

Managerial Competencies and their Impact on the Performance of Healthcare Organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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retical models of managerial competencies, with particular attention given to the models developed by Boyatzis (1982) and later expanded by Whetten and Cameron (2011), as well as findings from research on healthcare management, such as Calhoun et al. (2008) on competencies for healthcare leaders. The items were adapted to the specific context of healthcare institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1- Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3 – Neutral; 4- Agree; 5- Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was distributed to a purposive sample of 120 middle managers working in various healthcare institutions across Bosnia and Herzegovina. Data were collected during three months from January to April 2025. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis.

Conclusion: The results indicate that communication and teamwork competencies were rated most positively and significantly correlated with organizational outcomes. In contrast, strategic thinking and change management received lower ratings. The instrument's reliability was confirmed through high internal consistency (Cronbach $\alpha > 0.70$).

Abstract

This paper's primary aim is to examine the impact of managerial competencies on the performance of healthcare organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a particular focus on the role of middle management.

Research Methodology: A quantitative research approach was employed, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure six key dimensions of managerial competencies: leadership, strategic thinking, communication, decision-making, teamwork, and change management. The construction of the questionnaire was based on previous relevant research and theo-

Keywords: managerial competencies, healthcare organizations, middle management, organizational performance.

Article received: 28.4.2025.

Article accepted: 25.5.2025.

<https://doi.org/10.24141/1/11/1/2>

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Introduction

In recent decades, the importance of managerial competencies in enhancing the performance of organizations, particularly in the healthcare sector, has gained significant attention. Effective management in healthcare organizations is crucial, as it directly impacts the quality of care and organizational efficiency (1). Middle managers, in particular, play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between strategic decision-making and operational implementation, which makes their competencies critical for organizational success (2). Research has shown that leadership, strategic thinking, communication, and decision-making competencies are integral to effective healthcare management (3, 4).

In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the healthcare sector faces unique challenges, including limited resources and evolving healthcare policies. These challenges further emphasize the need for well-developed managerial competencies at all levels of management (7). While numerous studies have been conducted in developed countries on managerial competencies (8), there is a lack of research focusing on the specific competencies of healthcare managers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of managerial competencies on organizational effectiveness, with a particular focus on middle management in the healthcare sector.

Research Results

The following section presents the study's results regarding the impact of managerial competencies on organizational performance in healthcare institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The dimensions of managerial competencies and their influence on organizational performance are shown and analyzed through descriptive statistics, including mean values, median, and standard deviation. This part of the analysis provides an overview of managers' perceptions of key competencies and their impact on organizational effectiveness. Based on the obtained results, the competencies that contrib-

ute most significantly to organizational outcomes and those that indicate a need for further development and institutional support will be identified.

Table 1: The Impact of Managerial Competency Dimensions on Organizational Performance

Managerial competencies	Level of impact
Communication skills	22%
Teamwork	21%
Leadership	18%
Decision-making	17%
Strategic Thinking	12%
Change Management	10%

Source: Author's research

According to the research findings, communication skills significantly impact organizational performance. This result suggests that a manager's ability to communicate clearly and effectively with staff, patients, and other stakeholders directly contributes to the quality of work in healthcare institutions.

Teamwork also demonstrated a high level of influence on the performance of healthcare organizations. Given the specific nature of healthcare services, where employees must often collaborate in teams to solve complex tasks, effective teamwork significantly enhances service quality.

Leadership has a solid impact on performance, with an influence level of 18%. Although not the most dominant competency, leadership and managers' ability to motivate, inspire, and guide their teams toward shared goals play a crucial role in organizational success. Managers with strong leadership skills can improve employee morale, reduce turnover, and ensure stability within the organization.

Decision-making is also essential for organizational success, with a reported impact of 17%. Decisions can directly affect service quality, costs, and operational efficiency in healthcare institutions.

Strategic thinking shows a lower impact on organizational performance (12%). This may suggest that managers in Bosnia and Herzegovina lack sufficient resources or institutional support to develop long-term strategies and plans that could enhance organizational effectiveness. In the healthcare context, strategic thinking is essential for market adaptation, implementation

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Competency Dimensions

Competency Dimension	Mean	Median	Standard deviation
Communication skills	4.076	4.078	0.277
Teamwork	3.82	3.87	0.40
Leadership	4.30	4.29	0.27
Decision-making	4.01	4.00	0.32
Strategic Thinking	4.15	4.14	0.28
Change Management	3.70	3.68	0.42

Source: Author's research

of new technologies, and ensuring long-term service quality. The lower influence of this competency may be attributed to political, economic, and institutional challenges, where managers often lack full autonomy to make and implement strategic decisions.

Change management demonstrated the lowest impact on organizational performance (10%). This may indicate that managers in healthcare institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still insufficiently equipped to manage changes involving technology, reforms, or new organizational practices. Healthcare institutions frequently face challenges in implementing changes, whether due to limited resources, weak institutional frameworks, or employee resistance.

Table 2 presents the basic descriptive statistical measures to provide a clearer overview of the distribution of results across competency dimensions.

An analysis of the descriptive statistics concerning the impact of managerial competencies clearly shows that communication skills and teamwork have the most significant influence on organizational performance, with very low variation among responses. Leadership and decision-making demonstrate a solid impact, with slightly lower scores and greater consistency among managers. On the other hand, strategic thinking and change management show lower influence, accompanied by higher variability among managers, which may indicate a need for greater focus on these dimensions in future managerial development. These findings suggest that, in the context of healthcare organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most essential competencies directly affect daily operations. In contrast, strategic and change-related competencies require further investment and institutional support.

Discussion

Based on our research conducted among middle managers in Bosnia and Herzegovina healthcare organizations, communication skills and teamwork were rated the highest. Also, they showed the most significant impact on organizational performance (22% and 21%). These results are consistent with the findings of Stefl (2008) and Garman et al. (2006), who analyzed competency models in healthcare organizations in the USA and found that these two dimensions contribute the most to the efficiency and quality of healthcare services. Communication skills enable precise and effective interaction among team members, while teamwork ensures better coordination and collaboration, directly improving service quality (1, 2).

Similar results were recorded in research conducted in Croatia, where communication skills and teamwork were also recognized as key factors in improving the effectiveness of healthcare institutions. A study conducted by Marković et al. (2017) in Croatian hospitals showed that competencies in communication and teamwork are crucial for successfully implementing healthcare policies and achieving high service quality. Similarly, findings from Serbia by Banjanović et al. (2015) show that communication and team cooperation are key factors in the quality of healthcare services, which was also confirmed in the context of complex healthcare sector reforms.

However, our study found lower ratings and a more minor impact for the dimensions of strategic thinking and change management (12% and 10%), which contrasts with the findings of Liang et al. (2013), who investigated the Australian healthcare system. Their research highlights the high level of development and significance

of these competencies in healthcare organizations, where strategic thinking and change management are essential for long-term sustainability and adaptability. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, these dimensions are still not sufficiently institutionally supported, and the lack of adequate training and development might explain the lower impact of these competencies on organizational performance. Many healthcare organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still facing challenges in implementing strategies that would enable systematic changes, which could explain the lower impact of this dimension on organizational performance. Similar issues are present in Croatia and Serbia, where studies show that the development of strategic thinking and change management in healthcare organizations is often neglected while facing challenges in implementing long-term strategies and innovations. Research by Bjelanović et al. (2018) in Croatia and Jovanović et al. (2019) in Serbia indicates the lack of institutional support for the development of strategic competencies, which results in limited capacity of managers to adapt to changes in the healthcare sector.

Regarding leadership and decision-making, our results showed a solid impact on performance (18% and 17%), which partially aligns with the work of McAlearney (2005), who demonstrated that leadership and decision-making competencies can significantly improve internal control and the implementation of efficient procedures in healthcare organizations. McAlearney emphasizes that managers with strong leadership skills and decision-making abilities can better manage resources, positively impacting operational efficiency and the quality of healthcare services. However, it is essential to note that, although these competencies have a solid impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is room for further development and improvement regarding the implementation of organizational strategies and resource optimization, especially in the context of the complex challenges faced by healthcare institutions. Similar conclusions can be found in studies conducted in Croatia and Serbia, where it was confirmed that leadership and decision-making play an essential role in increasing the efficiency of healthcare organizations. Still, there is also a need for further investment in manager training and strengthening their ability to lead changes in the healthcare sector (3, 4).

There are significant differences between our findings and those of studies conducted in more developed healthcare systems, such as those in Australia and the USA. These differences can be attributed to the specifics of the Bosnia and Herzegovina healthcare system and

the context in which healthcare organizations operate. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the healthcare sector faces a lack of resources, unstable financial conditions, and frequent political changes, which can hinder the development of competencies such as strategic thinking and change management. Furthermore, institutional support and investment in human resource development and managerial skills are still insufficient, which may hinder the full implementation of effective organizational practices. Similar challenges have been recorded in Croatia and Serbia, where healthcare systems are also struggling with implementing long-term strategies and support for developing managerial competencies. Based on similar research, it is clear that investment in training managers and developing strategic competencies is needed to improve the efficiency of healthcare organizations in the region.

Although results from other countries provide essential guidelines for improving managerial competencies, the specifics of the healthcare system in Bosnia and Herzegovina require a tailored approach to manager training and development, considering local challenges and needs. The research conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina points to the need for institutional changes that would support the development of strategic competencies and change management, emphasizing the importance of investing in middle management training as a key factor for improving the efficiency of healthcare organizations.

Conclusion

The research revealed that communication skills and teamwork have the most significant impact on the performance of healthcare organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, strategic thinking and change management were rated lower. These results highlight the need for stronger institutional support to develop these competencies. Although leadership and decision-making show a solid impact, further investment in middle management development is necessary.

This study's limitations include a small sample size and managers' subjective perceptions. Future research should expand the sample, use qualitative methods, and focus on analyzing institutional support for developing managerial competencies.

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MENADŽERSKE KOMPETENCIJE I NJIHOV UTJECAJ NA UČINKOVITOST ZDRAVSTVENIH USTANOVA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI

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Sažetak

Primarni je cilj ovog rada ispitati utjecaj menadžerskih kompetencija na učinkovitost zdravstvenih organizacija u Bosni i Hercegovini, s posebnim naglaskom na ulogu srednjeg menadžmenta.

Metodologija istraživanja: Primijenjen je kvantitativni istraživački pristup, a podaci su prikupljeni putem strukturiranog upitnika za mjerenje šest ključnih dimenzija menadžerskih kompetencija: vodstvo, strateško razmišljanje, komunikacija, donošenje odluka, timski

rad i upravljanje promjenama. Konstrukcija upitnika temeljila se na prethodnim relevantnim istraživanjima i teorijskim modelima menadžerskih kompetencija, pri čemu je posebna pažnja posvećena modelima koje su razvili Boyatzis (1982) i kasnije proširili Whetten i Cameron (2011), kao i na nalazima iz istraživanja u kontekstu zdravstvenog menadžmenta, poput rada Calhoun et al. (2008) o kompetencijama za zdravstvene lidere. Pitanja su prilagođena specifičnom kontekstu zdravstvenih ustanova u Bosni i Hercegovini, a svaka je stavka ocjenjivana na Likertovoj skali od 1 do 5. Upitnik je distribuiran uzorku od 120 srednjih menadžera zaposlenih u raznim zdravstvenim ustanovama na području cijele Bosne i Hercegovine. Podaci su prikupljeni tijekom tromjesečnog razdoblja od siječnja do travnja 2025. Za analizu podataka primijenjena je deskriptivna statistika.

Zaključak. Rezultati potvrđuju da su kompetencije komunikacije i timskog rada najpozitivnije ocijenjene, te da imaju značajnu pozitivnu povezanost s organizacijskim ishodima. Nasuprot tome, strateško razmišljanje i upravljanje promjenama dobili su niže ocjene. Pouzdanost instrumenta potvrđena je visokom internom konzistencijom (Cronbachov $\alpha > 0,70$).

Ključne riječi: menadžerske kompetencije, zdravstvene organizacije, srednji menadžment, organizacijska uspješnost-