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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AS A KEY ELEMENT SHAPING THE IMAGE OF THE POLISH ARMY – RESEARCH REPORT

ABSTRACT

PURPOSE:

The main purpose of the article was to determine whether organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping the image of the Polish Army. Culture varies over time and is shaped in the army by commanders. The authors diagnosed the profile of the current and desired organizational culture in uniformed organizations, focusing their attention on the style of leadership and employee management style.

METHODS:

Culture as a key element of the image of the Polish Army was assessed by generation Z, and in particular by the uniformed classes that want to become professionally involved with uniformed organizations in the future. The main research tool was the OCAI questionnaire according to K.S Cameron and E. Quinn, based on the model of competing values. 5 uniformed organizations were deliberately selected for the research, and the diagnostic survey was conducted on a sample of 6% of Certified Uniform Classes. in the years 2020 and 2021.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

It is noted that the profile of culture is a hierarchy, leadership style (situational and ministerial) and the style of leading people (autocratic) correspond to the culture of the hierarchy. The participants of the organization accept the existing values, norms and procedures. Thus, the organization is internally coherent and effective. There is no need to change this culture. Students of uniformed classes understand the organizational culture of the Polish Army by imagining service as a passion (38%). They believe that the Polish Army is an organization that cultivates traditions (35%). A particularly important aspect here is the authority (32%) and the history of the Polish army (31%). The image-building activities of the Armed Forces, adjusted to the perception of Generation Z representatives, were assessed positively in 81%.

KEYWORDS: *shaping the image, Polish Army, organizational culture, leadership, management styles*

INTRODUCTION

The image of the organization is an asset that significantly supports the competitive advantage and market success. The issue of its creation is the basis of strategies created for this purpose. The image is closely related to the identity of the organization and its reputation. As Warren Buffet writes: "It takes 20 years to build a good reputation, and only 5 minutes to destroy it. If you realize this, you will approach everything differently." These words show the importance of proper communication with stakeholder groups. This skill makes the functioning and development of the organization dependent.

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland is an organization that must take special care of its image. They are an organization of public trust, the beneficiary of significant funds from the state budget and, at the same time, the guarantor of our independence and borders. The Polish Army is currently facing significant challenges, such as increasing the number of soldiers and rebuilding the state of personnel reserves. The process of modernization requires particular social acceptance. Implementation of modern image shaping methods and the use of the latest forms of communication.

Organizational culture is an important component of an organization, understood as a system of values and generally accepted social norms in

a given company, which activate employees to operate effectively and bind the organization (Sikorski, 2006, p. 67). The shaping of the organizational culture depends to a large extent on the management staff who have deeply rooted beliefs and values that must be disseminated in the organization. In a situation where this culture is clearly marked in a given organizational unit, then one can observe great harmony at all management levels. Organizational culture is a key element influencing the image of the organization.

The aim of the article was to establish whether organizational culture plays a significant role in shaping the image of the Polish Army. To achieve this, the authors determined the profile of the current and desired organizational culture in uniformed organizations, focusing their attention on the style of leadership and employee management style. Culture as a key element of the image of the Polish Army was assessed by generation Z, and in particular by the uniformed classes that want to become professionally involved with uniformed organizations in the future.

This is a fragment of the results of more widely conducted research, because the problem is complex and should be considered in various aspects. The authors are aware of the imperfections of this study, but it may be a source of discussion and further in-depth research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following research methods were used in the article: quantitative analysis and criticism, Hebrew methods, descriptive, technological technique, tech – paratys, and quantitative analysis and evaluation. In this case, it was used on the side of the tests, according to Cameron, K.S. and Quinn R. E. (Cameron and Quinn 2015 p. 13), who aimed at the type of culture that in a given place in the organization and the type of culture of practicing by employees. This method examines a given organizational culture on the basis of a competing model: flexibility and freedom of action versus stability and control as well as orientation to internal affairs and integration versus orientation to position in the environment and diversity and distinguishes four main types of culture: clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, and market (Wyrwicka, 2010). It made it

possible for the research group of the company to be the personal culture of the organization – the Polish Army.

The Questionnaire for assessing the culture of the organization was used in this paper. It is said that it is the most used organizational assessment tool. The research was carried out in 5 purposefully selected uniformed organizations, which were indicated by higher-level superiors. The data is for research purposes only and has been aggregated and proper names are hidden. The current culture is difficult to measure, because it is created by formal regulations, established legal norms are not easily subject to direct observation (Cameron i Quinn 2015; Wyrwicka, 2010).

The analysis of the results and their presentation was presented on the coordinate system. The results of the OCAI questionnaire described above were transformed by a specially developed program. The second research group were students of the Certified Military Uniform Classes. The program objectives in the Uniform Classes concern, among others: shaping defensive and patriotic attitudes of young people and strengthening respect for national and military symbols, the history and traditions of the Polish Armed Forces. “The program is aimed at “promoting the defense of the country and the Polish Armed Forces.”

Students of these classes are a social group of high importance in the context of the will to tie their future with the uniform and use their potential in the program of rebuilding the state of personnel reserves. They have permanent contact with the Polish Armed Forces due to participation in classes in military units and regular contact with soldiers. For this reason, they constitute an appropriate research group for the external assessment of the impact of the organizational culture of the Polish Armed Forces on their image. The research sample was 6% of the population, which constituted 368 questionnaires from 11 designated military schools. The research was carried out in the years 2020/2021 (Nowak, 2007).

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND THE IMAGE OF THE ORGANIZATION

The importance of the image in the modern world is an issue undertaken by representatives of various sciences, and making it positive is a key task of Public Relations. The image should be treated as one of the key assets of the organization – understood as a likeness, image, symbol or image, and its creation should be considered a continuous process. Issues related to communication between the organization and the environment are important from the point of view of management sciences, economics and sociology.

The term image entered the canon of the world of management science in the 1950s. Even then, it was understood as “the result of experiences, memories and expressions of a person related to a given organization”. The image of an organization can also be defined as an element consisting of knowledge, feelings, ideas and beliefs related to the organization, which are the result of all its activities. The image of an organization is understood as its overall image (Szymańska, 2005, p. 89) – it is what people think about it. It is usually subjective in nature – the image or image is produced by a given person, and its evaluation is emotional (Cenker, 2000, p. 2000), Therefore, it should be considered in terms of concepts such as attitudes, stereotypes, thought patterns, and imagery (Wójcicki, 2015, p. 39)

The image of an organization is the way its members believe external stakeholders perceive the institution or how management would like their organization to be seen. In both cases, image is the internal belief of managers as to how outsiders perceive or should perceive the institutions they manage (Figiel, 2011, p. 84). “An image is also a set of meanings by which a given subject is known and by which people describe, remember, and relate to it.” Taking into account the intuitive approach to the image, it can be concluded that its shaping depends on factors on the part of the organization. On the other hand, on the basis of the presented definitions of an image, it should be stated that it results not only from knowledge and experiences related to a given object, but at the same time is influenced by beliefs, impressions, values, stereotypes or feelings that guide people in their thinking and behavior. (Wójcicki, 2015, p.42)

The image is a dynamic concept – its creation is a continuous process (Lipiński, 2012, p.29) Building the image of the organization is based on social communication. By using the so-called “Universal definition of communication” should be understood as “the process of communication between institutions, individuals or groups aimed at the exchange of ideas, information, thoughts or the distribution of knowledge” (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007, p. 12). The image of the organization can be positive or negative; controversial or bland; widespread and useful for institutions, or little known and having a negative impact on reputation; unclear, colorless or indifferent. An institution such as the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland must constantly take care of its image (Knecht. 2005). The need to reliably inform the public about the directions of spending funds from the state budget is the main determinant of the principles of creating and nurturing relations with the environment. The image of the military must be shaped in terms of social expectations and be acceptable.

The image potential of the Polish Armed Forces is based on the history, organizational culture and values related to these areas. It should be supplemented by the presentation of the military as a modern and professional institution. Factors that will attract employees and make them feel comfortable at work should be applied. Organizational culture is defined through proper management, cognitive and behavioral patterns. Most often, they are unwritten rules that balance between the observed behavior and written rules. The key in organizational culture is adapting to the environment in which the organization operates, and this is achieved through key assumptions created or invented by the group that will distinguish their workplace from others. The people managing the organization and its founders have a significant impact on the organizational culture. Lower-level managers take actions that are closely related to the assumptions of the organization and do not deviate from them, and individual employees observe such behaviors and also follow them during the implementation of their tasks.

Organizational culture involves the implementation of individual functions, which E. Schein grouped into functions related to the environment of the organization and its interior. The functions related to the environment are assigned to learning the goals of the organization, eliminating threats by

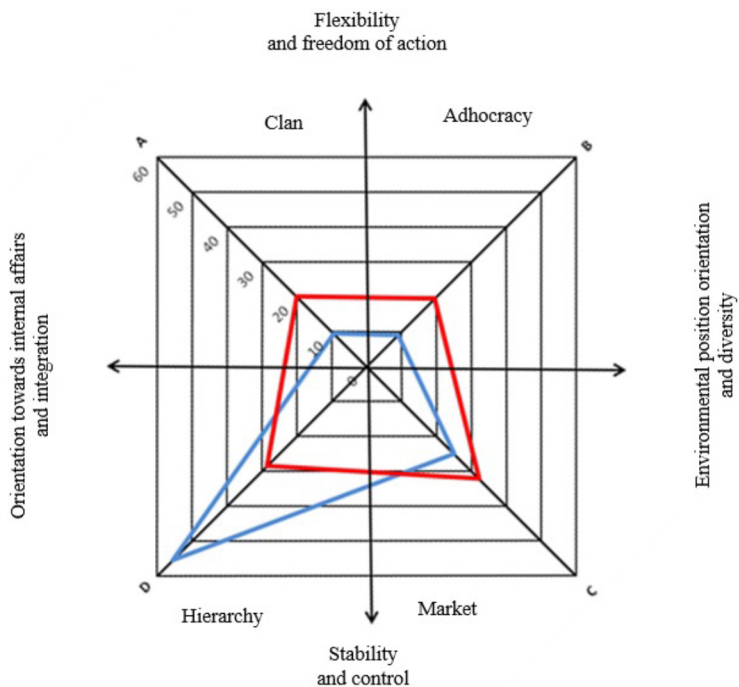
creating a favorable working atmosphere and connecting employees around the goals and means. In turn, the functions of culture within the organization are focused on determining the way the system of penalties and rewards works, defining rights, obligations, orders and bans, the functioning of the scheme used to recruit new employees, as well as standardizing the industry language in order to communicate more efficiently.

Organizational culture is shaped by each of the leaders personally, but it is also shared by employees. It is worth mentioning that each organization has its own model and no two organizations are alike. However, they follow similar patterns. One of the distinguished models of culture are the types of organizational culture defined by Robert E. Quinn and Kim S. Cameron of professors working at the University of Michigan, are clan, adhocracy, hierarchy and market (Cameron, Quinn, 2015, p. 41). Each organization must develop its own model of culture. This can be achieved through the amount of work that leaders and employees have to put into it. Depending on the purpose, type and goals of the organization, the organizational culture model will be shaped in a separate way. The key factor is to recruit appropriate employees who will match the type of enterprise with their competences and personality traits.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE PROFILE

By applying an appropriately selected organizational culture, understood as a system of values, it is possible to gather employees around the chosen goal in an appropriate way. It also ensures an appropriate understanding of the mission and enables employees to have the same view of the criteria for assessing the achieved results. Profile of organizational culture is presented in the figure number 1.

Figure 1. Profile of organizational culture



	A	B	C	D
Current state	10	9	25	56
Desired condition	20	20	32	29

Source: Own study

By analyzing the charts prepared on the basis of the obtained results, it can be concluded that the current profile of organizational culture is hierarchy. This means that this organization is subject to strict control and stability, people's actions are usually governed by formal procedures, there is coordination and consistency of tasks performed, and the entire organization is oriented towards the issues taking place inside it.

Such a profile of culture provides the organization with efficiency and high efficiency, and guarantees its employees stability and a sense of security. Its consistency is achieved through the compliance of all members of the organization with generally accepted rules and regulations. By making an in-depth analysis of the results presented in the chart, the authors concluded that the organizational culture profile adopted by this organization is not fully acceptable to employees. The respondents believe that the most optimal direction of change would be towards the clan's culture or adhocracy (the difference between the current and desired culture in the A and B quarter is 10 points). It means that the organization requires small changes. A clan culture profile may be appropriate in a small business. Considering the Polish Armed Forces, which is a corporate organization, such a profile of culture does not fit in with uniformed organizations.

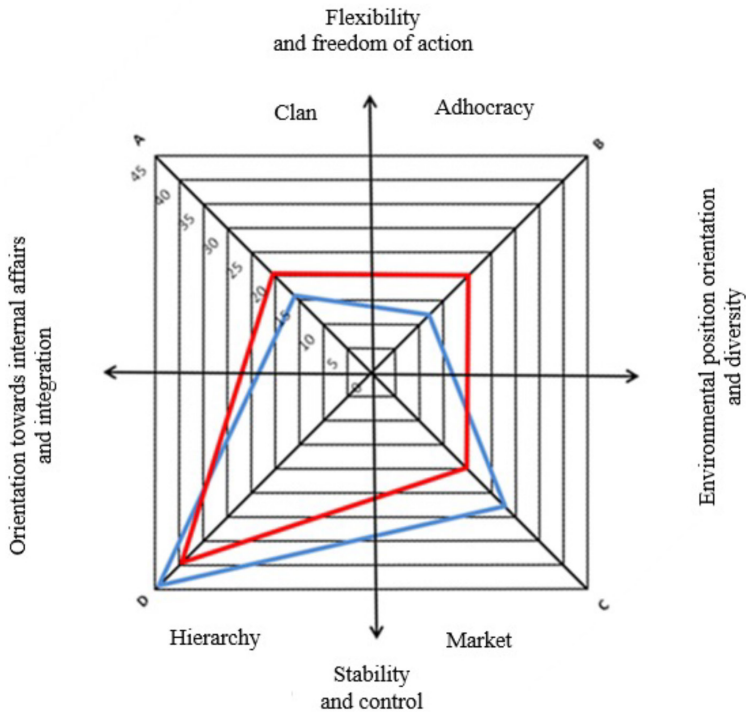
In contrast, some features of the adhocracy culture could be included. Employees in such a profiled organization willingly take risks, there is more entrepreneurship, and greater self-discipline is required. The measure of the success of such an organization is hiring creative employees who will be able to anticipate the market needs. This approach is more risky from the employer's point of view. Changes that should be made in the style of leadership and employee management are possible, but only after relaxing the process of absolute control. Giving commanders and employees greater responsibility and autonomy in decision-making, and after a slow but systematic introduction of innovation.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

Leadership in the modern world is understood as the ability of a person to influence a single individual or group of people (Rosińska, 2001). This behavior is to lead the leader to achieve a specific goal. It is, in other words, a way of exercising power (Northouse, 2013). The essence of leadership can be defined by the statement that its effectiveness depends on the compatibility between the leader and his associates and the ability to adapt to the situation. The concept of leadership is complicated and very complex (Bass, 2008). Individuals or groups of people who are subordinate to the leader may influence his actions, but this is done to a small extent.

The concept of leadership was also described by M. Armstrong (Armstrong, 2014). In his studies, he states that leadership is the achievement of specific results, using people for this purpose. Leadership is about encouraging and inspiring individuals and teams to do their best to achieve the desired result Goldman 2017. Brian Tracy, a Canadian writer specializing in the psychology of success, also described how leadership is understood (Tracy, 2007). As he claims, leadership is the art of activating extraordinary opportunities in ordinary people. Style of leadership is presented in the figure number 2.

Figure 2. Style of leadership



	A	B	C	D
Current state	16	12	28	44
Desired condition	21	20	32	40

Source: Own study

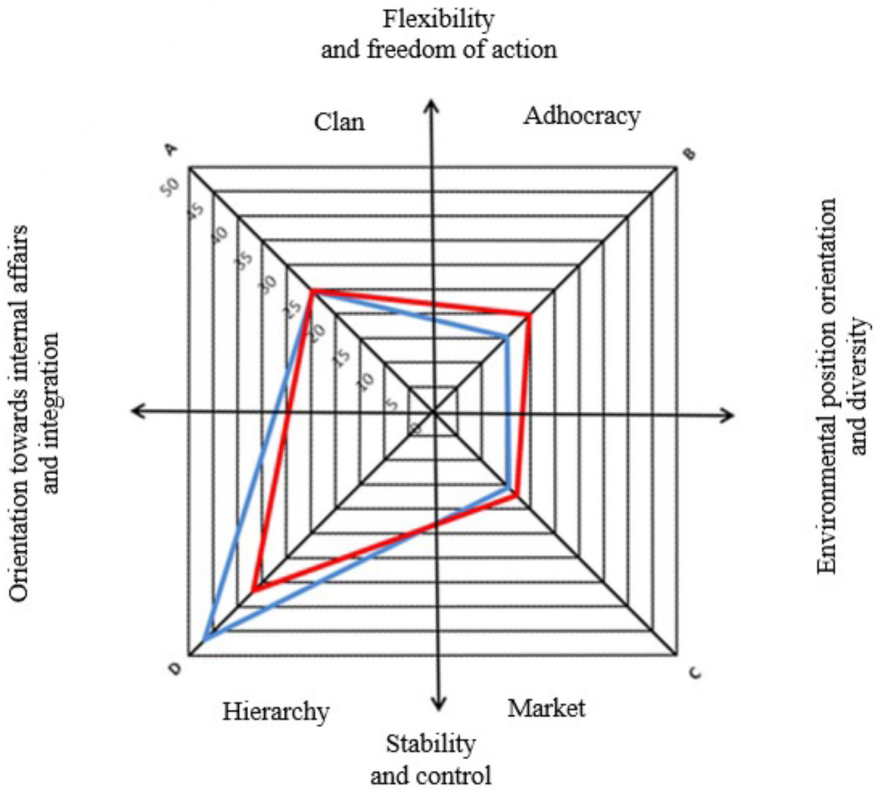
Following the obtained research results, it can be concluded that the analyzed organization is characterized by leadership characteristic of a hierarchy. Situational, servant and personalistic leadership can be distinguished here (Hersey, 2007; Blenchar 2019).

Situational leadership is a very effective form of leadership application. Its assumption is that the subordinate should be provided with appropriate products so that he can properly carry out the tasks assigned to him by the commander. The style of his behavior the leader chooses according to the situation and when using this form he is to rely mainly on the authority he has in his subordinates. Situational leadership is based on a task that must be properly defined and performed. Servant leadership is defined as the attitude of a leader who is driven not by a lust for power, but by conviction of encouraging his employees to become an even better version of himself. A small part of the respondents would like the leadership in the organization to be identified with entrepreneurship, innovation and risk taking. The gap between the current and the desired style (8 points in a quarter B) is small enough not to cause disturbances within the organization and does not require radical changes.

EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT STYLE

The style of managing an organization is understood as a way of the superior's influence on subordinates and reflects his personality traits or beliefs regarding effective team management. Each of the leaders chooses the style of managing the organization that is best for him. It adjusts it according to your preferences, features, vision and experience. There are three classical styles of managing an organization (human teams) – democratic, autocratic and liberal. Employee management style is presented in the figure number 3.

Figure 3. Employee management style



	A	B	C	D
Current state	25	15	16	47
Desired condition	25	20	17	37

Source: Own study

By interpreting the obtained results, the authors determined that the current style of managing people is an autocratic style. It is used when the top-level leader imposes on employees plans and guidelines that must be followed. According to the assumptions of this style, the employee is not well-oriented to work and is looking for a way to avoid duties, and his desire is to do his job with as little effort as possible. So leaders must be strict with people and control

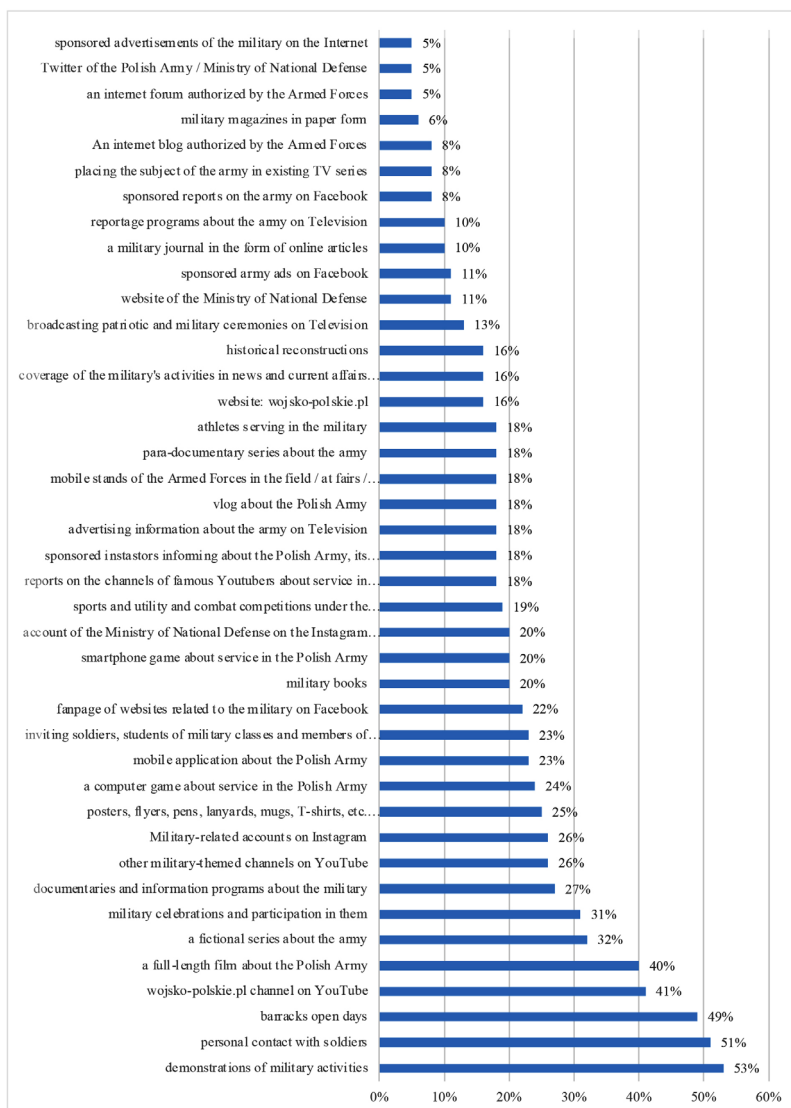
their work in order to get the job done. The work of managers, therefore, involves such an action that will boil down to issuing orders, using penalties more often than awards, self-determination of group goals and establishing the division of labor. Thanks to this, the goal will be achieved very effectively. The perceived negative side of this style is low motivation among employees. They only work with commitment when the person in charge of their tasks is nearby. In a group managed in such a way, there may be manifestations of some kind of aggression among colleagues. They are not interested in work and do not show any initiative to improve its quality. Their need for self-realization and striving for perfection is also of a secondary importance.

Officers with many years of work experience, not having too much decision-making while performing tasks, stated that they would like to strive to increase the amount of work in teams and would prefer a management style defined as liberal or democratic, which is characterized by following general consent and active participation in the implementation of projects by all members of the group. Based on the drawing, it can be concluded that the current and desired state is consistent and does not require changes at the present time.

THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH ON THE IMAGE OF THE POLISH ARMY

In the case of creating the image of the Armed Forces, activities aimed at stakeholder groups play a special role. In the context of the research undertaken, an attempt was made to determine the most preferred by students ways of presenting the organizational culture of the Polish Armed Forces. The question gives 40 suggestions, limiting their choice to 10. Distribution of answers given by the surveyed students of military classes to the question: “what activities shaping the image of the Polish Army are your most preferred?” are presented in the figure number 4.

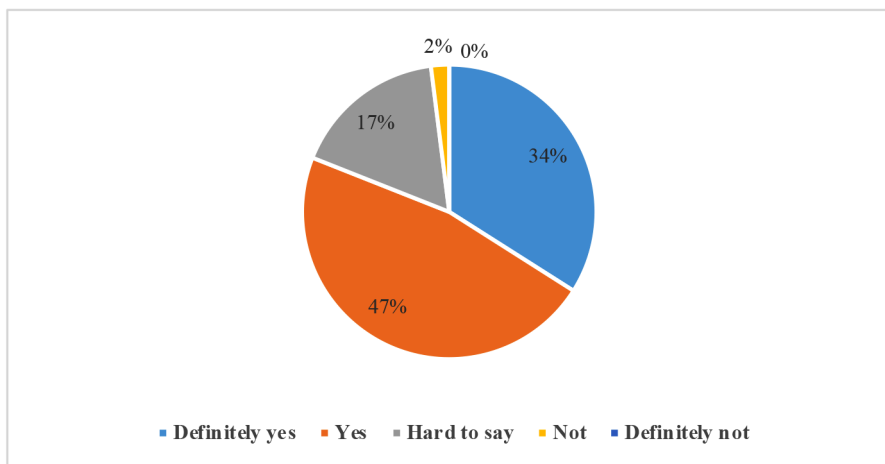
Figure 4. Distribution of answers given by the surveyed students of military classes to the question: What activities shaping the image of the Polish Army are your most preferred?



Source: Own study

As a result of identifying the image-related activities of students of military classes, the most indications were demonstrations of military activities (53%), personal contact with soldiers (51%) and open days of barracks (49%). In order to present and learn about the organizational culture of the army, the most utilitarian are meetings and direct contacts with members of the organization. Demonstrations of military activities are an extremely attractive form of shaping the image of the army. Direct contacts allow the transfer of knowledge about the basic assumptions that a given group has discovered, invented or developed (Piwowar, 2014). Distribution of answers given by the surveyed students of military classes to the question: “do you think that Polish soldiers are characterized by patriotism and deep attachment to national values?” are presented in the figure number 5.

Figure 5. Distribution of answers given by the surveyed students of military classes to the question: Do you think that Polish soldiers are characterized by patriotism and deep attachment to national values?



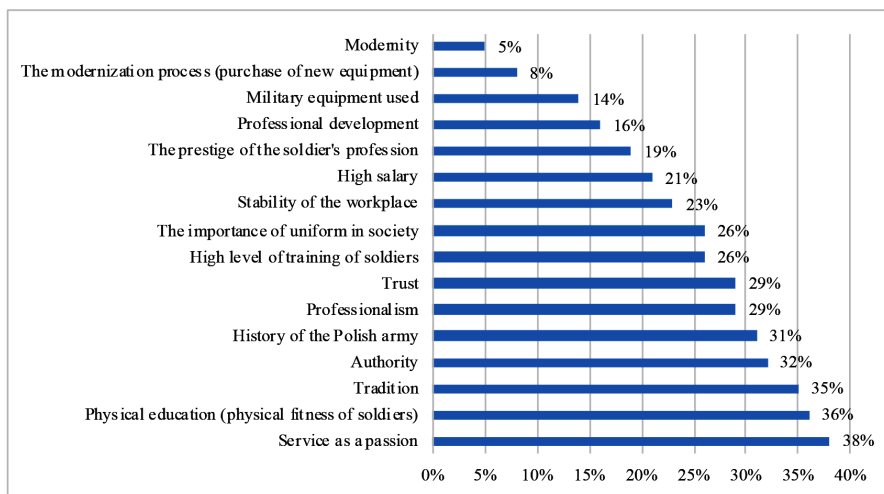
Source: Own study

As many as 81% of respondents believe that soldiers are characterized by patriotism and deep attachment to national values. Research shows that through personal contact with soldiers, students form a positive opinion of

them. Patriotism is an indispensable trait of a soldier who distinguishes himself from a mercenary through love for the homeland. From an axiological point of view, such perception of soldiers by young people influences their proper development in a society in which they may become “defenders of the motherland” themselves in the future. It should also be emphasized that the opinion of the students of military classes about soldiers is impeccable.

In the opinion of students of military classes, the key factor in the organizational culture of the Polish Army is the continuous improvement of the level of training of soldiers (52% of responses), necessary to guarantee the security of our country. Distribution of answers given by the surveyed students of military classes to the question: “what do you associate the Polish Army with?” are presented in the figure number 6.

Figure 6. Distribution of answers given by the surveyed students of military classes to the question: What do you associate the Polish Army with?



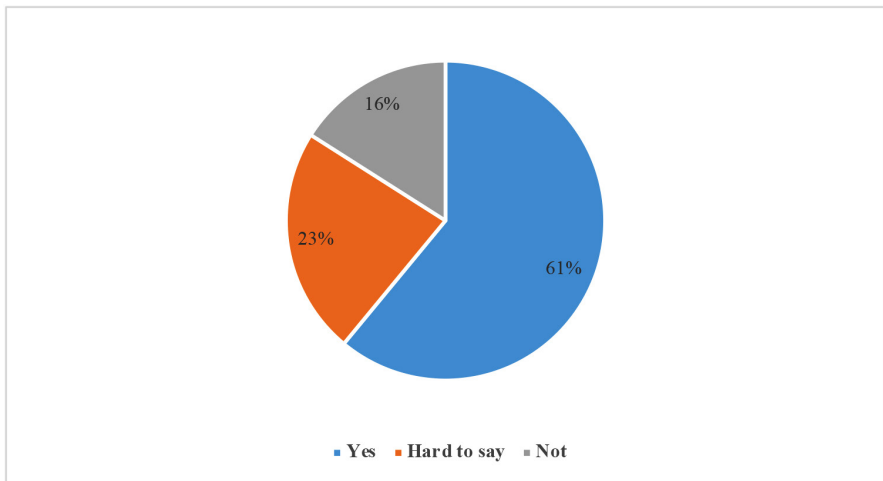
Source: Own study

The question proposed 16 positive factors (strengths) of the organizational culture of the Polish Armed Forces, limiting the choice to a maximum of four. Students of uniformed classes say that working in the army is service equated with passion (38%) and believe that it is an organization that cultivates

traditions (35%). A particularly important aspect here is the authority (32%) and the history of the Polish army (31%). In their opinion, the members of the organization are characterized by professionalism (29%).

The key issue in assessing the students was the students' opinion of whether they were interested in serving in the military after completing their military class. Students, through direct contact with soldiers and trained in a military unit, have elementary knowledge of social norms, value systems that stimulate soldiers, organizational climate, management, shared meanings and symbols, patterns, requirements and behaviors in force in the Polish Armed Forces. Over 60% of the respondents are willing to serve in the army. A decision on this issue has not yet been made by 23% of students. 16% of respondents do not associate their future with the military. This result seems positive. Efforts should be made to persuade both those who are hesitant and those who are so far opposed to taking up military service in the future. Distribution of answers given by the surveyed students of military classes to the question: "are you interested in serving in the army?" are presented in the figure number 7.

Fig. 7. Distribution of answers given by the surveyed students of military classes to the question: Are you interested in serving in the army?



Source: Own study

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the article was to define the profile of organizational culture, leadership style and the style of managing people in uniformed organizations as well as the assessment of the image of the Polish Army by generation Z, i.e. uniformed classes. It is noted that the profile of culture is hierarchy, leadership style (situational and servant) and leadership style (autocratic). The participants of the organization accept the existing values, norms and procedures. Thus, the organization is internally coherent and effective. There is no need to radically change this culture.

By making an in-depth analysis of the results presented in the charts, the authors concluded that the organizational culture profile adopted by this organization is not fully acceptable to all employees. The respondents believe that the most optimal direction of change would be towards clan culture or ad-hocracy. The changes that officers would like to make in the style of leadership and employee management are possible after relaxing the process of absolute control, empowering them with greater responsibility and autonomy in making decisions, as well as slowly but systematically introducing innovations.

On the other hand, the image-building activities of the Armed Forces, adjusted to the perception of Generation Z representatives, were highly rated. They influence the positive reception of the Polish Armed Forces as a guarantor of defense. It can be concluded from this that the culture created by the commanders is a key element of the image. Its shape is most influenced by direct contact between young people and members of uniformed organizations (53%). They treat soldiers as defenders of the homeland, who are characterized by great patriotism and deep attachment to national values (81%). Communing with the culture of the Polish Army contributes to its higher rating compared to other members of the society. Students believe that the service should be a passion (38% of responses) and in 60% of the population they want to join this organization after leaving school.

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