ATTRIBUTES OF UNIFORMED SERVICES AS EMPLOYERS ON THE POLISH LABOUR MARKET – THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE GENERATION Z

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Abstract: This article focuses on presenting the opinion of Generation Z, in terms of attributes of uniformed services as employers on the Polish labour market. The article was prepared on the basis of the results of empirical research carried out by means of a diagnostic survey method using the questionnaire technique, and was conducted in January 2019 on a sample of 100 people.

Keywords: attributes, generation Z, labour market, uniformed services.

1. Introduction

The modern labour market in Poland is more and more often referred to as the market of an employee, which is explained by, among other things, a decrease in the level of unemployment, ageing of the population, or an increase in migration resulting, i.a., from the progressing process of globalisation. However, it would be erroneous to state that the labour market is a uniform whole, because not every sector (industry) is subject to a shortage of employees, which is related to the attributes of employers operating in a given industry, and therefore their attractiveness for potential employees. The uniformed services are important employers on the Polish labour market, due to the number of offered jobs, as well as the specificity of the tasks performed.

There are representatives of four generations on the modern labour market: Baby Boomers, X, Y and Z, which additionally becomes a challenge for employers in the field of multigenerational management. Representatives of particular generations differ in terms of their values, including their approach to work. Intergenerational differences have a direct impact on the assessment of the attractiveness of a given organisation as an employer on the market. Taking into account the youngest Generation Z, i.e. people now entering the labour market,

the author, through empirical research, sought to solve the research problem formulated as a question: what are the attributes of uniformed services as employers on the Polish labour market from the perspective of Generation Z? The research using the method of a diagnostic survey carried out with the use of the technique was conducted among 100 people in January 2019. The selection of the research sample was purposeful, as the opinions of potential candidates for service in the indicated institutions were analysed. The main aim of the research was to identify the attributes of the Police, the Polish Army, the State Fire Service and the Boarding Guard as employers in Poland. The conducted research enabled to identify the attractiveness factors of these organisations as a potential workplace on the Polish labour market. The results of research can be used to develop the EVP of each analysed uniformed services – which, in turn, will also influence the image of those institutions.

2. Uniformed services as employers in Poland

The term 'uniformed service', despite its widespread use both in everyday language and in scientific and popular scientific publications, has not been defined in any legal act. The lack of this definition results in the fact that the catalogue of uniformed services is not a closed one, as evidenced by the fact that various formations have been assigned to this group.

In order to fully understand the essence of the uniformed services, it is worth defining the term of a service. In accordance with the PWN Dictionary of the Polish Language, service can be defined as: *work for the benefit of a community, performed with dedication; an institution of public utility or the army; also: employees of this institution* or *the activities of these institutions* (...) (https://sjp.pwn.pl). Analysing the above approaches, service can be considered as: work for the benefit of others performed with dedication, the activity of a public utility institution, including the army, or as work performed by employees of a public utility institution or the army performed during specific hours in the performance of assigned official duties. The term *uniform* is defined as the *official clothing of members of a social organisation, military formation or professional group* (https://sjp.pwn.pl). The uniformed service is therefore a uniformed formation, i.e. a formation wearing special distinguishing clothes, acting for the benefit of the society, having the character of a public institution, financed from public funds. The group of uniformed services also includes special services.

The final component of the considerations taken is one of the sparse definitions of the uniformed services by M.A. Liwo, who states that the uniformed services: *are the public entities designated by the legislator with a particular organisation – like military ones – subject to the supreme bodies of government administration, carrying out statutory tasks within the framework of public service related to the provision of a specific type of security and order,*

on the basis of the powers granted and the legal forms of operation of the relevant administration (Liwo, 2015, p. 20).

In discussing the characteristics of uniformed services, P. Szustakiewicz in his publication *Stosunek służbowy w formacjach mundurowych* points to four key aspects that distinguish the service relationship of persons performing service in military formations from other service relationships. This include: *the duty of sacrifice; availability and duty of subordination; special rights related to the performance of service and administrative and legal regulation of the legal relationship of an officer or a soldier* (Szustakiewicz, 2015, p. 7).

This publication will analyse selected uniformed services including: Police, Polish Army, Border Guard and State Fire Service (excluding volunteer guards). The above mentioned uniformed services in Poland include numerous formations which are the workplace and services for both civil servants and officers and other ranks. The analysis of data contained in the Small Statistical Yearbook of Poland of 2018 shows that, as at 31 December 2017, there were 98.8 thousand Police officers and 101.6 thousand professional soldiers. Considering the number of Border Guard officers in 2017, the service consisted of about 14.8 thousand officers, of which almost ¼ were women. About 3.5 thousand civilian workers were also employed (Border Guard in numbers…). Taking into account the number of State Fire Service officers, in 2017, the service was performed by over 30 000 officers.

In conclusion, in the four indicated services, the number of officers/other ranks exceeded 245 thousand, which means that the indicated services may be considered as important employers on the Polish labour market.

3. The labour market and the competence and attribute mismatch

In economics, the market is defined as a place where demand and supply meet, while the price of goods is being shaped at the same time. If labour is considered in the goods category, then we can talk about the labour market. Work as a good has a very specific character because it is inseparably connected with both the demand and supply side, while the subject of exchange is work – treated as a service for which remuneration is due. The price of the service results from the confrontation, including the conditions of work and the size of the transaction (Kryńska, Kwiatkowki, 2013, p. 11). Persons declaring their willingness to work are free to make choices based on their own needs and preferences in the process of making decisions regarding the place of work. Employers offering employment, on the other hand, expect candidates to have a specific competence profile. Transactions on the labour market occur when there is a convergence of needs and expectations of both parties, which is not possible in each case.

The allocation of labour force on the labour market is influenced by social and economic factors, including: demographic situation, professional activity and deactivation of labour force, economic growth rate, structural transformations, changes within enterprises and availability of employees, competence level and their adequacy to market needs (Noga, Stawicka, 2009, pp. 7-8). An important role is also played by competition on the labour market, which determines the flows of employees and their mobility.

In some sectors of the labour market there is a noticeable lack of homeostasis, i.e. balance in the scope of supply and demand, resulting from discrepancies in the expectations of entities from the labour market: employers and potential employees. A homeostasis disorder is visible through identification of surplus or shortage of demand and supply, while it is also advisable to analyse the so-called competence mismatch – a surplus or shortage of competence (a surplus occurs when the demand for given competences exceeds the supply of employees with the required competences).

In relation to competence mismatch, the following types of mismatches can be distinguished (International Labour Office, 2013, p. 24):

- vertical mismatch – the level of an employee's competence is higher/lower than the required level,
- horizontal mismatch – the field/type of education, and, therefore, the competences acquired, are not suitable for a specific job.

The expectations of both groups of entities on the market - employers and employees, being the result of needs and opportunities, affect the attractiveness of both the employee and the employer.

The labour market is not static, and the changes occurring within it, with varying degrees of intensity, concern its individual dimensions and sectors. The analysis of the entire labour market through the prism of variables such as the level of heterogeneity, i.e. gender, age, competence and macroeconomic variables, including the unemployment rate, economic activity rate of people from a given group, wage level and labour productivity level, slowly becomes incomplete. The analyses should be supplemented by a study of the needs and expectations of employees, which would allow presenting the attractiveness of particular sectors from the perspective of employees of a given status. The effect of the research undertaken would be to identify the so-called attribute mismatch noticeable in the form of:

- quantitative mismatch – offering by employers values different from expectations, e.g. stability of employment, with no perspectives of salary growth,
- quality mismatches – the attributes of the employer's attractiveness are inadequate to the needs of employees from a given group, e.g. offering remuneration below the expectations of potential employees.

Considering the above, an important aspect necessary for a deeper analysis is to explain the essence of the employer's image and the determinants of its attractiveness – attributes of attractiveness, as well as the diversity of employees on the labour market – identification of the

so-called generation of employees and typical features of a given generation. The indicated actions will allow identifying the attribute mismatch, which will enable the undertaking of corrective actions.

3.1. Employer's image and attributes

3.1.1. Image and attitudes

The issue of the employer's image is becoming more and more often a subject of interest of both the organisations themselves, which, while undertaking activities aimed at shaping their image, at the same time want to achieve the assumed objectives, and the employees for whom the information about organisations, after assessing the reliability of their source of origin, becomes the basis for the decision to apply for employment. However, the image has a specific character, because it refers to a fleeting aspect, considered individually, and at the same time very susceptible to any modifications resulting from the activity of the organisation itself, the needs of specific individuals and expectations, as well as the impact of entities cooperating and competing on the market.

The source literature, both Polish and foreign, is rich in many different definitions of image. The multitude of definitions of the term 'image' can be explained by the complicated nature of the image and its transience. Examples of definitions of the term image are included in Table 1.

Table 1.
Overview of the definition of the term "image"

Author	Definition
D. Bernstein	The image is the net result of the interaction of all experiences, beliefs, feelings and feelings. and the knowledge the environment has about the organisation (Bernstein, 1984, p. 125).
D. Tworzydło	The opinion of a group of people about a person, organisation, product, etc. or an image that is created in people's minds about someone or something (...) (Tworzydło, 2008, p. 1).
P. Martineau	The sum of the functional quality and psychological attributes that exist in the mind of the purchaser (Martineau, 1958, pp. 47-55).
K. Wójcik	It is an image that one or more audiences have of a person, company or institution; it is not a true, accurate and detailed picture, but rather a mosaic of many details, captured accidentally, piecemeal and fragmented, with blurred differences (Wójcik, 1997, p. 44).
I. Skowronek	An image is, above all, a subjective concept, because it is created in the mind of an individual recipient (Skowronek, 2012, pp. 28-29). The image of a company is a construct of cognitive and affective assessment in the mind of clients, based on the evaluation of clients' experiences with the company (Skowronek, 2012, p. 32-33).
B. Rozwadowska	The image of an organisation is a common opinion about the company (Rozwadowska, 2002, p. 55).
W. Budzyński	The image of a company is its image among the people who meet it – customers, contractors, officials, employees and others. Otherwise, it is what people think about the company (Budzyński, 2002, p. 73).
I. Kienzler	The Company's image, unlike the Company's identity, is the result of individual assessments and consumer experience, and is information about what people think about the Company. The image positions the company in its external environment and is an important element of the public relations strategy (Kienzler, 2008, p. 232).

Source: study based on the given literature.

Considering the various indicated approaches to the image, the following conclusion can be drawn: an image is a picture, an opinion, an idea that an individual has about a given object. This image is created as a result of cognitive and affective evaluation shaped through the prism of knowledge, feelings, previous experiences or opinions of other entities (labour market participants) heard in whole or in part (Ibrahim, 2017, p. 87). The shape of the image created in this way translates into the individual's behaviour towards an organisation. The image of an organisation shaped in the mind of an individual functions as a filter that affects the perceived quality and value of goods or services and conditions satisfaction. The shape of the image also determines the way of interpreting information about a given organisation that reaches the individual. A positive organisational image in the opinion of the individual strengthens positive associations, while a negative image negatively affects the evaluation of the organisation, which is reflected in opinion and may reduce the value of the image, and consequently, translate into undesirable attitudes towards an organisation.

According to S.H. Kennedy's views presented in *Nurturing Corporate Image,* two components of the image can be distinguished: the emotional component and a functional component (Kennedy, 1977, pp. 120-164). The functional attributes of an image include its measurable features, while the emotional component refers to the feelings and attitudes related to and resulting from the experience of a given entity.

The image of an organisation translates into attitudes towards the organisation, while on the other hand, the analysis of attitudes enables the identification of the image. An attitude is defined as: *a permanent system of positive or negative assessments, emotional feelings and pro or contra- tendencies to act in relation to a certain social object* (Soborski, 1987, pp. 12-13). An attitude is also defined as a complex socio-psychological relationship resulting from the influence of many factors, both objective and subjective, or as: *a mental process in which an individual, on the basis of previous experiences and gathered information, organises his or her perception, beliefs and feelings towards an object and directs his or her later behaviour* (...) (Lambin, 2001, p. 148). In the source literature of many authors, including T. Mądrzycki and S. Nowak (representatives of the structural position) (Marody, 1976, p. 16) emphasis is placed upon the three-component character of the attitude, because the attitude is based on information obtained about a given object (cognitive component), reflects feelings about the product and its evaluation (affective component), and is dynamic and determines the behaviour of an individual (behavioural component) (Lambin, 2001, p. 148). A person's attitude towards an object translates into a relatively stable tendency for positive or negative evaluation of that object. Taking into account the so-called 'bipolar continuum of evaluation', the human attitude towards e.g. a given organisation can vary from extremely negative to extremely positive. Human attitude is characterised by such features as: sign (positive, negative), intensity (greater, smaller) and the degree of connection with other attitudes.

When considering the problem of the image of an organisation, it is worth mentioning that there are four image perspectives, with the criterion of division being the perceiving group. The following ones occur:

- the internal perspective is the perception of the organisation in the minds of its members,
- market perspective (image of the counterparties),
- social and political perspective (i.e. the image of an organisation in the eyes of public opinion),
- investor perspective (image among investors) (Rozwadowska, 2002, p. 4).

Considering the image of an organisation and its influence on the attitude towards an organisation, the importance of the internal perspective is emphasised, as these are the employees of the organisation who are treated as a reliable source of information about the company and are a kind of a business card of an organisation. Analysing the social and political perspective, however, one can point to its impact on the so-called 'external image of an organisation', i.e. the commonly existing opinion on the company in society, including among potential job candidates.

D.J. Boorstin stresses that: *The image is ambiguous. It fluctuates between imagination and reason, between expectation and reality* (Boorstin, 1961, p. 193). The ambiguity of an organisation's image as an employer is, therefore, the result of a discrepancy in the perception of the company, which is the result of a misjudgement, information about a different level of credibility, different expectations shaped by the offers of other organisations, as well as one's own needs, and the influence of other entities whose opinion is considered important and valuable (including media, peer groups, family, school).

M. Łączyński points to four basic dimensions of the image, such as the psychological, sociological, marketing and communication dimensions (Łączyński, 2009, p. 81). By discussing the psychological dimension, the author emphasises the role of information processing processes (perception, identification, evaluation, interaction, memory), including the mechanisms of perception. In turn, in the case of the sociological dimension, it accentuates the essence of group and institutional belonging of people in whose minds the image of a given organisation is created and functions. The author draws attention to intergroup relations and their influence on the image, including the analysis of the image inside a given group, as well as the external image. The marketing dimension of the image includes forms of promotion and advertising. Thus, the image whose shape is dependent on marketing activities, has an impact on the financial situation of an organisation and expresses the perception of an organisation by the recipients. On the other hand, the communication dimension of the image includes the issue of channels, codes and roles of communication in the process of creating an image in the media (Łączyński, 2009, p. 82).

On analysing the issues of the organisation's image on the labour market from the perspective of generation, the sociological dimension plays an important role, as intergroup relations are not without significance. This in turn influences the unification of the perception

of a given body, also translating into attitudes related with it. An entity belonging to a group and wishing to be a member of it, often changes its opinion to match the opinion of the group. On the other hand, the characteristics of a given group, such as values, needs, expectations, way of perception and preferences of a given communication channel correspond to the psychological, communication and marketing dimension, which should become an object of special interest for an organisation. When shaping their image, organisations must adapt the way they communicate to the target group, hence, so-called 'employer branding' is more and more often referred to.

3.1.2. Employer branding and employer attributes

Activities aimed at shaping the image of an organisation as an attractive employer are referred to as *employer branding* (EB). S. Barrow, considered to be the precursor of employer branding, is the author of the book: *Bringing the best of brand management to people at work* (Kozłowski, 2012, p. 13). In the source literature, employer branding is defined as: *All activities undertaken by the organisation, addressed to current and potential employees, aimed at building its image as an attractive employer and supporting its strategic business goals* (Kozłowski, 2012, p. 13). Employer branding can also be considered as a whole set of activities aimed at generating consistency between individual objectives of employees and the vision and values of an organisation (Fombrun, Cees, Riel, 2004, p. 10). According to A. Grünewälder, EB includes the process of positioning the company's image as a great workplace in the perception of the target audience (Grünewälder, 2007, p. 2).

Employer branding can be divided into internal and external employer branding. Employer internal branding is targeted at the current employees of an organisation, including building commitment and job satisfaction, which reduces unwanted fluctuation. On the other hand, external employer branding is aimed at attracting and raising interest in an organisation of potential future employees – the most valuable employees operating in the labour market.

Activities aimed at building the image of an organisation as an employer of choice (which is related to the so-called war for talent) (Beaumonton, Graeme, 2003, p. vii) characterised by a strong brand positioning, by influencing internal and external customers, must have that brand image carefully analysed and designed. Broad knowledge about the employees in an organisation, their needs, key values (Pawar, 2016, p. 56) and sense of belonging to a given generation allows for intentional shaping of the desired image of an organisation, which in turn translates into an increase in the competitive abilities of an organisation. Experience is also of great importance, which translates into a better understanding of market mechanisms and consumer behaviours. Building a strong employer brand by an organisation should be identified with attractiveness of work and trust (Burke, 1999, p. 24), offering unique values, satisfying individual needs. An employer by choice is an organisation that encourages employees to live in accordance with key values (Sanders, 2008, p. 58), which in the case of the uniformed services, is becoming more and more important.

An employer by choice is considered an attractive employer when the sum of anticipated benefits perceived by employees and offered by an organisation allows satisfying the needs and expectations of individuals. Therefore, there are the so-called 'employer attributes' that determine their attractiveness. Attributes can be defined as aspects of a given organisation that distinguish it from other organisations (https://sjp.pwn.pl), and that which form the basis for judgements and, at the same time, translate into attitudes towards an organisation.

In the group of these factors, the following can be distinguished:

– values associated with doing an interesting job (interesting environment, creativity, etc.),

– values related to social needs, including employee relations, working atmosphere,

– economic values, including the amount of remuneration offered, stability of employment, prospects and promotion conditions,

– development values covering the career path, adjusting the path to the individual needs of an employee, development of his or her competences,

– application values, including the possibility of using the acquired knowledge in practice, or learning opportunities (Berthon, Ewing, Hah, 2005, pp. 156-162).

In the opinion of the author of the article, it is also possible include the following into the pool of indicated attributes:

– prestige of the job (social relation to a profession, social respect, social importance of a profession),

– social image of an organisation – the way of perceiving the organisation on the market, in the environment of the target group, including social respect and esteem,

– the ability to maintain a work-life balance,

– adequacy of remuneration to the work effort (including the level of work hazard).

Building a strong employer's brand on the labour market requires, first of all, giving strategic importance to actions in the area of personal function. However, this is not possible without constant monitoring of the labour market, of the needs of potential employees, the image of an organisation, attributes of other organisations on the market, as well as changes in values and needs of target groups – potential employees who have a competence profile adequate to the needs of an organisation.

4. Generations on the labour market

The modern labour market is not homogeneous, as there are representatives of at least four active generations of employees – the so-called 'generation of employees', i.e. people working, albeit with different attitudes, values and needs (Bencsik, Horváth-Csikós, Juhász, 2017, p. 92.).

Therefore, there is a need for so-called 'multigenerational management', which is related to the need for a full diagnosis of the target group of employees, in order to design personal activity in such a way that an organisation, in the opinion of the indicated group, obtains the name of an employer by choice (is perceived as a very good brand).

The term generation is defined as: *a collection of people (...) living in the same period of time and being approximately of the same age.* A generation is defined as *a group of people (...) of approximately the same age; a collection of people shaped by similar or the same history, experiences, etc.* (http://sjp.pwn.pl). Employees are included in a given generation/group of contemporaries on the basis of their year of birth. However, in the source literature it is difficult to find clearly defined time frames, which results in different classifications (Lyons, Schweitzer, Eddy, 2015, p. 8; Mazur-Wierzbicka, 2015, p. 307; Ruth, Bolton, Parasuraman, et al., 2013, p. 247; Kaifi et al., 2012, p. 88; Twenge, Campbell, Freemen, 2012, p. 1045; Kraus, 2017, p. 63). While the timeframe is still under discussion, the following ranges can be accepted:

– the Baby Boomers generation, or workers born between 1946 and 1964,

– Generation X – workers born in 1965-1980,

– Generation Y – workers born in 1981-1997,

– the Z generation are the employees born between 1998 and 2016.

Detailed data concerning only employees aged 18-21, i.e. adult representatives of the Z generation, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Representatives of the Z generation in the labour market

Age	Year of birth	Population	% of the total population	Men	Women
18	2001	365.990	0.9	187.470	178.520
19	2000	375.990	1	192.570	183.420
20	1999	379.040	1	193.960	185.080
21	1998	390.040	1	200.010	190.030
	Total	1.511.060	3.9	774.010	737.050

Source: study based on data from Struktura ludności według wieku od 1970 r, GUS (CSO), at: https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/ludnosc/ludnosc-piramida/ (accessed 19.05.2019).

The representatives of the Z generation are also called the 'C generation' (connected), which is related to the permanent access of these people to the Internet (Hysa, 2016, p. 381). Typical features of the Z generation include: global character due to access to social media and knowledge about the world, the succumbing to the influence of e.g. social media and so-called 'influencers' that increase the requirements for the characteristics of offers, willingness to distinguish oneself on the market through e.g. access to new technologies and appreciation of social responsibility and activities undertaken in this area (Pokolenie bez granic..., 2019, p. 8-21; Shilpa, Lokesh, Bhuvanesh, 2019, p. 2806; Smith, Nichols, 2015, p. 40; Sobotka, 2019, p. 227).

A more detailed description of the Z generation (Iorgulescu, 2016, p. 50) is presented in the results of research carried out by ATERIMA HR, which are included in the report by A. Dolot titled *Zawodowy alfabet pokolenia, czyli młodych w pracy.* According to the report, a very important aspect for the Z generation employees is feedback (72%), the possibility of using new technologies (56%), the separation of professional and personal life (47%), group work (28%), permanent access to the Internet (19%), and for 17%, the possibility of career development. Employees of the Z generation are persons willing to go abroad for profit (56%), who plan their activities (53%), are able to focus on the task (51%), feel fear connected with seeking a job (40%), are comfortable in situations of change (31%) and in the need of changing their place of residence (29%). The indicated features were distinguished on the basis of surveys conducted on a sample of 1162 people, so the survey can be considered as a representative (Dolot, 2017, p. 6).

In conclusion, the Z generation are persons just entering the labour market, who have their own needs and therefore hold certain expectations towards employers. Meeting their requirements, and thus attracting talent, requires the organisation to create appropriate working conditions, which is also related to modifications of the personnel policy. Multigenerational management in multigenerational workplace (Hillman, 2014, p. 241) is, therefore, a challenge for all organisations that must be aware of the diversity of generations, and thus also of the different perception of an organisation – its image and attributes as an employer on the labour market.

5. Attributes of uniformed services and expectations of the Z generation – research results

5.1. Research methodology

In order to respond to the research problem that was formulated in the form of a question: what are the attributes of uniformed services as employers on the Polish labour market from the perspective of Generation Z?, it was necessary to conduct empirical research among the this generation. The research used the method of a diagnostic survey carried out with the use of the questionnaire technique. The respondents provided answers to closed questions with equivocal and disjunctive cafeterias and to semi-open questions. The research involved 100 people who, according to the division adopted in the article, can be classified as Z generation employees. The research was conducted in January 2019. The group of respondents consisted women (59%) and men (41%) aged from 18 to 35. The distribution of gender was determined by the structure of gender of the analysed second-year students at the Management and Command Faculty. The selection of the research sample was purposeful, as the opinions of potential candidates for service in the analysed institutions.

The author is aware that the sample is not fully representative of Poland's Generation Z, but the survey was of a pilot nature and the results are interesting, as they offer an insight into the perception of the youngest generation regarding the attributes of uniformed services as employers on the Polish labour market.

5.2. Results and discussions

Employees undertaking activities aimed at finding a potential employer are guided by the willingness to satisfy their own needs. The problem of diversity of needs of representatives of a given generation thus becomes an area of research undertaken by both scientific centres, research agencies and organisations themselves. Identification of needs and expectations of future employees enables undertaking actions aimed at both modification of human resources management processes and the way of presenting an organisation on the market, which allows increasing its attractiveness in the perception of potential candidates for work.

Bearing in mind the importance of the needs and expectations of Z generation employees, during the course of the survey, the respondents were asked to indicate the factors that have the greatest impact on their decisions regarding the selection of employers. The results of the research are presented in Figure 1.
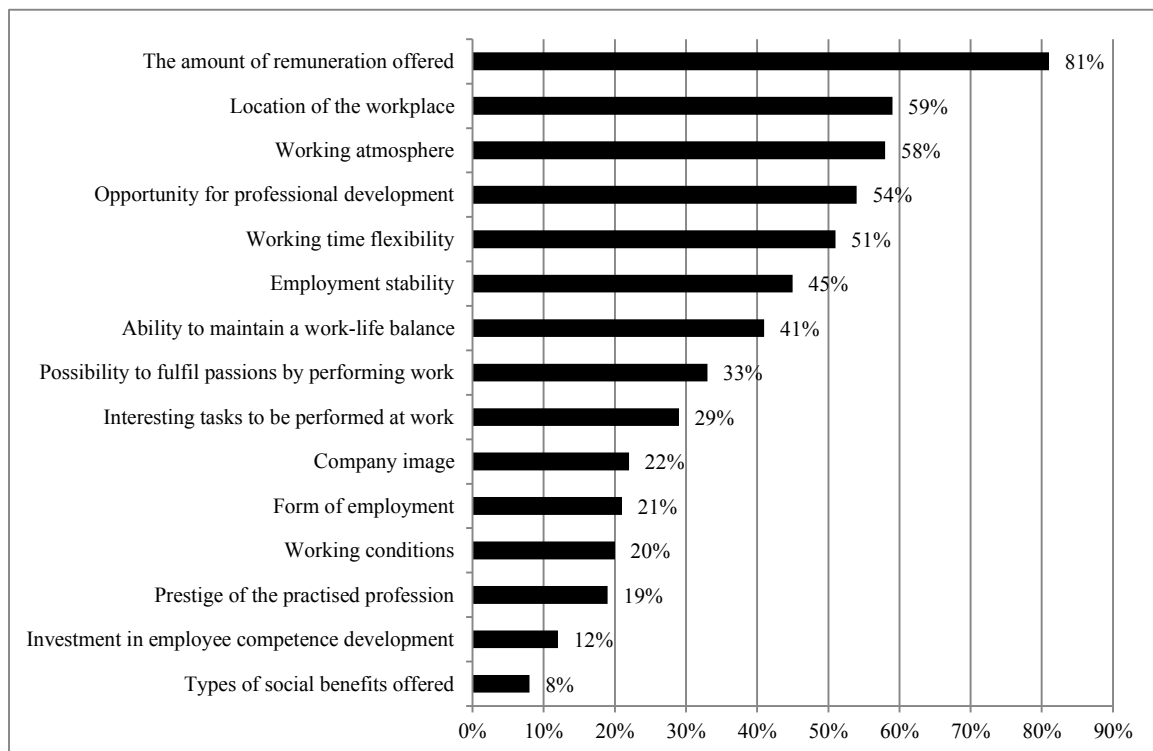

Figure 1. Factors most influencing the choice of future employer. Source: own research results.

According to the representatives of the Z generation, the main factor determining the attractiveness of an employer is the amount of remuneration offered. In the minds of 81% of the respondents, this factor determines their choice to the greatest extent. The second place was taken by the respondents who indicated the location of their workplace (59%), followed by the

working atmosphere (58%) and the possibility of professional development (54%). In the opinion of 51% of the respondents, an important factor determining the choice of an employer is the flexibility of working time, 45% indicated the stability of employment, and 41% stated the balance between professional and private life. For 33% of the respondents, the key factor is also the possibility to fulfil passions by doing work that they can enjoy or be proud of, while 29% indicated the implementation of interesting tasks at work. The employer's image as a key determinant of choice was noted by 22% of the respondents. The following factors were less popular: form of employment (21%), working conditions (20%), prestige of the profession (19%), investments in the development of employees' competences (12%) and the type of social benefits offered (8%).

The analysis of the obtained research results allows formulating the following conclusions:

–   when selecting an employer, the surveyed Z generation pay special attention to the level of the offered remuneration, however, the location of the workplace, the working atmosphere or the possibility of professional development are not without significance,

–   the Z generation are looking for employers offering flexible working time, strive for 'work-life balance', want to pursue their passions at work by performing interesting tasks,

–   stability of employment is not a key factor for the Z generation, but it should be stressed that a greater percentage of respondents indicated a preference for stability of employment rather than the form of employment,

–   the Z generation pays less attention to the image of an employer, as well as to the prestige of a job.

Considering remuneration as a key determinant of choice, the financial expectations of the Z generation were also verified in the course of the research. 66% of the respondents indicated that they would like to receive monthly remuneration in the range from 2.250 to 4.000 PLN net (including 30% from 3.001 to 3.500; 27% from 3.501 to 4.000 PLN), while 34% want something offering above 4.001 PLN (including 10% above 5.000 PLN). The amounts indicated in relation to the average salary in Poland in March 2019, shaped at the level of 5.164,53 gross (GUS, 2019), are not overstated.

In attempting to identify attractiveness factors with regard to employment in the uniformed services, in the course of the research, the respondents were firstly asked to assess the general image of the uniformed services in question (Figure 2).
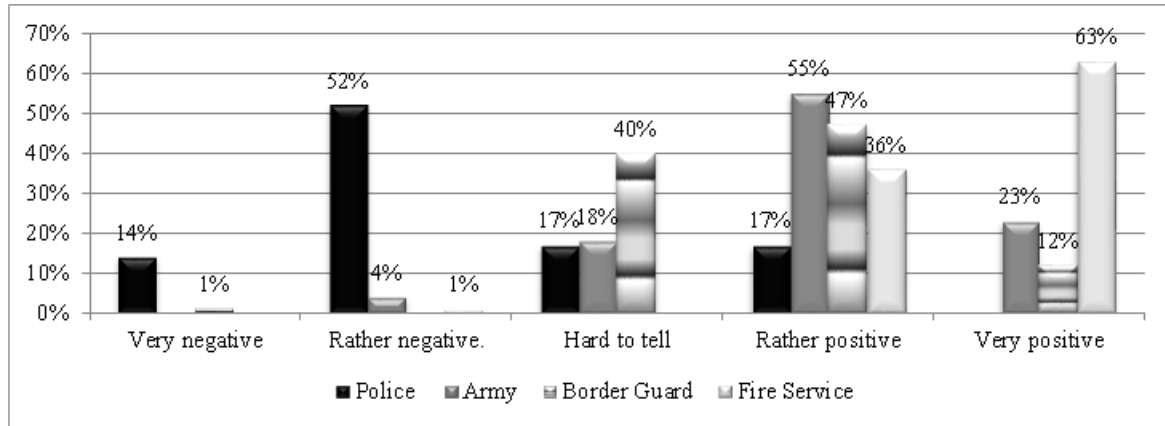
Figure 2. Assessment of the image of uniformed services. Source: own research results.

According to the largest group of the respondents (99%), the Fire Service holds the greatest positive image, then the Polish Army (73%) and subsequently, the Border Guard (58%). The lowest rating was given to the image of the police. Indeed, 14% indicated a very negative image of the police, while 52% saw it as rather negative. None of the respondents thought that the police have a very positive image. Taking into account the statements of the Z generation, it is worth noting that they contradict the general nationwide results of the survey conducted by the CBOS in September 2018, which shows that 74% of Poles positively assess the activity of the Police (CBOS, 2018, p. 10). According to the survey, the youngest respondents (25%), living in the largest agglomerations (23%), expressed the most negative opinions. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to present the results of the nationwide survey through the prism of the sample structure, as it is confirmed that the representatives of particular generations assess the image of a given uniformed service in a different way. Showing only overall results does not allow the identification of possible discrepancies and may be misinterpreted by the organisations concerned.

Turning to the main issue in the survey, the analysis of the attributes of uniformed services as employers began with a general assessment of the image of uniformed services as employers in Poland. The assessment of the respondents is shown in Figure 3.
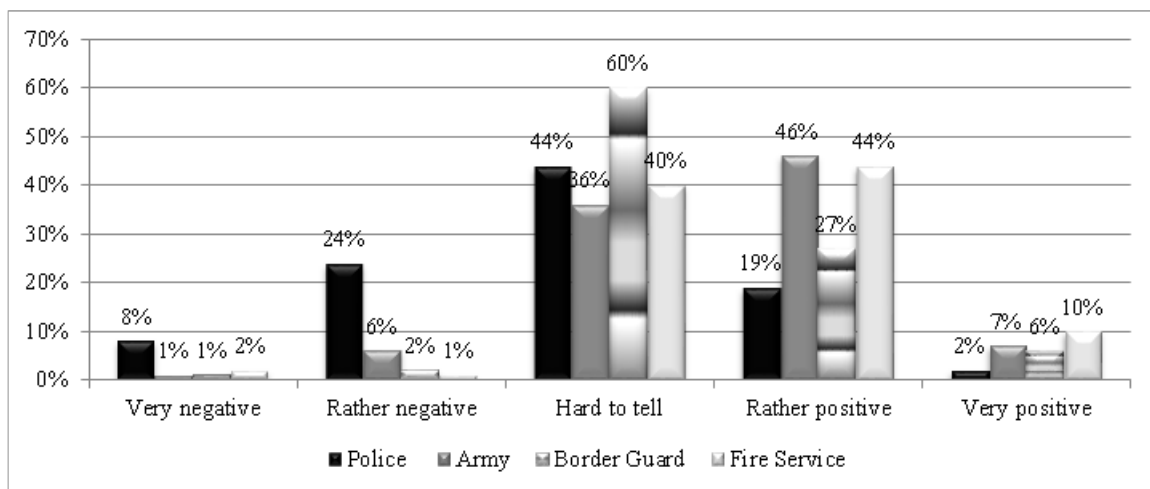

Figure 3. Uniformed services as employers in the labour market. Source: own research results.

According to the largest group of the respondents, the Fire Service enjoys a good and very good image – this was the opinion of 54% of the respondents. The second place was taken by the Polish Army – 53%, followed by the Border Guard – 33% and the Police – 21%. Similarly as in the case of general image evaluation, also in relation to the evaluation of the image of an organisation as an employer, the worst evaluation was given to the image of the Police – 32% of the respondents indicated it as a bad and very bad employer.

Continuing to discuss the problem of attractiveness of uniformed services, the respondents, in the course of the survey, also assessed the attractiveness of particular factors related to work in uniformed services. 18 factors were assessed (Figure 4).

The analysis of Chart 4 shows the key attributes of the assessed services in the opinion of the surveyed representatives of the Z generation. Considering only the five most frequently indicated attributes in relation to a given service, the respondents considered that the factors encouraging them to take up employment include:

- in relation to the Police: possibility of early retirement (66%), stability of employment (60%), possibility of helping others (55%), specifics of work (44%) and transparent career path (43%),
- for the army: early retirement (73%), stable employment (68%), image of the army (62%), prestige of the workplace (60%) and remuneration (56%),
- in relation to the Border Guard: stability of employment (54%), specifics of work (44%), image of the organisation (41%), possibility of maintaining work-life balance (41%) and equal possibility of early retirement and conditions of performed work (38%),
- in relation to the Fire Service: possibility to help others (76%), social respect of the profession (67%), image of the organisation (62%), stability of employment (56%) and specifics of work (54%).
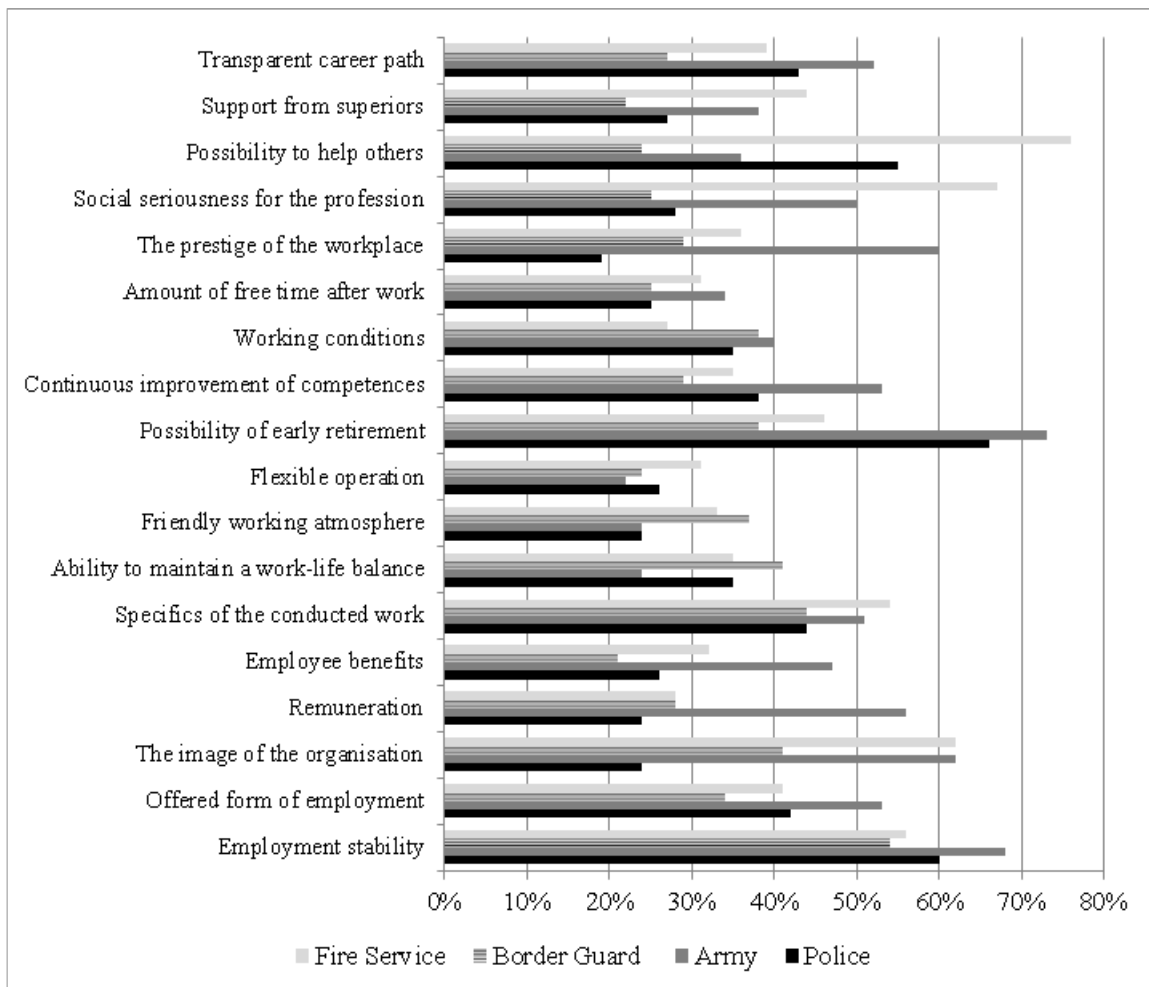
Figure 4. Factors of attractiveness of selected services in the opinion of the respondents. Source: own research results.

Of note, the offered remuneration was in the group of the 5 most important attributes for those only interested in the Army. Therefore, the respondents were also asked to assess the adequacy of remuneration for service in a given organisation (Figure 5).
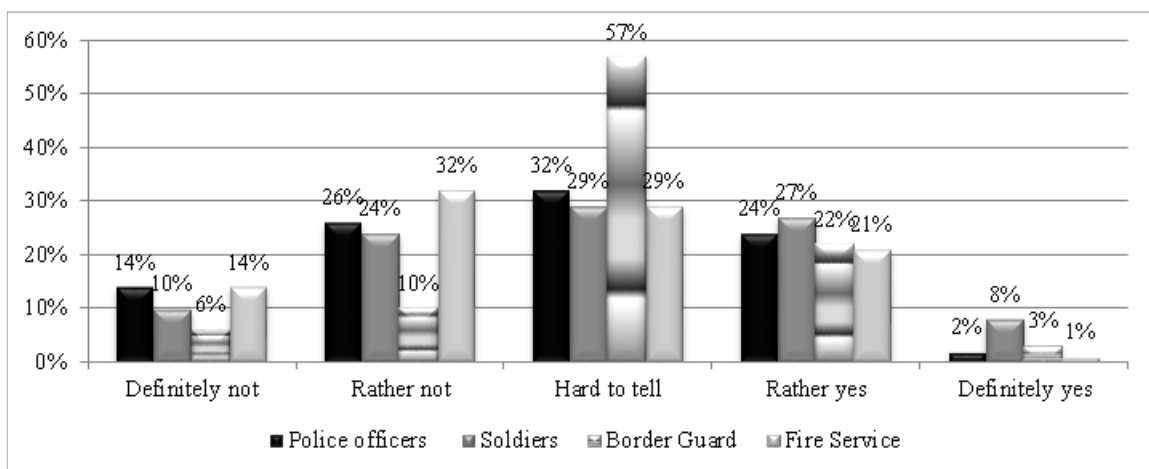

Figure 5. Adequacy of remuneration for service – opinions of the respondents. Source: own research results.

The research shows that 46% of respondents deny that fire fighters receive remuneration adequate to their work, 40% have the same position with regard to police officers, 34% with regard to soldiers and 16% with regard to border guards. The adequacy of remuneration in the army is confirmed by 35% of respondents, by 26% in relation to the Police, by 25% with reference to the Border Guard and by 22% in association with the Fire Brigade. Therefore, the majority of the respondents expressed negative opinions in the area of adequacy of remuneration for service, which may be considered an important factor weakening the attractiveness of the services under consideration.

A factor that may affect the image of the uniformed service as an employer is the ease or difficulty in obtaining a job in a given organisation (Figure 6.).
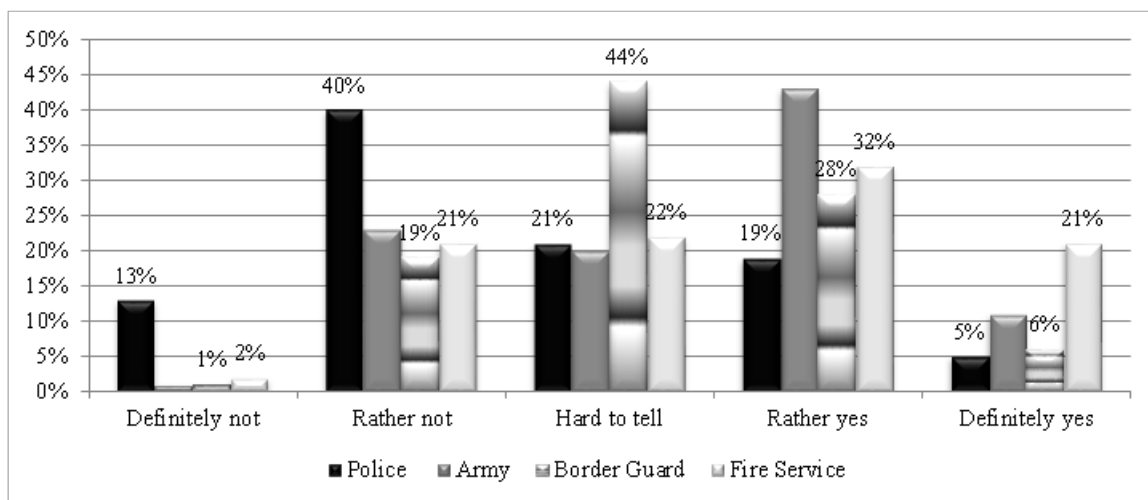

Figure 6. Difficulty in getting a job in the Police and Army according to the respondents. Source: own research results.

According to the largest group of the respondents, it is most difficult thing to obtain employment in the Army (54%), followed by the Fire Service (53%) and the Border Guard (34%). Finding employment in the Police is the easiest - this was the opinion of 53% of the respondents. However, the ease of obtaining a job in the police does not correspond to the attractiveness of the image of this service. In addition, it is emphasised by the statements of the respondents who indicated that: The police is an organisation for men (75%), supported by the authorities (66%), bureaucratic (59%), constituting a workplace for only for certain people (59%), static (50%), conservative (46%) and without large financial resources (45%). The respondents described the Polish Army as: an organisation for men (83%), having the support of the authorities (73%), reliable and solid (73%), also constituting a workplace only for certain people (73%), having public support (65%), conservative (61%) and efficient (60%). When assessing the Border Guard, the respondents indicated the following characteristics: an organisation for men (72%), with the support of the authorities (65%), reliable and stable (63%), constituting a workplace only for certain people (59%), efficient (56%) and having public support (53%). Furthermore, the State Fire Service was defined as: an organisation for

men (82%), reliable and solid (76%), having social support (70%), constituting a workplace only for certain people (69%), efficient (68%) and safe (67%).

Summarising the results of the survey, it can be stated that not all uniformed services, in the opinion of the surveyed representatives of the Z generation, enjoy a positive image. A positive image is an attribute of the Fire Service (99%), the Polish Army (73%) and the Border Guard (58%). The lowest rating was given to the image of the police, as among the surveyed, 14% indicated a very negative image of the police, while 52% saw it as rather negative. In turn, the respondents described the Fire Brigade (54%) and the Polish Army (53%) as attractive employers. The respondents pointed to such factors of attractiveness of these employers as the possibility to help others (76%), social respect for the profession (67%), the image of the organisation (62%), stability of employment (56%) and the specifics of the work performed (54%) in relation to the Fire Service, while in relation to the Polish Army: the possibility of early retirement (73%), stability of employment (68%), the image of the army (62%), prestige of the workplace (60%) and the level of remuneration (56%).

Considering the fact that when selecting a future employer the respondents are guided mainly by the amount of the offered remuneration (81%), location of the workplace (59%), working atmosphere (58%), possibilities of professional development (54%), flexibility of work (51%) and stability of employment (45%), it may be stated that the uniformed services possess only some of the indicated attributes. The quantitative and qualitative mismatch between the attributes may contribute to difficulties in recruiting Z generation employees by the uniformed services, which is the issue that the Police has been struggling with to the largest extent. The negative image of the Police, the low level of salaries offered, the low level of social respect for the profession and the prestige of the service cannot fully compensate for the stability of employment or the possibility of early retirement. Additionally, it should be emphasised that in the opinion of most of the respondents, the uniformed services are conservative organisations and are mostly workplaces designed for men.

6. Summary

The image of an organisation as an attractive employer on the market, the so-called 'employer of choice', enjoying a well-established position and a strong brand, is a product derived from a number of activities related to both personnel policy and other organisational activities. The employer's image, referred to as 'employer branding', is shaped not only by organisations from the business environment, but also by the uniformed services. Taking into account the number and scope of tasks of the above formations, the attractiveness of the indicated entities among potential employees is becoming increasingly important. The youngest employees on the modern labour market are the Z generation, i.e. persons born in 1998-2016.

Considering only adult representatives of this generation, this generation in Poland amounts to 1.511.060 people (3.9% of the total population). Representatives of the Z generation differ from their predecessors in terms of their values and attitudes, which translates into their assessment of the image of a given organisation as an attractive employer. The youngest generation, guided by their needs and expectations, is looking for jobs that will allow them to meet their needs and expectations. The research shows that the uniformed services in Poland may be considered attractive employers, dissonant with a positive overall image. However, this does not apply to all the formations under consideration. The attractiveness of the Fire Service, the Polish Army or the Border Guard is mainly due to the greatest convergence of the following factors in terms of the expectations of potential employees and their ability to be satisfied by an organisation. The attributes of the services under consideration, indicated in the article and resulting from the research, should, therefore, be of particular interest to the uniformed formations, first of all to the Police (with the poorest evaluation results), which would allow to undertake activities aimed at improving the image and reducing the attribute mismatch to a minimum, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The Police do not enjoy a positive image as an employer, but they encourage people to join up by offering benefit in the area of early retirement, stability of employment, content of work and assistance to others, which, however, do not fully correspond to the important factors determining the choice of a future employer.

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