscore the imperative of systematically strengthening principals' competencies in crisis management, thereby enhancing school safety and ensuring effective, timely responses to emergent challenges in an evolving educational and societal landscape.

