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## Career paths of logistics managers

### Ścieżki kariery menedżerów logistyki

**Abstract.** This article aims to identify the career paths of logistics managers in Poland in the context of modern labor market trends and managerial competence development. The study covered 100 professional LinkedIn profiles analyzed for career progression, job mobility, education level, certifications, and soft skills. The profiles of Polish managers were analyzed. The results indicate that a typical career path in logistics moves from specialist to strategic positions over 10–15 years, with an average job tenure of 5.2 years. Key factors influencing career success include interdisciplinary education, proficiency in ERP/WMS systems, language fluency, and online professional engagement. The findings confirm the growing importance of digital and international competencies in shaping the career trajectories of logistics managers.

**Keywords:** professional career, logistics, managers, skills, LinkedIn

**Synopsis.** Celem artykułu było rozpoznanie przebiegu kariery zawodowej menedżerów logistyki w Polsce w kontekście współczesnych trendów na rynku pracy i rozwoju kompetencji menedżerskich. Badanie obejmowało 100 profili zawodowych opublikowanych na portalu LinkedIn, analizowanych pod kątem ścieżek awansu, mobilności zawodowej, poziomu wykształcenia, posiadanych certyfikatów i kompetencji miękkich. Analizie poddano profile polskich menedżerów. Wyniki wskazują,

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że typowa ścieżka kariery w logistyce obejmuje przejście od stanowisk specjalistycznych do strategicznych w ciągu 10–15 lat, przy średnim okresie zatrudnienia w jednej firmie wynoszącym 5,2 roku. Kluczowymi czynnikami sukcesu zawodowego są: interdyscyplinarne wykształcenie, znajomość systemów ERP/WMS, biegłość językowa i aktywność zawodowa online. Uzyskane wyniki potwierdzają rosnące znaczenie kompetencji cyfrowych i doświadczeń międzynarodowych w kształtowaniu ścieżek kariery menedżerów logistyki.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kariera zawodowa, logistyka, menedżerowie, kompetencje, LinkedIn

**JEL codes:** M12, M13, L62, L91

## Introduction

The contemporary business environment is characterized by increasing complexity and dynamism, which places new demands on logistics managers. Their role is evolving from operational to strategic functions, requiring a wide range of competencies and continuous professional development [Christopher 2016]. Effective supply chain management is becoming a key factor in the success of companies, which in turn translates into an increased demand for highly qualified specialists in this field [Mentzer et al. 2001].

Logistics has undergone significant evolution over the last century. Factors such as the industrial economy, the technological revolution, globalization, the creation of intermodal transport networks, and the development of management sciences have necessitated a fundamental shift in approach from logistics to integrated supply chain management in the twenty-first century. Supply chain management is defined as the design, planning, execution, control, and monitoring of activities within the supply chain to create net value, build competitive infrastructure, leverage global logistics, synchronize supply with demand, and measure performance globally. Logistics has undergone a significant shift in its role from operational to strategic [Lau et al. 2018].

In recent decades, the world of work has undergone significant changes due to various factors, including globalization, digitalization, and automation. Individuals are increasingly required to cope with serial changes in work and life, including periods of underemployment or overemployment, multiple career transitions, and re-entering education, as previously non-standard forms of work – such as temporary, short-term, and agency work, as well as self-employment – become more prevalent. In light of these changes, individuals must continually learn and remain flexible to maintain their employability and create their own opportunities [Kettunen 2021].

Every person's professional career is individual and unique. It depends on many factors, including the choices made. It combines not only professional issues but also the ability to integrate professional roles with those in family, society, or leisure activities. It often expresses the personal and natural desires of every person striving to achieve specific goals or a place in the social and professional hierarchy [Pikuła 2017]. Currently, logistics and supply chain management are highly attractive fields for a professional career [Cvetić et al. 2017].

Logistics managers must operate in an environment characterized by the coexistence and cooperation of different generations, the diversification and individualization of career types, and both temporary and long-term cooperation. Even in such a complex business situation, it is ultimately the employees – not the systems and processes – who provide solutions to logistical tasks and ensure the necessary competitiveness for the company. The evolution of the general business environment has presented a significant challenge to the development of logistics skills and the qualifications of logistics managers. They are becoming truly interdisciplinary experts, and this requires a very complex set of skills [Kisperska-Moroń 2013].

This article aims to identify the career paths of logistics managers, identifying the key factors influencing their development, the challenges they face, and the prospects for the further evolution of this profession. Research in the field of career management indicates that career path choice, competence development, and professional mobility are key to success in a dynamic environment [Hall 2002]. In the context of logistics, these aspects are fundamental due to the industry's interdisciplinary nature and its strategic importance to the economy [Rushton et al. 2017].

## **Theoretical background**

The term “professional career” refers to the successive stages of objectively defined statuses or even positions within an organization [Piekarska 2009]. A career is a very complex process. Due to its multidimensional nature, it is often considered on two levels – subjective and objective [Piekarska 2017]. Such properties characterise a career as one of individuality, uniqueness, and dependence on the choices made by a given individual. It is variable in nature and develops throughout one's life. It encompasses both professional matters and aspects related to a job search, the period following the end of professional activity, and the integration of multiple roles that an individual assumes throughout their life [Koszalka 2017].

The changes that have taken place have characterized today's careers as being unstable, unpredictable, and marked by short-term employment, while, at the same time, increasing the mobility and flexibility of individuals, making planning difficult, and affecting the course of one's professional career. The new career paradigm shifts the burden of responsibility for professional development from the organization to the employee. The employee becomes the leading actor in the career development process, steering it based on organizational conditions [Konieczny 2017].

A business career is the result of the interaction of three groups of factors [Kurchenko, Hryshchenko 2020]:

1. The individual. Each person is unique in terms of their professional and personal characteristics. The knowledge, skills, abilities, personal characteristics, and experience acquired to perform a specific type of activity determine their level of professional competence. Among personal characteristics, the most important are psychological attitudes, character, temperament, and emotional and volitional spheres.
2. Professional center. Professional activity must first and foremost, satisfy a person's material needs. It provides employees with enormous opportunities to meet their

needs at all levels. For example, despite specific changes, the issue of satisfying material needs remains relevant both in countries with a developed economy, where the majority of the population satisfies lower-level needs, and in countries with economies in transition.

3. A work-free environment. A place where people live and relax. People do not live by work alone: for many, work is a means of earning a living, while also enjoying leisure activities, maintaining good health, and everything that brings people joy and satisfaction in life outside of work. Quite often, especially in the case of women, family relationships are the most important factor in this group. The influence of family on the development of a business career can be precisely the opposite – from a categorical refusal to build a career for the sake of loved ones to a complete refusal to start a family if family responsibilities threaten the development of a business career.

One concept of a career is a career without boundaries. It refers to “a sequence of professional opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of a single place of employment”. A career without boundaries can be understood in many ways. The literature proposes a distinction between physical and psychological mobility. The dimension of physical mobility refers to actual changes in one’s professional career and crossing physical boundaries, while the dimension of psychological mobility refers to a person’s psychological orientation towards making these changes. According to Briscoe and Hall [2006], a boundaryless career orientation consists of two dimensions:

- (a) a boundaryless mindset, which refers to a general preference for working with people outside one’s current organization, and
- (b) mobility preference, which refers to a preference for changing employers [Guan et al. 2019].

According to the Operations Management Association, professional mobility is a trend in supply chain management. It notes that some of the most important achievements leading to promotion include demonstrating proficiency in specific areas, maintaining good performance, and promoting high professional standards in the workplace. As supply chain managers gain experience, they may be promoted to larger departments to oversee more complex chains or products [Careerie.com 2022].

The profile of a manager is constantly being changed, refined, and modified. Factors such as the size and structure of the team, the manner of responsibility and authorization for decisions made, the importance of the tasks performed in relation to the organization’s results, as well as culture and organizational climate and culture are, of course, of great importance [Tomaszuk 2013].

## **Research methodology**

The study aimed to identify key trends and patterns in the professional development of managers in this industry. The research was carried out in July 2025. The data source was the LinkedIn portal. The analysis covered 100 profiles of logistics managers.

The study was exploratory in nature and involved analyzing the content of 100 public LinkedIn profiles of logistics managers from Poland. The selection criteria were: professional activity in the logistics industry, a current or previous managerial

position, and availability of complete data on education and experience. The study employed desk research combined with quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The data was coded according to the following categories: job level, number of places of employment, industry certifications, foreign language skills, and activity on LinkedIn. The analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics tools (means, standard deviations, frequencies).

## **Research results**

The research findings concern career trajectories, educational backgrounds, acquired skills, and typical stages of professional development.

The managers surveyed were aged between 28 and 55, with an average age of 38. Most of the logistics managers surveyed had at least 10 years of professional experience. The respondents comprised 78% men and 22% women. Women were more often found in senior positions within the FMCG and e-commerce sectors.

### *Career paths and stages of promotion*

Most logistics managers started their careers in positions such as logistics specialist or logistics coordinator. Over time, by gaining experience and developing their skills, they were promoted to higher management positions, such as logistics department manager and then logistics director. This career model is characteristic of the logistics industry, where there are clear paths for professional advancement.

The average number of companies where the analyzed logistics managers worked was 4.8. This value suggests that logistics managers change employers on average almost five times during their professional careers. This number of changes may be due to various factors, such as the search for better development opportunities, higher remuneration, more interesting projects, or changes in the organizational structure of companies.

The minimum number of companies where logistics managers worked was 2. This value indicates the existence of a group of managers characterized by long-term employment stability. These individuals have likely found satisfactory working conditions and development opportunities within one or two organizations, which have allowed them to build their careers in the long term.

On the other hand, the highest number of companies where logistics managers worked was 9. Frequent employer changes are more typical among project-based managers. Project work often involves short-term contracts and necessitates changing employers after completing a specific project. In addition, managers with such extensive professional experience may have sought diverse challenges and development opportunities in different industries and organizations.

A typical career path for a logistics manager involves advancing from specialist to management positions, either within the same company or by transitioning to a new employer. Initial specialist positions, such as logistics specialist, logistics analyst, or transport coordinator, provide the foundation of knowledge and experience necessary for further professional development.

Promotion to management positions, such as logistics manager or logistics director, often involves assuming responsibility for team management, strategic planning, and optimizing logistics processes. This promotion may take place within the same company where the manager has gained experience and trust, or by changing employers where better development and remuneration conditions are offered.

Larger organizations usually provide greater opportunities for development, training, promotion, and more competitive salaries and benefits. Working for an international company offers the opportunity to gain experience in managing logistics on a global scale, which is highly valued in the job market.

In addition, a change of employer may be motivated by a search for more interesting projects, a better organizational culture, greater flexibility at work, or a better work-life balance. These factors are increasingly important for managers who seek job satisfaction and want to develop in an environment that supports their professional and personal goals.

The average duration a manager works for one company is 5.2 years. It is an average value that takes into account individuals with both short and long periods of employment at a single company. This value can serve as a helpful reference point for managers considering a job change, as well as for companies planning employee retention strategies.

The shortest recorded period of employment for a manager in one company is 8 months. Such short periods of employment usually occur in two cases:

**Transitional positions:** The manager assumes the position temporarily, for example, to replace someone on maternity leave or during the recruitment process for a permanent role.

**Projects:** The manager is hired to carry out a specific project, after which their contract expires.

In such situations, the short period of employment is planned and does not necessarily indicate employee dissatisfaction or performance issues.

The most extended recorded period of employment for a manager at one company is 18 years. Such long service is most common in two types of organizations:

- **Family businesses:** In family businesses, loyalty and long-term relationships are often highly valued. Managers who join a family business may remain with it for many years, often advancing to higher positions as the business grows.
- **Corporations with significant internal promotion opportunities:** Large corporations offer managers extensive career development opportunities within a single organization. A manager may start in a lower-level position and gradually advance to higher positions, acquiring new skills and gaining experience. Long service with a corporation can be viewed as a testament to loyalty and commitment, which can lead to additional promotion opportunities.

Managers with shorter tenures at a single company typically list a higher number of employers on their CVs. It may indicate several factors:

- **Career development turnover:** Managers may change jobs in order to gain new skills, experience in different industries, or advance to a higher position. Changing jobs can be seen as a way to accelerate career development and increase earnings.

- Searching for better opportunities: Managers may change jobs in search of improved employment conditions, such as higher remuneration, better benefits, more flexible working hours, or a more favorable work environment.
- Mismatch with organizational culture: Managers may change jobs if they do not feel comfortable in a given company or disagree with its organizational culture.

It is worth noting that changing jobs more frequently does not necessarily have to be viewed negatively. In some industries and positions, turnover is a natural part of career development. Managers need to be able to justify their decisions to change jobs and demonstrate that each change has contributed to their professional growth and development.

### Industry specialization

An analysis of the industry distribution of logistics managers' professional experience reveals a concentrated presence in key sectors of the economy. The distribution of industries in which the surveyed logistics managers gained their professional experience is as follows (Figure 1):

- Transport and freight forwarding: 35%.
- FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods): 25%.
- Industrial and automotive manufacturing: 18%.
- E-commerce and warehouse logistics: 12%.
- Pharmaceutical sector: 10%.

These industries are characterized by a high demand for specialist knowledge in the field of supply chain management, which explains their dominance in the occupational structure.

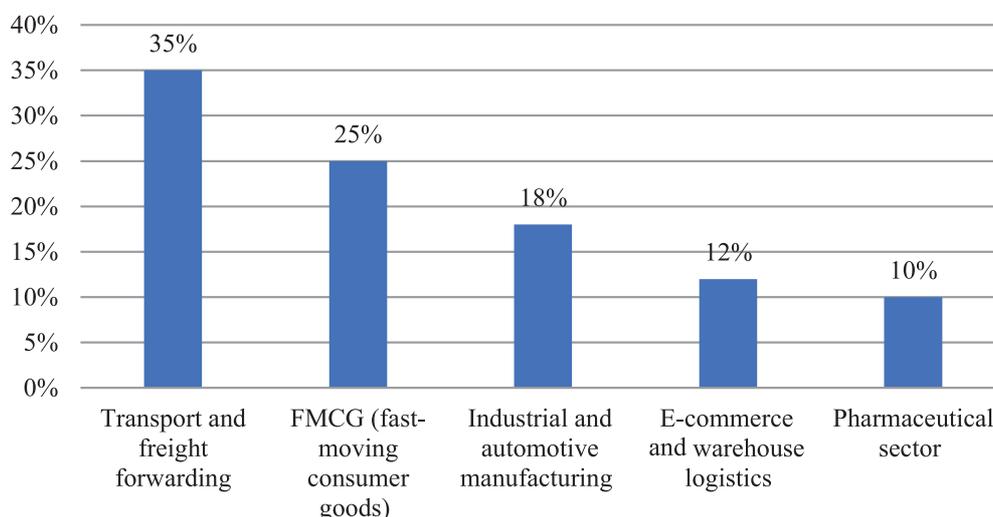


Figure 1. Employment structure of the surveyed logistics managers

Rysunek 1. Struktura zatrudnienia ankietowanych menedżerów logistyki

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

The dominance of these industries in the professional structure of logistics managers stems from their specific nature and the need for specialist knowledge in the field of supply chain management. Each of these industries has its own unique challenges and requirements, which means that experience gained in one sector can be valuable in another. Logistics managers with knowledge and skills from various industries are particularly sought after in the job market because they can effectively manage the supply chain in diverse conditions and situations.

### Education and qualifications

An analysis of the profiles revealed that most logistics managers hold a university degree, typically in logistics, management, or a related field such as engineering. In addition, many of them have completed postgraduate studies or specialist courses in supply chain management, which demonstrates a continuous desire to expand their knowledge and skills in a dynamically changing industry.

The structure of the fields of study completed by the managers surveyed is as follows (Figure 2):

- Logistics and Supply Chain Management: 42% (the dominant field among logistics managers).
- Transport Engineering: 23% (mainly related to warehouse technology and process optimization).
- Management and Economics: 15% (managers with a strategic approach and understanding of financial issues).
- Computer Science and Management Systems: 10% (mainly specialists in digital systems that optimize logistics).
- Postgraduate studies and MBAs: 10% (many managers decided to improve their management qualifications when promoted to higher positions).

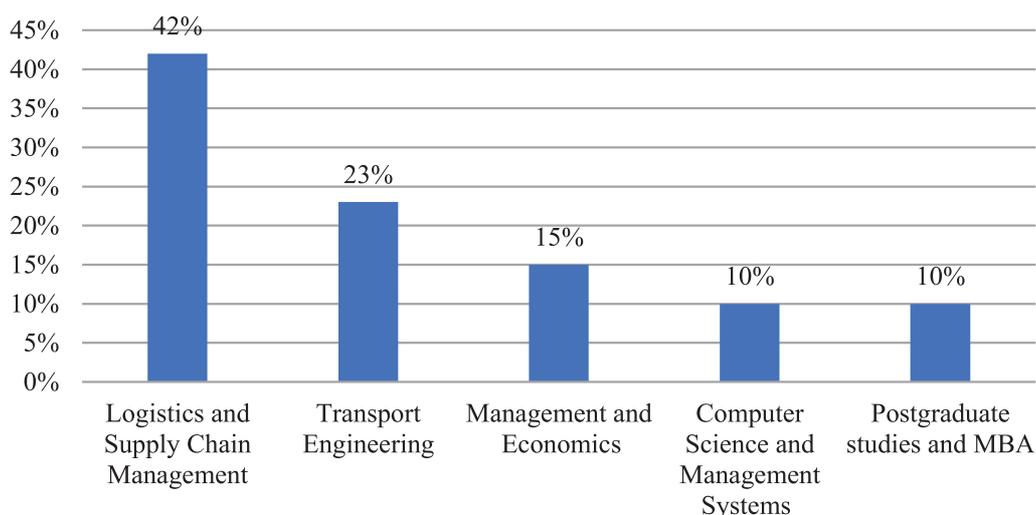


Figure 2. Fields of study of the surveyed logistics managers

Rysunek 2. Kierunki studiów ankietowanych menedżerów logistyki

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

An analysis of the educational background of logistics managers in Poland shows a predominance of fields directly related to logistics and supply chain management. However, graduates in engineering, management, economics, and IT also play a crucial role, bringing a diverse range of skills and perspectives to the logistics sector. Additionally, postgraduate studies and MBAs are popular among managers who seek to advance their careers and acquire knowledge in the field of management.

### *Key skills and competencies*

Skills such as negotiations, sales, and logistics management often appeared in the profiles of managers. Experience in the FMCG industry was also emphasised, suggesting that logistics managers often specialize in specific market sectors. The skills most frequently mentioned by the managers surveyed were (Figure 3):

- Supply chain management (82%).
- Cost optimization (78%).
- Negotiations with suppliers (66%).
- Implementation of ERP and WMS systems (57%).
- Management of cross-functional teams (51%).

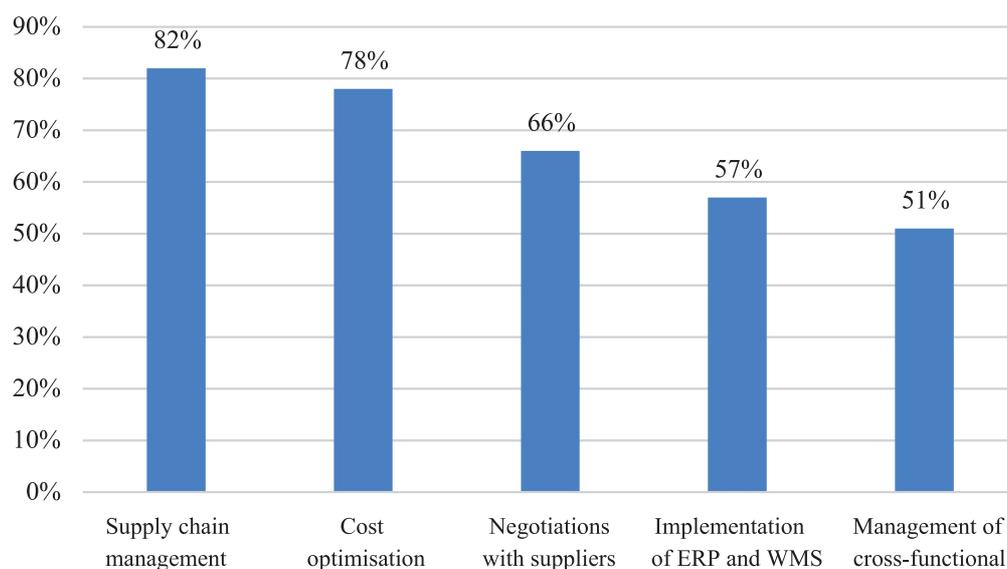


Figure 3. Most frequently declared competencies of logistics managers

Rysunek 3. Najczęściej deklarowane kompetencje menedżerów logistyki

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

### *Additional education and certificates*

In addition to their field-specific education, approximately 55% of managers have additional certificates, such as:

- APICS certificate (CSCP – Certified Supply Chain Professional).
- Six Sigma (most often at the Green Belt level).
- Prince2 or PMP in project management.

It indicates that managers recognize the importance of continually enhancing their skills and expanding their knowledge across various fields. Having additional certifications can significantly affect their effectiveness at work, as well as how employers and colleagues perceive them.

Having additional certifications, such as APICS CSCP, Six Sigma Green Belt, Prince2, or PMP, is becoming increasingly popular among managers. These certifications enable them to expand their knowledge and skills in various fields, which translates into improved work efficiency, increased competitiveness in the labor market, and recognition in the industry. Managers who invest in their qualifications are more likely to achieve professional success and meet the organization's goals.

Knowledge of digital tools was a key element of professional success and a primary factor in determining promotion to higher positions. The managers surveyed indicated that they possessed the following digital skills and knowledge of IT systems (Figure 4):

- ERP systems (SAP, Oracle): 70% of profiles.
- WMS systems: 55% of profiles.
- Route optimization software (e.g., Trans.eu, Optilo): 30% of profiles.
- Microsoft Excel (advanced): 90% of profiles.

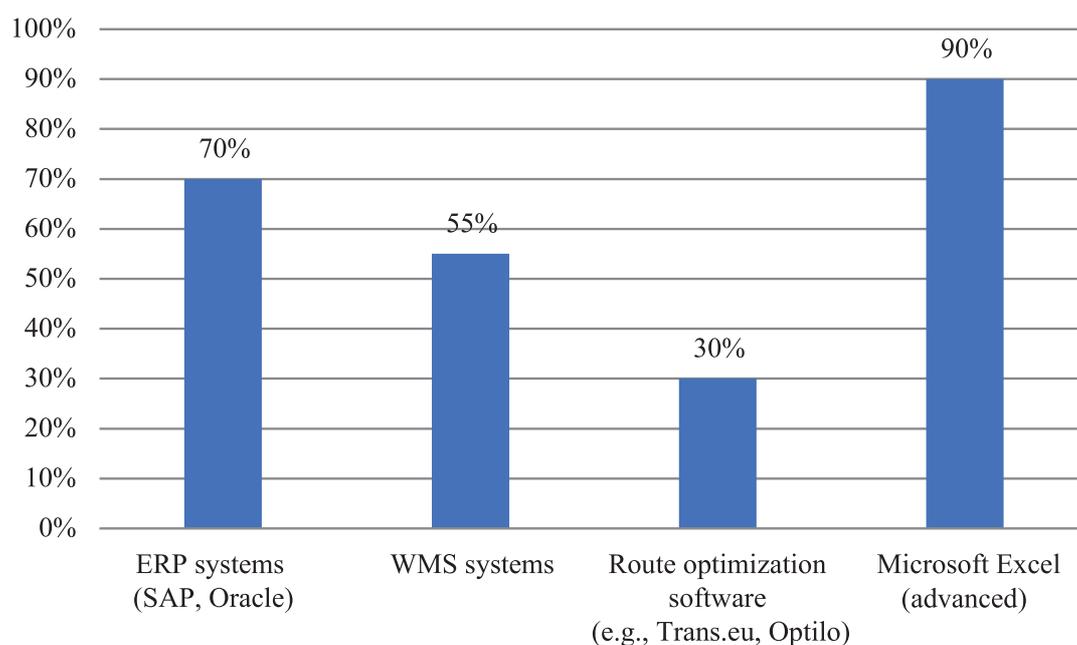


Figure 4. Digital skills of logistics managers

Rysunek 4. Kompetencje cyfrowe menedżerów logistyki

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

The study revealed that knowledge of digital tools and IT systems is a crucial element of professional success and a key factor influencing promotion to higher management positions. Managers who possess digital skills and knowledge of IT systems are more effective in managing company resources, optimizing business processes, and making data-driven decisions. Therefore, investing in the development of digital skills is crucial for managerial career development.

Language skills among the logistics managers surveyed vary. English is by far the most dominant language, and proficiency at the B2-C1 level is almost standard. German is a widely spoken language, particularly in the automotive and technology sectors, reflecting the country's strong economic ties with Germany. French, Scandinavian languages, and Spanish are less popular, but may be relevant in specific sectors and companies.

The foreign language skills declared by managers on their profiles are as follows (Figure 5):

- English: 98% (proficiency at the B2-C1 level).
- German: 35% (mainly in the automotive and logistics industries).
- French: 10%.
- Scandinavian languages and Spanish: 7%.

International logistics management requires fluency in foreign languages, which is reflected in the dominance of the English language. Managers also point to knowledge of Scandinavian languages, which may result from the markets they work with and previous experience of working abroad.

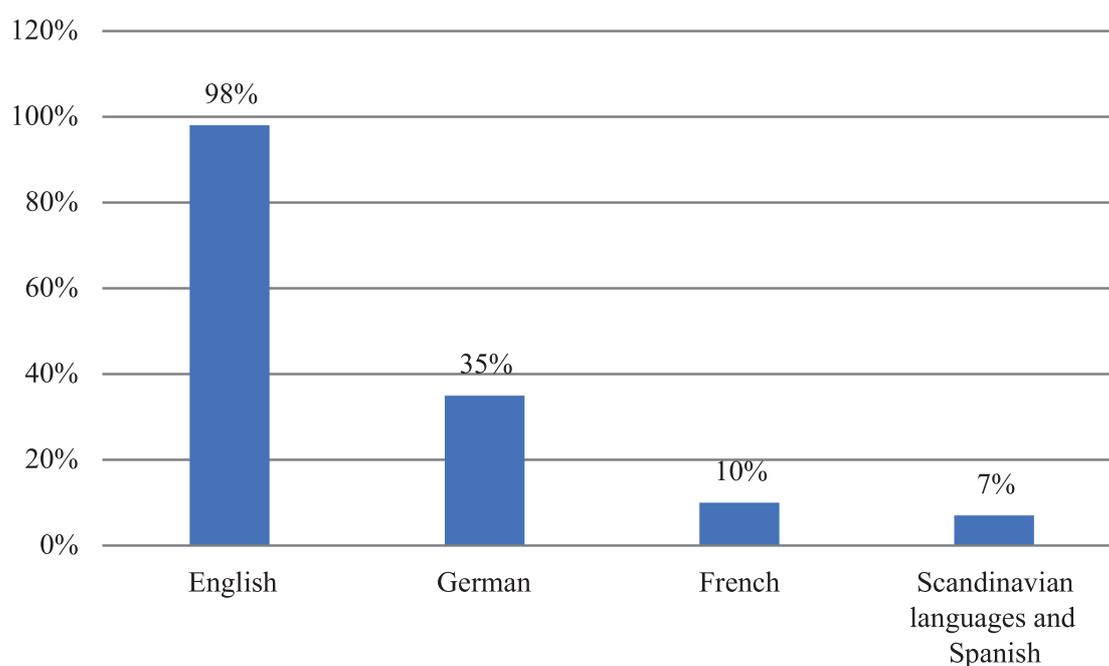


Figure 5. Foreign languages spoken by logistics managers

Rysunek 5. Znajomość języków obcych wśród menedżerów logistyki

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

The modern business environment presents managers with several challenges that require not only technical knowledge but also developed soft skills. These skills, often underestimated, play a key role in building effective teams, solving problems, and achieving organizational goals. The soft skills most frequently mentioned by managers are (Figure 6):

- Leadership skills: 80%.
- Intercultural communication: 55%.
- Time management and multitasking: 70%.
- Problem-solving skills: 65%.

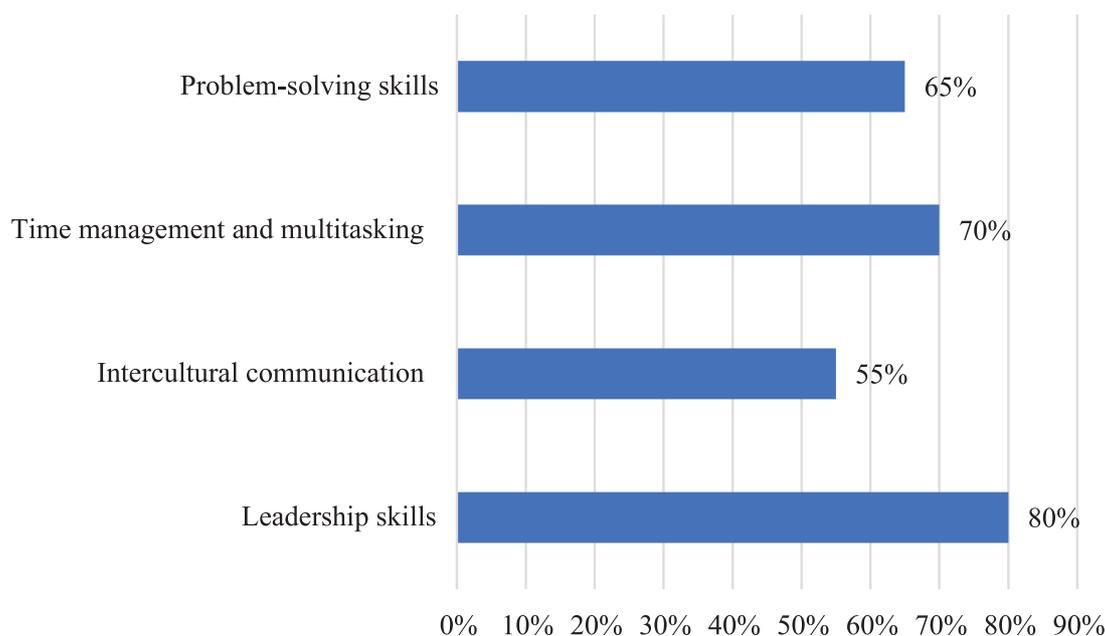


Figure 6. Soft skills of logistics managers  
Rysunek 6. Umiejętności miękkie menedżerów logistyki

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

The soft skills identified – leadership, intercultural communication, time management and multitasking, problem-solving, the ability to work under pressure, and make quick decisions in crises – are key to the success of managers in a dynamic business environment. Developing these competencies should be a priority for any manager who strives to manage a team effectively and achieve organizational goals. Investing in the development of soft skills brings measurable benefits to both the manager and the company in which they work.

#### *Typical positions in the career path of a logistics manager*

An analysis of logistics manager profiles has identified typical career paths for logistics managers. A typical career path includes the following positions (Figure 7):

1. Logistics Specialist
  - Working time: 2–4 years
  - Tasks: Operational management, transport planning, warehouse control.
2. Logistics Coordinator/Team Leader
  - Length of service: 3–5 years
  - Responsibilities: Supervision of the operations department, process efficiency control.

3. Logistics Department Manager
  - Work experience: 4–6 years
  - Responsibilities: Supply chain management, implementation of optimization systems.
4. Logistics Director/Supply Chain Director
  - Work experience: 5 years or more
  - Responsibilities: Strategic logistics planning, cost optimization, and cooperation with management.

The average length of a typical career path from specialist to director level was 10 to 15 years.

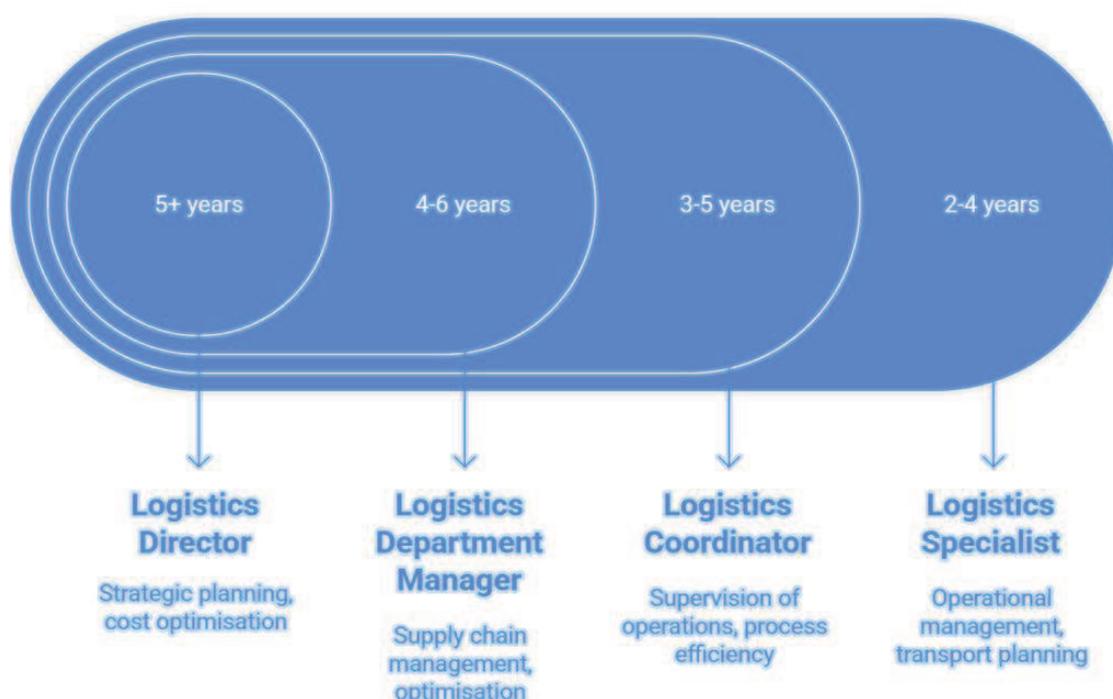


Figure 7. Typical career path of a logistics manager

Rysunek 7. Typowa ścieżka kariery menedżera ds. logistyki

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

The presented analysis of a logistics manager's career path enables us to understand the stages of professional development in this industry. From specialist, through coordinator and manager, to director, each stage requires the acquisition of appropriate competences and experience. Conscious career planning, skills development, and continuous knowledge improvement are key to success in the rapidly changing world of logistics.

### *Projects and professional achievements of the managers surveyed*

The most frequently mentioned projects and achievements reflect key industry trends and priorities. These are primarily projects related to cost optimization, improving operational efficiency, reducing order fulfilment times, and implementing modern technolo-

gies and management methods. Managers with experience in implementing these projects are highly valued in the labor market and have better career development opportunities. This analysis may be helpful for companies recruiting logistics managers, as well as for managers themselves who want to develop their skills and increase their value in the labor market.

Managers indicate the following projects and professional achievements:

- Implementation of WMS (Warehouse Management System) systems: 55% of profiles,
- Optimization of transport and storage costs: 63% of profiles.
- Reduction of order fulfilment time: 45%.
- Implementation of Lean processes in logistics: 40%.
- Successfully conducting international contract negotiations: 35%.

### *Professional mobility and international experience*

Many logistics managers have gained professional experience in various geographical regions, indicating high professional mobility within this industry. International experience is highly valued, particularly in the context of global supply chain expansion and the need to manage operations on an international scale.

40% of the surveyed managers reported having professional mobility and international experience, with a minimum of two years spent working abroad, either in foreign branches or on global projects. In particular, they gained this experience in Asia and Western Europe. The average number of job changes in different cities/countries was 3.2.

### *Activity on LinkedIn*

The profiles analyzed were generally well-completed, with professional photos, personalized headlines, and detailed descriptions of professional experience. Many managers actively participated in industry discussions, published articles, and shared their professional achievements, demonstrating an awareness of the importance of building a personal brand in the online environment.

Activity on LinkedIn characterises 75% of the managers surveyed, who regularly publish articles and industry opinions. They had good-quality profiles with detailed descriptions of their professional achievements. It demonstrates their awareness of the need to build a personal brand. LinkedIn network:

- average number of contacts: 550,
- most frequently established contacts: suppliers, customers, production and transport department employees.

### *Membership of the surveyed managers in industry organizations and associations*

Membership in industry organizations and associations is a significant indicator of commitment to professional development, as well as a willingness to expand knowledge and build a network of contacts within a specific field. In the logistics and transport industry, membership in relevant organizations can bring several benefits, including access to the latest information, opportunities to exchange experiences with other professionals, and participation in training courses and conferences. The surveyed managers belong to the following industry organizations and associations:

- Logistics and Transport Association (Poland): 30%,
- Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals: 20%.

In addition, 15% regularly participated in industry events such as international logistics conferences and trade fairs, which indicates their activity in the professional environment.

### *Key elements of success for the managers surveyed*

Logistics managers have diverse career paths, but the key elements of success identified in the study include:

- stable professional experience in at least 4–5 companies,
- an average tenure in one organisation of 5–6 years,
- specialized education and industry certifications,
- proficiency in IT tools and English,
- developed soft skills and leadership abilities.

The research also allowed us to determine the correlation between the promotion path and experience. Analyses of the careers of the surveyed managers indicate that individuals in specialist positions (e.g., IT in logistics) most often advance horizontally, gaining experience across various departments. Managers and supervisors were usually promoted internally, especially if the company offered opportunities for rotation between different departments (e.g., domestic and international). Directors, on the other hand, were most often promoted as a result of changing employers and moving to a larger organization, often after completing additional postgraduate studies.

A career path for a logistics manager requires a combination of solid education, professional experience, developed soft skills, and continuous improvement. Investment in personal and professional development, networking, flexibility, and adaptation to changing market conditions is key to success in this dynamic and demanding industry.

A detailed analysis allows us to determine the profile of a candidate for the position of logistics manager and predict key development paths in this industry. Based on the analysis of the managers' profiles, it can be concluded that logistics manager positions can be divided into four main categories, depending on the level of management and scope of responsibilities (Table 1).

This analysis reveals that the logistics sector is characterized by diverse career paths that are strongly linked to educational specialization and acquired experience. Those aspiring to strategic roles (Logistics Director) often have a solid background in economics and management and a more extended history of employment in many companies, which suggests the importance of a broad business horizon. On the other hand, operations and IT specialists rely on technical and IT education, which is crucial for effective process management and the implementation of technology. Project positions are characterized by high mobility and a demand for interdisciplinary skills, often enriched with postgraduate qualifications. Therefore, the optimal candidate profile in the logistics industry is not uniform, but depends on the target job category. Conscious shaping of one's educational path and gaining experience relevant to one's career goals are key to career development. In the logistics industry, success depends on a combination of specialist knowledge, relevant technical or strategic skills, and the ability to adapt and manage projects,

Table 1. Relationship between managerial positions, education, and experience

Tabela 1. Wykształcenie i doświadczenie pracowników na stanowiskach kierowniczych

Position	% of 100 respondents	Most common fields of study	Mean number of firms	Average length of service in the position
Logistics manager	45	Logistics and Supply Chain Management (60%)	4.5	3–5 years
Warehouse Operations Manager	20	Transport Engineering (50%)	3.8	4 years
Director of Logistics/Supply Chain Management	15	Management and economics (40%)	5.2	5–7 years
Logistics Optimization and IT Specialist	10	Computer Science and Management Systems (70%)	3.2	2–4 years
Project positions (International Project Coordinator)	10	Postgraduate studies and MBAs (50%), various basic fields of study	4.1	2–3 years

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

often in an international environment. The data presented can provide a valuable basis for planning human resource development and creating personalized recruitment strategies in logistics organizations.

## Discussion

The results of the analysis indicate that the dominant group consisted of logistics managers (45%) and warehouse operations managers (20%), which is consistent with the literature suggesting that these positions form the foundation of the logistics management structure [Coyle et al. 2024]. Holding higher positions, such as logistics director (15%), was strongly associated with completing postgraduate studies, confirming earlier research indicating the key role of supplementary education in a managerial career [Ellinger et al. 2011].

According to research by Golicic and Mentzer [2015], industry specialization and education influence the nature of a career in logistics. Managers with a degree in a relevant field (logistics, supply chain management) are more likely to be promoted within operational structures, while those with a general education (e.g., economics) take on strategic positions such as a logistics director. Our results are consistent with this pattern – 60% of logistics managers held a degree in a relevant field, which enabled them to develop expertise in this specialization.

Recent research highlights the growing importance of interdisciplinarity in the education of logistics managers. According to Huk et al. [2023], an increasing number of educational programs are integrating knowledge of information technology, management, and engineering, which prepares graduates for a variety of roles in the logistics sector.

Our analysis confirms these observations, indicating that managers with such diverse educational backgrounds are more likely to hold positions related to process optimization and the implementation of new technologies.

Our analysis shows that 70% of managers were familiar with advanced ERP systems (SAP, Oracle), and 55% had experience with WMS systems, confirming the research of Autry and Daugherty [2003], who emphasise that knowledge of information systems is crucial in logistics management. The development of digital systems in logistics has compelled managers to enhance their IT skills, particularly in the areas of data analysis and process optimization [Christopher 2016].

Research by Rodrigue and Notteboom [2021] emphasizes that the implementation of modern technologies, such as supply chain tracking and management systems, requires digital literacy, which is reflected in our results. Managers who held positions related to logistics process optimization most often had technical degrees (in computer science or engineering) or additional certifications, such as Six Sigma and APICS.

According to the report “Specialists and managers open to professional change” (2024), most specialists and managers are optimistic about their career prospects, which may influence their willingness to change jobs in order to further their career development [Rzeczpospolita 2024]. Research indicates that logistics managers spend an average of 5.2 years at one company, aligning with observed trends in the labor market.

The report “Polish Logistics” (2024) emphasises the importance of the computerization and optimization of logistics processes as key success factors in the industry [Puls Biznesu 2024]. Analysis of profiles showed that 70% of managers are familiar with advanced ERP systems, and 55% declare experience in WMS systems, which confirms these observations.

Knowledge of English (98%) and German (35%) is widespread, especially among those in senior positions (directors and international project coordinators). Wagner’s research [2010] emphasises that professional mobility is one of the key factors influencing the career development of logistics managers, especially in the context of global supply chain expansion. These results are also confirmed by research by Stefan and Becker-Peth

Table 2. Foreign language skills in different positions

Tabela 2. Znajomość języków obcych wśród pracowników zajmujących różne stanowiska

Position	English [%]	German [%]	French [%]	Other [%]
Logistics Manager	98	30	10	5 (mainly Spanish)
Warehouse Operations Manager	80	20	5	2
Logistics Director	100	40	15	8 (Scandinavian)
Optimization and IT Specialist	95	25	10	3
International Project Coordinator	100	35	20	10

Source: own research

Źródło: badania własne

[2018], who indicate that international experience is a key element in the development of managers' competencies. Our study showed that 40% of managers had worked abroad, which was one of the main factors influencing their promotion. Those with international experience were more likely to hold executive positions and participate in negotiations with global suppliers.

The average number of contacts on LinkedIn was 550; 60% of managers declared that they actively use this platform for professional purposes. According to a study by Hamori and Koyuncu [2011], networks play a crucial role in the career development of logistics managers, as they facilitate the exchange of knowledge and the establishment of relationships with business partners. In particular, for project and strategic positions, building professional relationships provided access to new projects and opportunities for international cooperation [Cross, Borgatti & Parker 2001]. The results of the study confirm these theories – people who were active on LinkedIn changed jobs more often and were promoted faster than those who were less involved in building their networks.

### *Education and continuous learning are key elements of a career*

60% of managers completed relevant higher education studies, and 50% obtained additional industry certificates or completed postgraduate studies. Research by Lambert and Stock [2019] emphasizes that professional success in logistics is mainly dependent on adapting competencies to changing market requirements. Obtaining additional qualifications, such as APICS certificates or an MBA, enables managers to advance to higher management positions. The results of the study are consistent with the research of Ellinger et al. [2011], who indicate that the professional development of logistics managers is based on a combination of practical experience and formal education. The report "The labor market and professions of the future 2024" [Future Report 2025] emphasizes the importance of continuous education and adaptation to new technologies in the context of a dynamically changing labor market. The research confirms these observations, indicating that 60% of managers have completed relevant higher education studies, and 50% have obtained additional industry certificates or completed postgraduate studies.

## **Summary and conclusions**

In light of the latest research and global trends, the career path of the modern logistics manager is undergoing a fundamental redefinition. Gone are the days of viewing this role solely through the prism of operational optimization. As Ivanov [2023] points out, post-pandemic experiences have forced a strategic shift towards building resilient and adaptive supply chains, in which digitalization is a key tool for managing uncertainty. This, in turn, places new competency requirements on leaders. Nair, Jayaram, and Das [2022] confirm that managerial effectiveness today is inextricably linked to advanced digital skills and leadership abilities that enable teams to navigate the process of technological transformation. This perspective is further radicalized by the OECD report [OECD 2023], which predicts that artificial intelligence will not only automate routine tasks but also create a demand for managers capable of managing complex, automated systems and making decisions based on data analytics. Consequently, the future of logis-

tics careers belongs to leaders who can combine strategic thinking about risk, technological proficiency, and the ability to inspire people to adapt continuously.

An analysis of logistics manager profiles on LinkedIn indicates clear career paths in the logistics industry, with an emphasis on continuous improvement of qualifications and gaining international experience. Activity on professional platforms and personal branding play an important role in career development in this field.

Logistics managers typically follow clearly defined career paths, progressing from operational to strategic positions, often within three to five companies.

Relevant education and industry certifications play a key role in the promotion process.

The average length of employment at one company suggests moderate job stability, with greater mobility observed among those with international experience.

Competencies related to process optimization and negotiation determine the success of managers at higher levels of management.

Activity on professional platforms, such as LinkedIn, is important for creating a professional image as a specialist in the logistics industry.

The results of this study can serve as a basis for analyzing recruitment trends and planning career paths in logistics, taking into account the industry's dynamics, which are key to the global economy.

The results of the study indicate that a career in logistics is closely linked to the continuous development of competences, changes in professional environments, and openness to international experiences.

In practical terms, the results of the study can serve as a basis for:

- developing recommendations for universities on adapting logistics education programmes to the requirements of the labor market,
- building competency profiles for logistics managers in international organizations,
- creating HR strategies in the logistics industry, taking into account promotion paths and the need for continuing education.

The research conducted is not representative and therefore cannot be generalized to the entire population, but it does provide some insight into the career paths of logistics managers in Poland. The conclusions and recommendations formulated are a prelude to further, more in-depth research.

From the perspective of further research, it is recommended to conduct a comparative analysis of the careers of logistics managers in other Central and Eastern European countries and to use two research methods, combining data from LinkedIn with the results of surveys and qualitative interviews.

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