INTRODUCTION

According to the Law on military service “a professional soldier may be a person holding Polish citizenship, having a good reputation, whose fidelity to the Polish Republic of Poland does not raise concerns, having required qualifications and the physical and mental capacity for performing professional military service”\(^1\). Requirements towards people serving in the Armed Forces include: loyalty, discipline and dedication. Such a person must meet not only physical criteria but also psychological ones. A candidate examined by a psychologist must obtain a certificate of no contraindications for military service. General Regulations of the Polish Armed Forces clearly state that “a sol-

\(^1\) Ustawa z dnia 11 września 2003 r. o służbie wojskowej żołnierzy zawodowych, p. 1.
dier is obliged to be disciplined and loyal to other soldiers”\(^2\). In social perception a soldier is expected to show a specific type of attitudes and behaviors\(^3\). Shaping the desired attitudes and behaviors takes place through the achievement of military educational objectives. The realization of such objectives can be carried out by socio-educational impact (a training process, traditions, the community of soldiers, interpersonal relationships) and also by material and physical influences (barracks, uniforms, military technology)\(^4\). The strict control over the soldier’s behavior encourages the use of numerous and diverse educational activities. It is natural that superiors try to evoke and reinforce these types of behaviors that are desired by the Armed Forces. The Code of Honor of the Polish Army Soldier already in the first paragraphs reads how important responsibility and compliance with commitments (conscientiousness) are. The article presents selected issues regarding conscientiousness and responsibility as well as the results of research conducted among professional soldiers.

1. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

Conscientiousness, in addition to neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience and agreeableness, is one of the basic personality dimensions highlighted in the popular concept of personality by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae\(^5\). Conscientiousness is often referred to as “a degree of organization, perseverance and motivation of individuals when performing goal-oriented activities”. A conscientious person is characterized by rationality, orientation towards goals and conviction about his/her competences. High achievements at work result from good organization and a tendency to maintain order, causing that a person is an efficient and effective employee. Features of such persons include dutifulness and proceeding according to their own moral principles. A diligent employee realizes goals set, and the high level of aspiration with the concern for perfection contributes to the success. Discipline and prudence ensure accurate planning for each objective before its execution, while perseverance and a low level of impulsivity give in consequence the successful completion of almost every action\(^6\).

Studies have shown that conscientious people live longer. This is due to their lifestyle (avoiding drugs, regular exercise and healthy eating), adapting to the doctor’s instructions and undergoing regular medical review. What is more, their care is also ad-

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dressed to the environment, which when contaminated could cause damage to health\(^7\).

Salgado’s research on the performance of work by soldiers and civilians showed that conscientiousness and emotional stability are important predictors of behaviors at work and the quality of its execution\(^8\). Diligence can also be a good predictor of the level of civic behaviors and commitment to work\(^9\). The high conscientiousness of personnel is associated with greater levels of tasks performance\(^10\) and devotion for work\(^11\), numerous civic behaviors in the organization\(^12\) as well as affective involvement in the work\(^13\).

Muhammad Bhatti shows in his study that conscientiousness has a positive impact on adaptation at work, interpersonal relations and overall achievements\(^14\).

Moreover, it has been proven that conscientiousness is one of the features that allows for the prediction of effects of exercises. Nicholas Vasilopoulos, Jeffrey Cucina and Arwen Hunter carried out studies, which demonstrate that people with high or low conscientiousness achieve lower results in training than those with average intensity of this feature\(^15\).

Conscientiousness is one of the best predictors of quality performance in all occupations and results of training courses. This feature is often overlooked by researches.

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focusing on agreeableness; however, conscientiousness is what makes it easier to better predict results of work\textsuperscript{16}.

Paul Costa and Robert McCrae conducted the longitudinal study, which has shown that conscientiousness increases between adolescence and the age of thirty. In turn, results of research carried out by Antonio Terracciano et al prove that the increase of the following features takes place up to 70 years of age. The environment, e.g. adaptation to a workplace in order to conform to the position held or organizational culture, may have a great impact on such changes\textsuperscript{17}. A diligent soldier would rather increase his / her conscientiousness to preserve his / her self-image in others\textsuperscript{18}.

Joseph Callister et al examined pilots reporting fear of flying associated with the operational load in a cockpit. They recognized that to a certain extent this is due to poor outcomes in the conscientiousness test.\textsuperscript{19} On the other hand, Amy Fitzgibbons et al studied commercial pilots who achieved high scores of conscientiousness in the Big Five test\textsuperscript{20}. The Big Five test predicted who from among the U.S. Air Force pilots would complete the training, and conscientiousness and agreeableness proved to be the most important traits\textsuperscript{21}. Conscientiousness appeared of great importance when improving professional skills.

Other studies have shown that a senior officer, who is characterized by high conscientiousness is more likely to be promoted and would be better judged by his / her superiors\textsuperscript{22}. The personnel of elite special units demonstrate a greater level of conscientiousness in comparison with other officers\textsuperscript{23}.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

The notion of responsibility is derived from Roman law and means self-representation, self-defense before the court\textsuperscript{24}. Nowadays, responsibility is understood as “being liable to a penalty in the event of breach of duty”\textsuperscript{25}.


According to Kazimierz Sośnicki three types of responsibility can be distinguished: physical - responsibility for doing an act, psychological - that occurs when the actions arise from personality traits, and moral, which concerns possible situations. Responsibility is one of the features that appeared in Krystyna Skarżyńska’s study of hierarchy of parental values. In the group of mothers this value was in third place, while fathers positioned it fourth (out of thirteen). Furthermore, parents recognized responsibility as one of the conditions for success. Among the characteristics of the Polish “good officer”, responsibility was placed second as the most important personality trait. The identification of someone’s place in an event has a significant impact on the sense of responsibility. It will be larger when this position is recognized, and much lower when the situation involves persons considered as more obliged to react. When all the participants are in the same position the phenomenon of the diffusion of responsibility may appear, that means reducing the opportunity to response (even if the attribution of responsibility takes place) with a larger number of people participating in a given situation. However, it should be borne in mind that this phenomenon makes it possible to avoid the cost of reaction. According to Ervin Staub “taking responsibility” has its origins in childhood. The Duval-Wicklund theory postulates the impact of the self-awareness on the sense of responsibility. Higher self-awareness is accompanied by a greater sense of responsibility for the success or failure than in the case of low self-awareness. The hypothesis has been confirmed by Jerald Greenberg’s studies, in which participants had to recognize numbers and assign awards to particular groups (depending on the merits). The findings of the research allow for the conclusion that the fair behavior is modified by

self-awareness and the sense of responsibility - the increased reward for success and decreased for a failure\textsuperscript{34}.

The research performed by Shelley Duval and Robert Wicklund\textsuperscript{35} showed that self-focused persons tend to admit their own responsibility in positive situations, while other persons’ (or circumstances) responsibility when an adverse event occurs\textsuperscript{36}.

Dieter Frey\textsuperscript{37} in his study presents evidences showing differences in the attribution of responsibility. People attribute to themselves much more responsibility in the case of public failure rather than anonymous. What is more, it can be expected that this standard of internal justice will be decisive. Its high level will cause that an individual will attribute to himself / herself responsibility equally for a negative and positive situation, and public or anonymous conditions will not affect the attribution\textsuperscript{38}.

The sense of responsibility can be talked about “if someone fulfills duty while being aware of possible punishment, and in the case of commitment of an offense he / she accepts a penalty without protest, or even demands it”\textsuperscript{39}. The sense of responsibility may be simulated, it is easiest to simulate in front of own conscience. Such behavior can occur when a person is not afraid of consequences, and only wants to escape the hostility of society. Trustworthy people are those with “proven conscientiousness” and the real high sense of the responsibility. The common expression regarding taking responsibility for something is empty words, since a person saying them usually does not believe in possible negative effects of their conduct\textsuperscript{40}.

The problem of conscientiousness and responsibility has already found its place in psychological literature. There are no empirical findings of the level of conscientiousness and responsibility in soldiers. It is very important that our Armed Forces are still in the professionalization phase.

Developing qualities such as conscientiousness and responsibility is consistent with the development and shaping of civic attitudes among the personnel of the Armed Forces. The study shows that through the impact of military service the soldiers note substantial modification of their own behaviors related to discipline, proper understanding of responsibilities and citizenship\textsuperscript{41}. Military service and the effective application of edu-

\textsuperscript{34} Z. Zaborowski, Psychospołeczne problemy sprawiedliwości i równości, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe. Warszawa 1986, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{39} W. Witwicki, Psychologia tom II, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe. Warszawa 1963, p. 266.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibidem, p. 266.
cational methods shape the personality of soldiers. A great number of studies in the field of military andragogy have been devoted to this issue. In each state possessing an army, beside schools it is the largest educating and upbringing institution. The military is one of the specific institutions, in which the process of education and upbringing is included in the list of statutory tasks.

The sociological literature has already described the role model of a professional soldier. This study attempts to reflect in psychological terms on soldiers’ conscientiousness and responsibility.

3. METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH BASIS

Aim of the research:

The aim of the research was to determine whether significant differences exist in the level of responsibility and conscientiousness of soldiers compared to persons employed in civilian professions.

The research sample:

The research covered two groups of men, consisting 62 people each. The study group included professional active soldiers, aged 21 - 51 years (M = 33.44, SD = 6.8). The control group consisted of men working in corporations or private companies, aged 21 - 51 years (M = 32.12, SD = 7.07).

Research tools:

The Sense of Responsibility Scale by Romuald Derbis and scales examining conscientiousness from NEO-PI-R questionnaire by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae were used in the studies.

4. RESULTS

It was investigated whether the soldiers and civilians vary at the level of the sense of responsibility and conscientiousness. The data obtained are provided in Table 1.

The analyses carried out indicate that soldiers and civilians do not vary from each other as far as the level of responsibility is concerned. Of all the components of conscientiousness differences (in favor of civilians) can be seen in the subscales: competence and the pursuit of achievements. Persons working in private companies or corporations have statistically significantly higher scores compared with soldiers. The overall result

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of conscientiousness in the group of tested soldiers is lower than in the group of civilians (at the statistical trend level). The performed statistical analysis proved that soldiers, contrary to what is claimed, as well as intensive educational activities, do not reach higher levels of conscientiousness and responsibility than civilian work.

**Table 1.** The comparison of the level of soldiers’ and civilians’ responsibility and conscientiousness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Soldiers</th>
<th>Civilians</th>
<th>Test of mean change significance</th>
<th>Test of variance homogeneity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>22,24</td>
<td>4,66</td>
<td>22,87</td>
<td>3,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competences</td>
<td>20,39</td>
<td>4,72</td>
<td>22,50</td>
<td>4,41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propensity for order</td>
<td>19,87</td>
<td>4,63</td>
<td>20,73</td>
<td>5,02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutifulness</td>
<td>23,60</td>
<td>4,55</td>
<td>24,87</td>
<td>4,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuit of achieve- ments</td>
<td>20,52</td>
<td>4,25</td>
<td>22,13</td>
<td>4,06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
<td>20,85</td>
<td>4,49</td>
<td>21,92</td>
<td>4,61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudence</td>
<td>18,02</td>
<td>4,95</td>
<td>17,26</td>
<td>5,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness total</td>
<td>123,24</td>
<td>21,62</td>
<td>130,16</td>
<td>21,43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: own study*

**CONCLUSION**

In the search for the interpretation of the results obtained, some possible reasons for the lack of differences between the groups in terms of the measured variables can be indicated. People working in private enterprises and corporations are more at risk of unemployment than professional soldiers. Civilians cope much better on a more competitive labor market; this is why their level of competence and the pursuit of achievements are higher than soldiers’. In a private enterprise it is also easier to get a promotion than in the military, where the possibility of promotion is limited due to the number of positions (more than half of the soldiers have not been promoted five years). According to the research conducted by Marian Kloczkowski soldiers are least satisfied with promotional opportunities to a higher rank and to a higher position, as
well as career prospects. Those who work in private companies are likely to have a higher level of education than soldiers. It happens very often that the military profession is the choice due to the unavailability of other offers in the labor market. The level of recruitment and the quality of education impacts in the Armed Forces should be also considered when analyzing the results obtained.

Currently, there is a professional army in Poland, which means that volunteers apply to join it. Therefore, there should be selected such persons, who guarantee their full involvement in the execution of duties.

Consciousness and responsibility are qualities that are formed in the course of socialization. A worker / soldier appears at the place of work / service with a certain level have of those features, which, however, can be further shaped and strengthened by the organizational culture. Regardless of whether it is a private company or the military. As written by Lesław Wełyczko: “the end result, which is the product of the educational process implemented in the Armed Forces, to the greatest extent depends primarily on teachers / commanders.” The question remains open: Is the revealed level of soldiers’ conscientiousness and responsibility satisfactory in the opinion of the commanding staff? It is possible that future studies with the use of these research tools during the recruitment and in the course of later service, together with the obtained results summarized with the assessment of the level of duties exercised would give more practical guidance on the selection of educational methods towards soldiers.

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