

MOTIVATION OF RETIRED OFFICERS OF THE POLISH ARMY TO TAKE UP WORK AFTER THE SERVICE

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Purpose: The aim of the work was to successfully define motivation and the act of motivating, but also to characterize many different kinds of the former. Based on a survey carried out among retired officers a set of data was presented, explaining the reasons for their desire to find employment after withdrawing from the army, as well as making known retirees' opinions on their persisting willingness to keep working post-retirement. The profile of an officer of the Polish Army was also discussed.

Design/methodology/approach: The research was conducted in a group of retired officers of the Polish Army in 2019-2021 using the snowball method. The study also used the method of analysis and criticism of the literature and the heuristic method, as well as the quantitative method - a questionnaire was used. The research problem was expressed in the form of a question: What factors influence the motivation of retired officers of the Polish Armed Forces to take up work after leaving the service?

Findings: The termination of military service after several years of work in the Polish army may be a difficult moment for some officers, because most of their lives they worked in one organization, where there are clear and defined rules and high discipline. During their service, the officers of the Polish Armed Forces acquired valuable competences – knowledge and skills supported by experience, therefore it is important that they can still use their competence potential. It is essential that officers who will retire plan their future careers. Motivation, i.e. a set of forces and factors that are aimed at supporting an individual in certain behaviors, also plays a large role. Thanks to them, you can work towards achieving specific goals. According to the survey, retired officers take up work after leaving the service due to the desire to further use their knowledge and experience. Working in a group, contact with other people also influences the continuation of work in retirement. For some respondents, too low a retirement benefit is a factor that motivates them to look for a job.

Originality/value: Results of this research should be of interest to institutions and people, who help retired officers of the Polish Armed Forces. Secondly they are also directed to officers themselves, as a support in planning their future professional career.

Keywords: motivation, motivating, officer of the Polish Army, service, retirement.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

What motivates people to take up a further career in retirement depends on the distinct character of a given individual – each of us is motivated by various factors. It can be a financial aspect, i.e. the desire to maintain the standard of living from before retirement or the desire to be still active – contact with other people, the need to feel needed. However, the same applies to the group of retired officers of the Polish Army. Those are people with unique competences, including high qualifications. They are characterized by, among others: the ability to forecast changes and, consequently, to plan activities that take place in the organization's environment, set goals and implement them properly, as well as the ability to properly delegate powers. They are also characterized by the ability to act efficiently or work effectively in a group. It is important for officers to consider whether they want to work after leaving the service, and therefore they should think about additional courses and trainings that would help supplement their valuable potential with competences needed on the civil market. Employment of Polish Army officers after termination of service would be a great advantage for many organizations, especially civilian ones, because a former officer of the Polish Army can be called a complete employee. Therefore, it is important to verify and learn about the factors that motivate retired officers to work in retirement.

2. Motivation and motivating

Motivation is, according to some authors, a complex process, often regarded as "the most complex function of human resource management" (Tokarska-Ołownia, 2019, p. 161). Motivating is also "influencing employees with the use of specific incentives (motivators) that are to cause them to behave in accordance with the company's goals" (Tokarska-Ołownia, 2019, p. 161). Motivating is known as the process of "consciously and deliberately influencing the motive of people's behavior by creating means and possibilities of implementing their systems of values and expectations (goals of action) to achieve the motivating goal" (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2020, p. 325). The motivational process can be inferred by analyzing the continuity of the behavior of a given individual, which depends on e.g. the environment, heredity, and it is also observed how this process affects the personality or knowledge and skills (Kanfer, 1990, p. 78). In the case of motivation, one can also speak of a set of forces that make people behave in a certain way (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2020). It is important, however, to recognize the needs of your subordinates and activate them in such a way that they act in accordance with the guidelines enabling the achievement of the goals of a given organization with the possibility of satisfying their own needs. The area of motivating in the organization concerns the

characteristics of managing employees, their remuneration (tangible and intangible), as well as evaluating their subordinates.

On the other hand, motivation is related to the willingness to "do something, conditioned by the possibility of satisfying a need of an individual by this action" (Olszewska, 2007, p. 229). It is also "a set of forces and factors that support a person in behavior aimed at achieving specific goals and stimulating him to them" (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2020, p. 325). Motivation comes from the combination of conscious and unconscious factors. It may be, for example, the intensity of an individual's desire or expectations (Ganta, 2014, p. 221) According to J.A.F. Stonner and CH. Wankel's motivation is a management process that involves "influencing people's behavior, taking into account the knowledge of what causes such and not other human behavior" (Kacprzak-Biernacka et al., 2014, p. 3). Motivation is the "source of energy" that is responsible for why man will decide to make an effort, how long it takes his willingness to stay active and how hard he is trying to fulfil it (Rost, 2006, p. 1).

Motivation can be divided into internal and external motivation. Internal motivation "results from personal desires and aims at self-realization" (Olszewska, 2007, p. 327). It also stimulates "to action, induces to achieve values in themselves, its manifestation is interest or love for something" (Kacprzak-Biernacka et al., 2014, p. 4). It can be said that "this is the most important, the most desirable and the strongest type of motivation" (Kacprzak-Biernacka et al., 2014, p. 4). External motivation "is related to influencing the needs and the intended change of employees' behavior" (Olszewska, 2007, p. 327). This motivation is related to: rewards, including salary increases, promotions, praise, but also penalties, such as "disciplinary actions, lower wages, or criticism" (Kacprzak-Biernacka et al., 2014, p. 4). Another division is negative and positive motivation. The first one is based on anxiety, fear. Its purpose is to stimulate to work by creating conditions and an atmosphere of danger. On the other hand, positive motivation is related to the fact that the superiors organize for their employees the possibility of "better and better realization of their goals as well as meeting the employer's expectations" (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2020, p. 327).

People who are internally motivated will become more involved in doing the activity. This is due to an interesting aspect related to the specific job and also due to satisfaction. Employees operate without awards, because it gives them great satisfaction and gives them the opportunity to develop their competency potential (Żurawska, p. 3).

3. Polish Army officer

The soldier profession entails many challenges. One of them may be a particularly demanding qualification process and recruitment rules. You can also mention availability, physical fitness (at different stages of life it may turn out to be a challenge or a barrier).

From the officers of the Polish Army, "continuous self-development and education are required" (Struś, 2012, p. 498). In the military hierarchy, officers are the most important available group. When performing the function of a commander, teacher and educator of subordinate soldiers, it is necessary to demonstrate appropriate knowledge and social, leadership, training and tactical-specialist competences. It should be emphasized that the changing environment requires the officer to constantly train independently, i.e. self-education (Struś, 2012).

"In every organization there is a group of employees whose special value results from their professional, often unique knowledge and skills supported by experience" (Strzelczyk-Łucka, Dewalska-Opitek, 2019, p. 117). However, it is not easy to replace these people, so it is worth taking care of "shaping their competences within the framework of development programs" (Strzelczyk-Łucka, Dewalska-Opitek, 2019, p. 117). It should be noted that the dynamics of changes taking place in the world around us exerts on organizations, regardless of their type, the search for new solutions that will help in managing their potential (Maśloch, Jałowiec, Grala, 2019).

Officers who already did or will retire begin to consider their further professional career in the civilian environment, and therefore have to think about possible preparations for it. Often the age at which officers leave service is a factor that influences job search, but sometimes also it is the matter of finances. One of the documents relating to retired officers of the Polish Army is the Act on retirement provision for professional soldiers and their families. The military pension is due to a soldier dismissed from professional military service, who on the day of his release from this service has 15 years of military service in the Polish Army (Ustawa z dnia 10 grudnia 1993 r. o zaopatrzeniu...)¹.

The fact is that often "highly qualified and skilled soldiers leave the army with experience acquired during foreign missions" (Zarządzanie-zasobami-osobowymi..., 2019)². Therefore, there should be an interest in the qualifications of former officers in the civilian labor market. There is a need to prepare more soldiers, who will take the place of those leaving the service, by sending them to additional courses that complement their already acquired skills

¹ Ustawa z dnia 10 grudnia 1993 r. o zaopatrzeniu emerytalnym żołnierzy zawodowych oraz ich rodzin, Chapter 1, Art. 12, Source: <https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzu-dziennik-ustaw/zaopatrzenie-emerytalne-zolnierzy-zawodowych-oraz-ich-rodzin-16795740/dz-2-roz-1>, 02.01.2020; This applies to soldiers who entered military service before 2013, Rzepecka, A. (2019). Wykorzystanie potencjału kompetencyjnego emerytowanych funkcjonariuszy służb mundurowych na przykładzie żołnierzy Wojska Polskiego. *Zeszyty Naukowe ZPSB FIRMA i RYNEK*, 2(56), p. 113.

² *Zarządzanie-zasobami-osobowymi-a-gotowość-bojowa-Sił-Zbrojnych-RP* (2019). pp. 9-12, Source: <https://www.stratpoints.euwp-content/uploads/2019/08/Zarz%C4%85dzanie-zasobami-osobowymi-a-gotowo%C5%9B%C4%87-bojowa-Si%C5%82-Zbrojnych-RP.pdf>, 07.05.2020.

(Zarządzanie-zasobami-osobowymi..., 2019). As a result, their ability to find themselves in the labor market outside the army will increase.

The information gathered shows that the following number of soldiers left the army in individual years, i.e. (Bera, 20019, p. 20; R.CH., 2020):

- 2016 year – 4830 soldiers,
- 2017 year – 4131 soldiers,
- 2018 year – 3976 soldiers,
- 2019 year – 4400 soldiers.

It has been illustrated in the figure below.

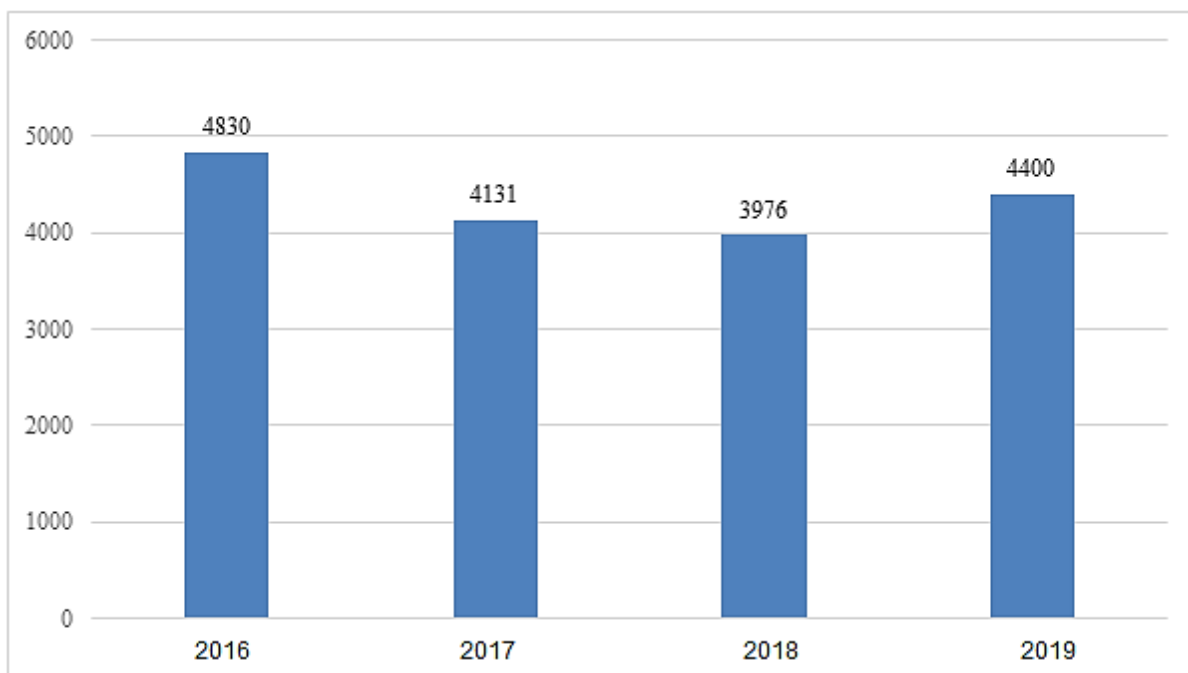


Figure 1. The number of dismissals of soldiers of the Polish Army in the period 2016-2019. Source: opracowanie własne na podstawie: Bera, R. (2019). *Tranzycja byłych wojskowych na rynek pracy a ich zasoby osobiste*. Lublin: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, s. 20; R.CH., *Więcej zwolnień, ale struktura kadry WP pozostaje bez zmian*, 04.02.2020, Available online: <https://m.portal-mundurowy.pl/index.php/start/item/11160-wiecej-zwolnien-ale-struktura-kadry-wp-pozostaje-bez-zmian>, 12.05.2020.

3. Research methodology

179 questionnaires were used to compile the collected statistical material – they were obtained in direct and indirect interviews conducted in 2019-2021. These were the responses of retired officers of the Polish Army serving in the Army. Some of the questionnaires were completed by telephone and e-mail, and some were completed in face-to-face meetings. Establishing contacts largely relied on recommendations from the recruited respondents to the next respondents, as it was already mentioned during the discussion of the snowball method.

However, it should be emphasized that the retired officers did not show "enthusiasm for confiding", as it happened that they occupied less honorary positions compared to their positions in the military. In the interviews conducted, many respondents stated that the qualifications of former officers are not fully used in the civilian labor market, especially when they are not employed in a uniformed organization. However, you can find examples of people who managed in private enterprises, such as the founder of DRUTEX.

The figure below shows the age of the respondents participating in the study. The largest group are respondents aged 56-60, the next – 51-55. The respondents aged 40-45 and 71 and more were a minority in the group.

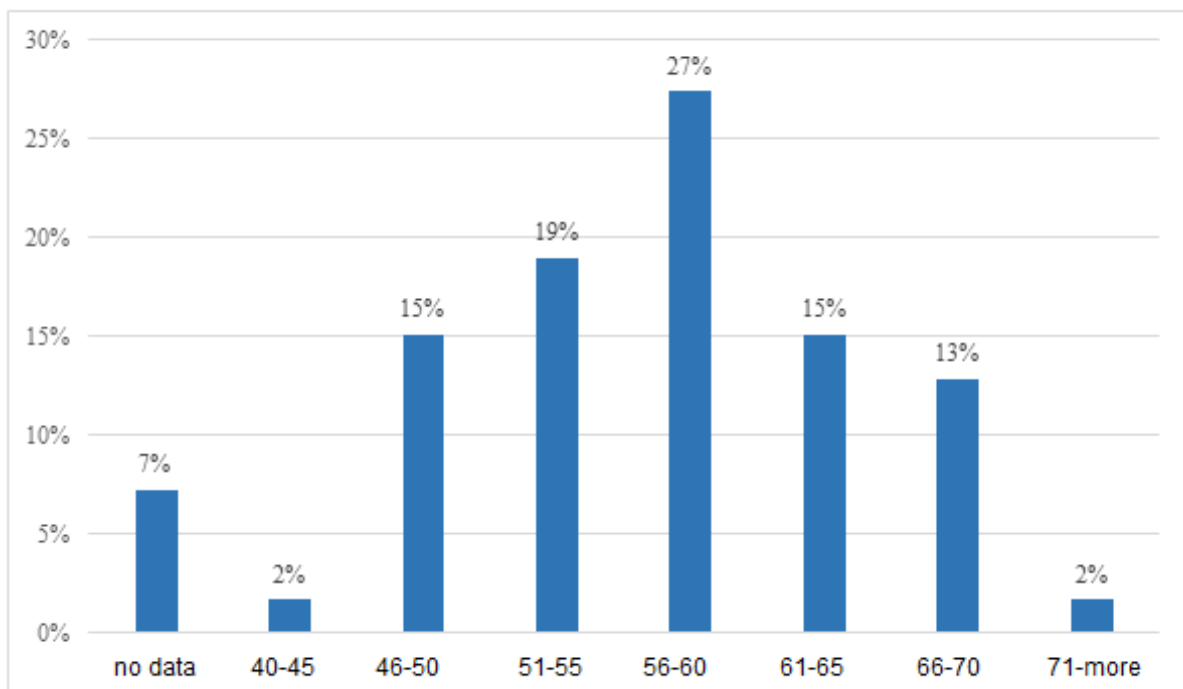


Figure 2. Age of retired officers participating in the study. Source: *own study* based on own research.

4. Research results

The respondents were asked about their motivation to start working in retirement. The respondents could indicate more than one answer. The greatest number of retired officers indicated the willingness to further use the knowledge and experience acquired during the service (almost 60%). Working in a group, contact with other people may be another factor influencing the continuation of work in retirement by a former officer. This allows you to maintain the achievements you have obtained while at the peak of your career. In the next place, the respondents indicated too low retirement benefit (38%).

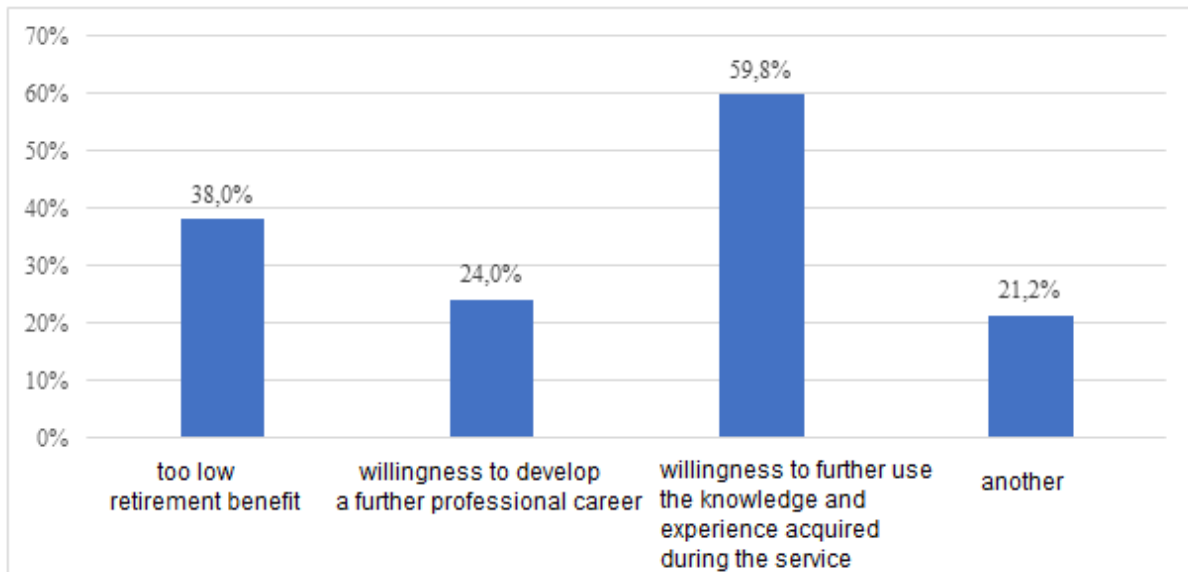


Figure 3. Motivation of retired officers to work in retirement. Source: *own study* based on own research.

The next figure shows that the insufficient retirement benefit was indicated by the largest number of respondents with the shortest retirement age (15-25 years). This is due to the fact that former officers with less military service receive a small part of the salary of a professional soldier.

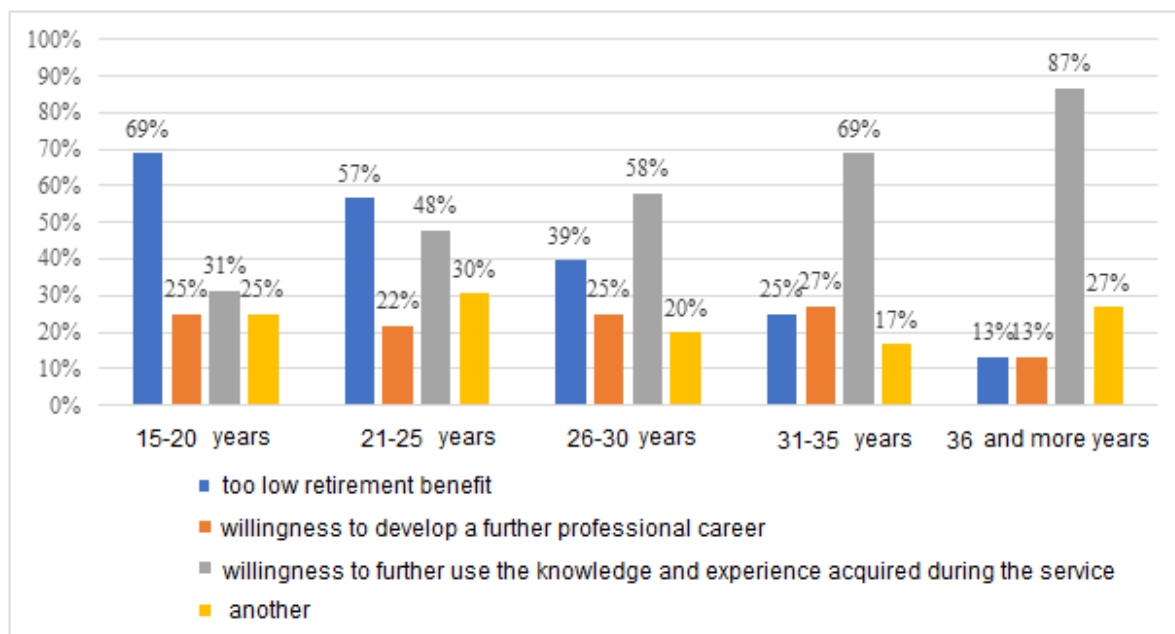


Figure 4. Motivation of retired officers to take up employment in retirement - according to years of service. Source: *own study* based on own research.

In the group of respondents serving 15-20 years in the army, the greatest number of people indicated that the old-age pension was too low (69%). On the other hand, among the retired officers who are in the army for 21-25 years, two answers can be noted: too low retirement benefit (57%) and the willingness to further use the knowledge and experience acquired during the service (48%). The majority of retired officers serving 26-30 years (58%) and 31-35 years (69%) indicated a willingness to further use the knowledge and experience acquired during the service. It can be concluded that the longer the service period, the greater the desire for further self-realization. Unfortunately, when it comes to retired officers with a shorter length of service, they need to improve their financial resources. Other responses from retired officers were: the need to be professionally active, the financial issue – increasing income, the desire to acquire new knowledge, and the desire to bring value to other people's lives. Apart from those mentioned above, the following were also mentioned: self-realization, willingness to test oneself on a different professional level, willingness to do something positive for society and the country, the need for contacts, the need to be active.

According to the chairman of the convent of deans of the professional officers corps in the rank of commander "most of the military try to earn full service for years, in order to receive the highest possible pension" (Rzemek, 2021). He adds that "when they leave the service at the age of 50–60 years old, they are fully active and try to look for a job on the civil market" (Rzemek, 2021).

The next figure shows the opinions of retired officers about their willingness to continue working in retirement. Over 30% of the respondents would like to work as long as possible, while 24% of the respondents would still work for 4-7 years. It shows, that most of the retired officers do not see themselves out of work in the future, thanks to which they will be able to develop further, especially if they find a job in which they would find themselves, for example through acquired competences. Also, they won't have to worry about financial issues, but most importantly they will be among co-workers, similarly like they surrounded themselves and collaborated with many other people during their service in the army.

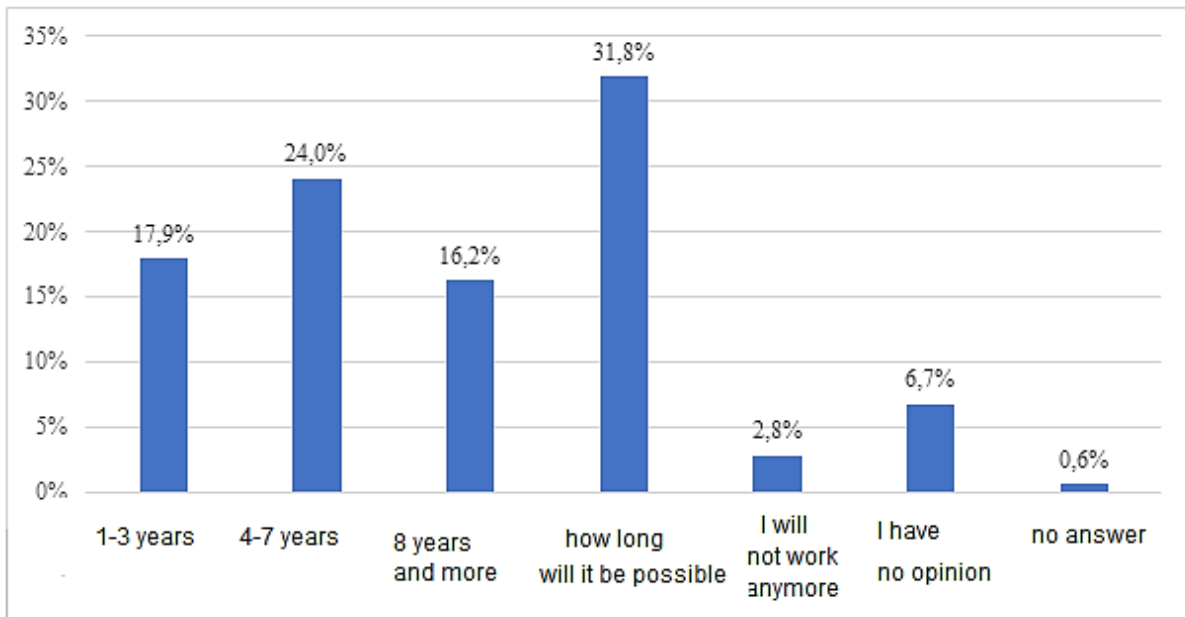


Figure 5. Opinions of retired officers about their continued willingness to work in retirement. Source: *own study* based on own research.

In analyzing this question, the years of service of retired officers were taken into account. In the group of respondents serving in the army, the shortest time was the advantage of such answers as: 8 years and more (37.5%) and how long will it be possible (31.3%). Such answers are related to the length of service, as retired officers may not have acquired a full retirement pension or they want to develop further and use their experience.

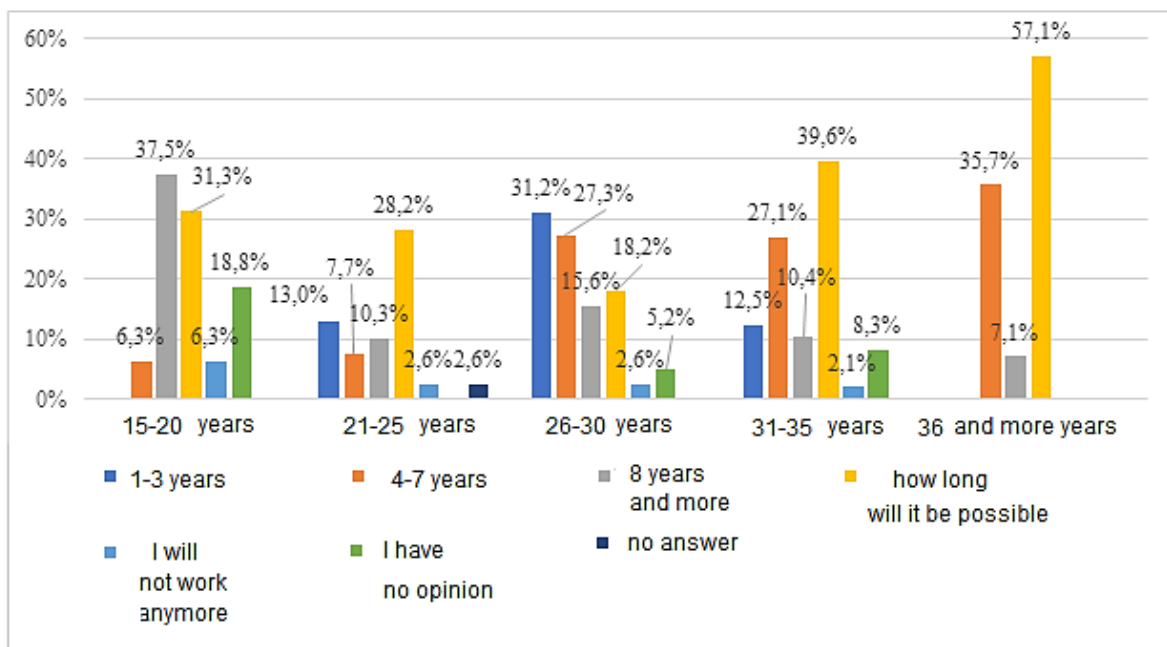


Figure 6. Opinions of retired officers on their continued willingness to work in retirement – by years of service. Source: *own study* based on own research.

This question was also analyzed for an independent variable such as retirement years. 36% of former officers with the shortest retirement would like to work 4-7 years, while almost 25% of respondents – as long as it will be possible for them to work.

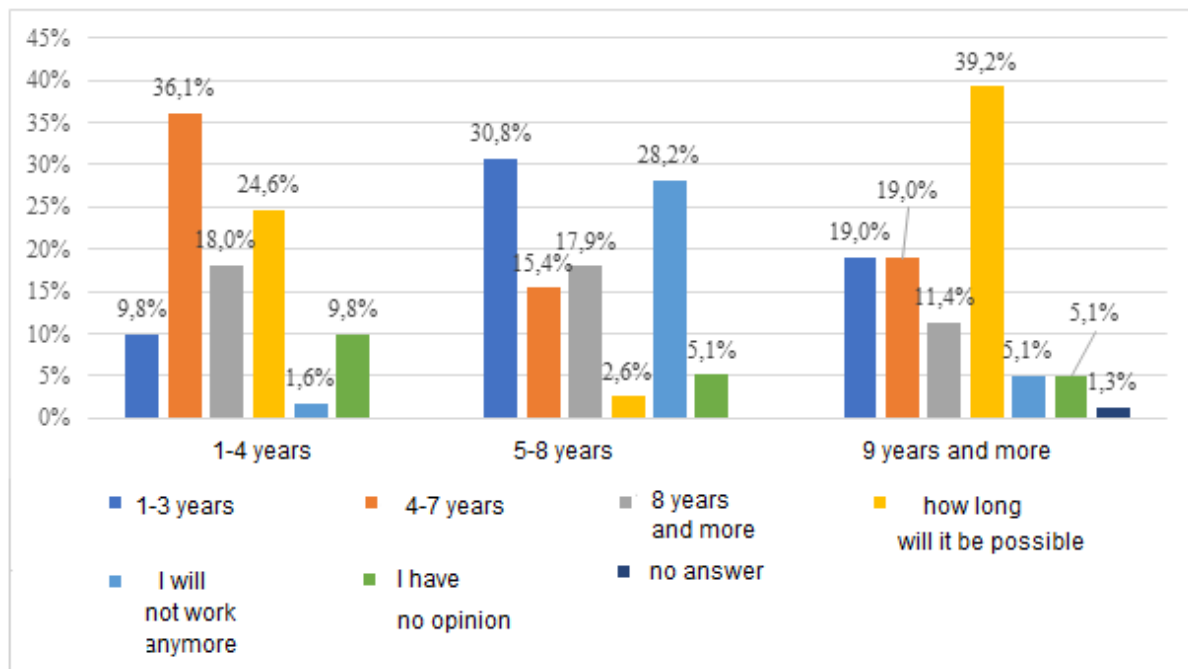


Figure 7. Opinions of retired officers on their continued willingness to work in retirement – b y retirement years. Source: *own study* based on own research.

This is due to the fact that former officers have just left their service and have a need and willingness to continue working. They are still quite young for retired people, therefore their activity is still high. By contrast, officers who are retired for 5-8 years indicated two answers: 30% of them intend to work for 1-3 years, while 28% of the respondents will no longer work. In the group of those who stayed the longest in retirement, 39% of respondents would like to work the longest.

5. Conclusion

The motivation in life for each person is and will be different. It is related to the desire to do something, to pursue the goal by meeting the needs of a given person. Retired officers of the Polish Army come from a specific environment which allowed them to acquire unique competences, including specialist knowledge, ability to work in a group, discipline, determination in achieving the goal, duty, punctuality, execution of entrusted tasks.

The motivation of retired officers to take up employment in retirement results from the willingness to further use the service, knowledge and experience acquired by them over many years. Also, the possibility of working in a group, maintaining contacts with other people are

other factors that influence the decisions of former officers to continue working in retirement. It also helps them maintain the qualifications obtained at the peak of their careers. The financial issue is also very important for some respondents - it is a factor motivating the respondents to take up further work.

The research also shows that a large number of retired officers would like to work as long as possible, another group of respondents would work for 4-7 years. It follows that most of the retired officers think about continuing their careers, thanks to which they will be able to develop further, especially if they find employment in an organization where they could use their already acquired competences.

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