

The Influence of Organizational Culture on Human Capital Development of Polish Army Officers in the Context of Post-Service Employment

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Abstract:

Organizational culture paves the way for employees, shows how one should function in a given organization – it aims to keep it together by adhering to similar values. Thanks to conditions prevailing there, specific rules employees know how they can perform their duties, properly cooperate with others and also how looks like the possibility of professional development, which is very important in the development of human capital. Human capital is people, their skills, creativity and qualifications. Development of capital through competence development has a positive impact on further functioning of the organization, but also on the satisfaction of employees themselves. In the case of retired officers of the Polish Army, who acquired specialized knowledge and valuable skills during their service, it is important to use their capital after the end of service. They can be supplemented with additional courses, training that will enrich their existing potential, and also enable them to find work in the civilian market. A survey was conducted among retired Army officers and employers/supervisors hiring retired officers from 2019 to 2021. The snowball method was used. A qualitative method was used – a survey questionnaire.

Keywords: organizational culture, human capital, professional development officer of the Polish Army, retirement.

1. Introduction

The culture within an organization is something that sets it apart from others. Organizational culture consists of symbols, artifacts, norms and values, and basic assumptions that are more difficult to change and less visible to the company's external environment. Thanks to the culture, the company's employees understand the adopted vision and mission and the strategy implemented in connection with it. It is easier for them to cooperate thanks to clear rules or regulations, which not only prescribe but also indicate how one should function in the organization.

In a military organization, there is a specific organizational culture that is governed by many regulations, or documents. One of such documents is the General Regulations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, in which there is information that “a superior in a military organization

exercises commanding (managerial), managing, training and educational functions with regard to his subordinates” [1, p. 68]. It is worth mentioning a survey that was conducted in late 2017/2018 among employees at one military institution. It concerned organizational culture. The results of the study confirmed that in this type of organization, due to its specific nature, there is a culture of hierarchy, the management of which is an important element of its functioning [2].

2. The Essence of Human Capital

Along with social capital and organizational capital, human capital makes up intellectual capital. This is shown in the figure below. It is defined as the most valuable among the others, affecting the company’s success the most. Human capital is people, including their skills, creativity, qualifications. They are connected with a given organization. The development of their capital, for example through the development of competencies will positively affect the further functioning of the organization, but also the satisfaction of employees.

Human capital is “the competence, intellectual agility, and motivation of personnel” [3, p. 59]. It is also the knowledge found in people [3]. It can also be assumed that human capital „encompasses the totality of qualities and characteristics” [4, p. 6], that reside in people, who are the cause of value creation. These include the abilities, skills, and motivation of personnel.

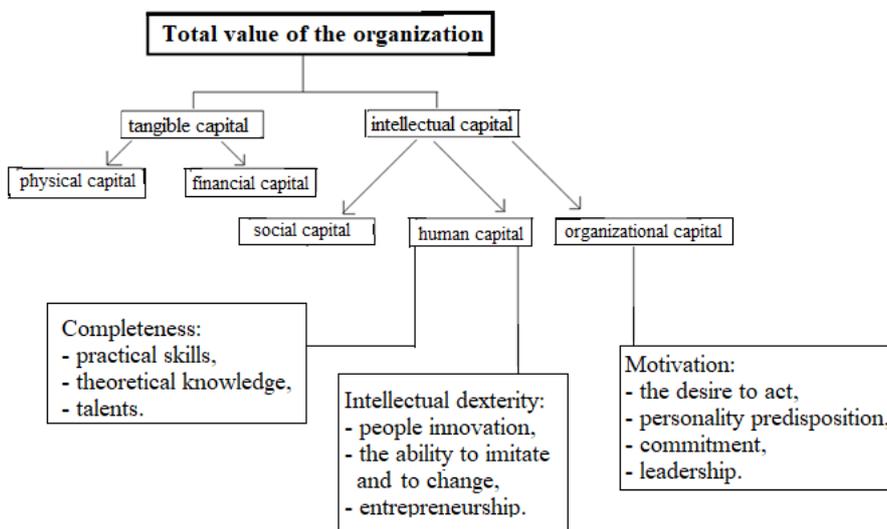


Figure 1. Total value of the organization
Source: compilation based on [5, pp. 153]

Human capital can have a threefold meaning. First, for the individual, who „owns it and, by taking proper care of it, can develop professionally and not only” [6, p. 18]. Secondly, also for the employer, who gains as a result of hiring employees with specific skills. It should be added that often this employer invests in these skills of the subordinate. Thirdly, human capital is important for the whole economy in the context of its competitiveness, as it depends more and more on economic development which is based on competences and knowledge [6].

According to M. Bartnicki, human capital is people who are permanently connected with the company and its mission. They have the ability to cooperate, creativity, qualifications, motivation, competence and „intellectual agility” [7, p. 179].

The main objective of human capital development in an organization is to „shape (develop) the performance (efficiency) of employees allowing to achieve the objectives of the company” [8, p. 7]. To impact employee effectiveness, investing in human capital should address areas such as employee competencies, organizational culture, and development opportunities.

3. The Importance of Organizational Culture in the Development of Human Capital of Polish Army Officers in the Context of Employment at Retirement Age – Research Results

Organizational culture is defined as an established way of thinking, feeling, and also a way of acting. The influence of “culture on the attitudes of people in the professional environment and the behavior of employees in companies have led to the formulation of the concepts of organizational culture and organizational identity” [9, p. 58]. Organizational culture, which plays an important role in a given company, enterprise or institution, is the style in which a given organization operates, the views and values that are shared by its members and common patterns of behavior, as well as ways of communication [10]. According to E. Schein, creator of the organizational culture model, symbols/artefacts, located high up on the so-called „iceberg”, are visible to the internal and external environment. Symbols/artifacts are divided into: linguistic (language, anecdotes), behavioral (ceremonies, rituals), and material (clothing, buildings, interiors). In contrast, values and norms are partially visible and conscious. We can mention, for example, ideologies, ways of behaving, prohibitions. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the most difficult to change are the basic assumptions at the bottom of Schein’s model [11]. It is connected with invisibility and also unconsciousness of human actions and interpersonal relations. Figure 2 shows the organizational culture model discussed above according to E. Schein.

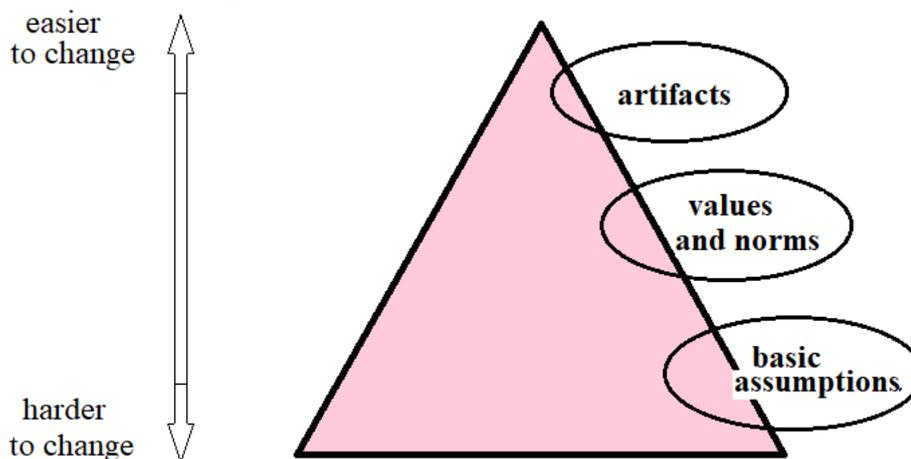


Figure 2. Model of organizational culture according to E. Schein

Source: own compilation based on: [11]

Related to human capital is the definition of the concept of human capital management. This is due to the fact that employees began to be seen as an asset of human capital and not just as a cost of an organization [12]. In the Armed Forces human resource allocation model, the Armed Forces’ strategy, structure, and organizational culture are internal factors. External factors include the external environment [13].

The information contained in the Ordinance of the Minister of Defense of September 15, 2014 *on the study of professional soldiers* [14], concerns, among other things, the assistance provided to professional soldiers in connection with undertaking their studies. It also defines the type, form, scope and amount of assistance and how to determine it and the manner of its repayment. The regulation also addresses how to document expenses incurred by a professional soldier that are covered by the assistance. You can find information related to with directing / recalling professional soldiers to study or study in a military school, or non-military or to internship, course or perhaps specialization in the country or abroad.

The system of in-service training for professional soldiers consists of two categories of in-service training forms, which result from the above mentioned Ordinance of the Minister of Defense. These are [15]:

- **post-graduate studies and qualification courses** – are supposed to prepare „to take up a service position of higher full-time rank”. Their main purpose is to „update and broaden general and specialist military knowledge, as well as acquiring competencies necessary to function on a higher official position”.
- **in-service training courses** – designed to help supplement knowledge and prepare „to perform the duties on a particular official position specified in the description sheet of a given official position”. When organizing courses, the needs of the Polish Armed Forces are taken into account.

In the system of professional development of officers, basic qualification courses are „realized in functional departments: command, staff, security and special as characteristic for the tasks performed on official positions in relation to particular full-time ranks” [15]. The presented solution is primarily to ensure adequate recruitment, selection and rational use of personnel resources of the Armed Forces, so it is important that they are taken into account in the system of professional development of professional soldiers.

Professional development of Polish Army officers [15] is related to the possibility of participation in, among others, postgraduate studies or courses. This is intended to develop the already possessed general and specialized knowledge. It is also intended to help in preparing officers to individually solve problems concerning the implementation of decision-making processes on particular duty positions. In order to be eligible for a duty position located at a higher grade, „depending on the evaluation from the service opinion and service forecast”, each officer must complete the course training or studies assigned to that position.

An organizational culture with strict hierarchy, bureaucracy, but also specific language, behavioral, and physical artifacts has been a part of a retired officer's life for most of his life. For managers of state institutions or uniformed organizations, it is a good solution because there is no need to implement the employee from the beginning and therefore there will be no barriers to adaptation in the workplace.

It is worth citing the results of a survey that was conducted between 2019 and 2021 among retired Army officers serving in the Land Forces and employers/supervisors who hire retired officers. The snowball method was used. The qualitative method used was a survey questionnaire. The figure below shows the years of service of former officers of the Polish Army. Most retired officers served in the range of 26-30 years (42%), the least – 36 and over (8%).

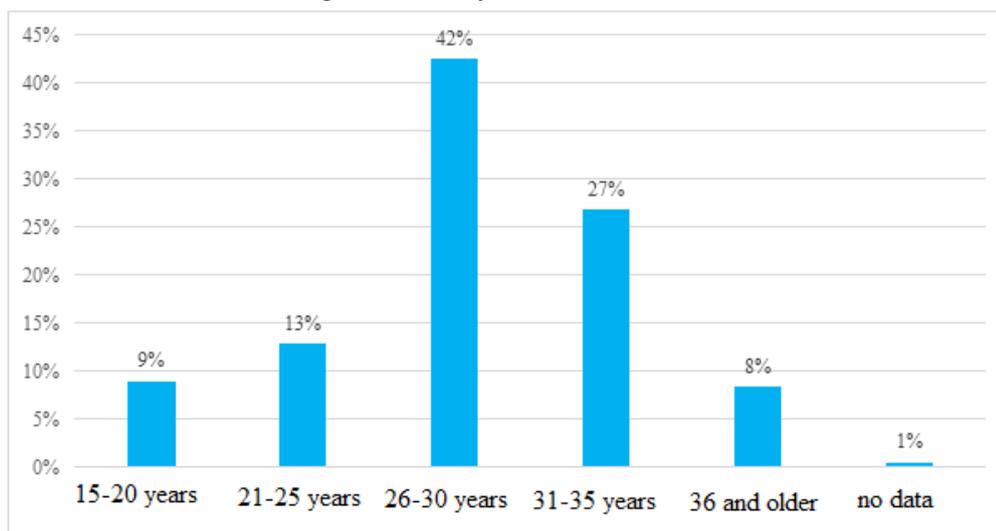


Figure 3. Years of service by retired officers.

Source: own study based on own research.

In contrast, Figure 4 shows the responses of survey respondents-employers/supervisors who employ retired officers, categorized by organization size by number of employees. The largest group were employers/supervisors in organizations with 11 to 50 employees (44%). The fewest respondents selected an organization with up to 10 employees (4,6%). Almost 4% did not mark any answer.

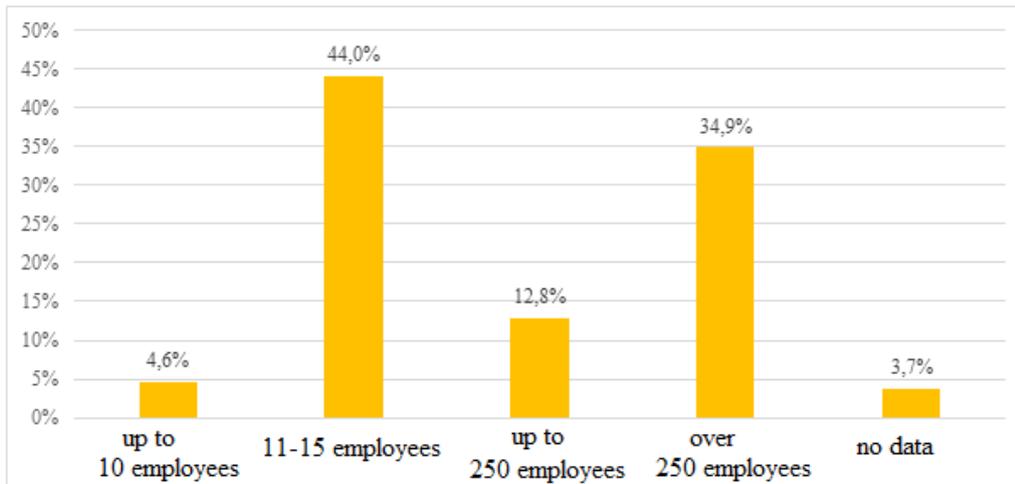


Figure 4. Distribution of respondents by size of organization based on number of employees. Source: own study based on own research.

The next figure shows a confrontation of retired officers’ responses regarding the usefulness of their competencies acquired while on active duty with employers/supervisors’ responses related to former officers’ competencies affecting their employment. Respondents could select more than one response.

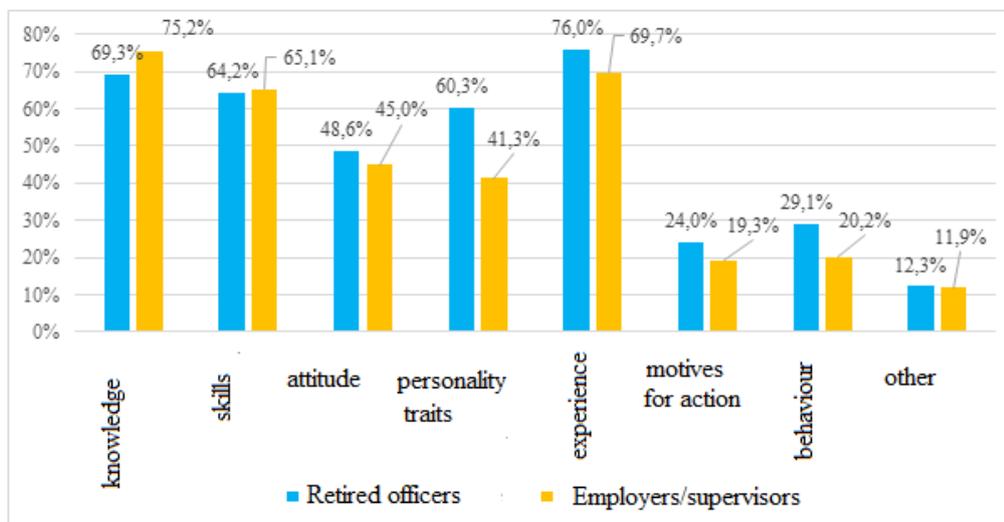


Figure 5. Competencies that influenced the hiring of a retired officer according to employers/supervisors vs. usefulness of competencies in current workplace according to retired officers. Source: own study based on own research.

Source: own study based on own research.

Comparing the other competencies, it can be seen that the responses of employers/supervisors and retired officers were similar. It is important that experience, knowledge and skills are acquired and also supplemented – if necessary, as these competencies are highly useful according to employers/supervisors.

In the category of other at employers / supervisors were given such competencies as: the speed of decision-making, awareness of systematic improvement of knowledge and skills, availability, ability to assess human behavior. Retired officers listed, for example: disciplined, responsible, independent in action, initiative, reliability, loyalty, commitment, determination to

achieve a goal, ability to work with people, ability to make decisions under time constraints, and awareness of the need to improve their knowledge and skills.

It is important to improve one’s competence. Therefore, self-development plays an important role. Employment of an employee, in this case a retired officer, depends on his/her competence. The employer does not have to invest too much in the development of a former officer at the beginning of his career because a Polish Army officer has a unique potential. To support future retired officers or those who have already passed, additional training, courses can be offered to help them find their way in the new environment and find a suitable job.

One of the questions addressed to employers/supervisors concerned the characteristics that a retired officer has at work.

It should be noted that respondents could indicate more than one characteristic. The largest number of responses received such a feature as: independent (83,5%), effective (68,8%). Slightly fewer marked such a characteristic as definitely. The respondents also gave their suggestions. They included, among others, responsibility, showing initiative, ethical and moral attitude, goal orientation, creativity, decisiveness, dutifulness, availability, organization.

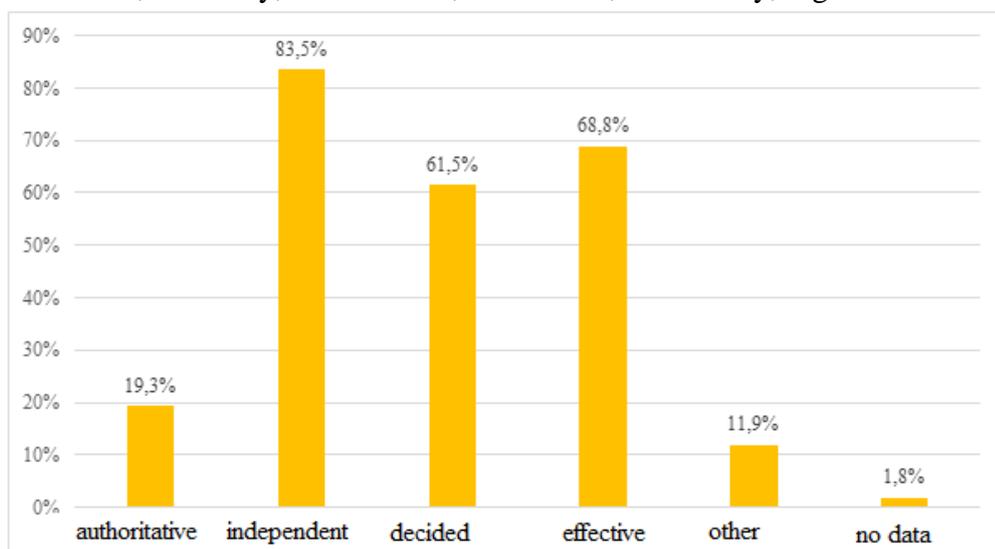


Figure 6. Characteristics of a retired officer at work according to the employer/supervisor. Source: own study based on own research.

The next figure shows the opinions of employers/supervisors regarding the impact of training/courses received while on active duty on the employment of a retired officer.

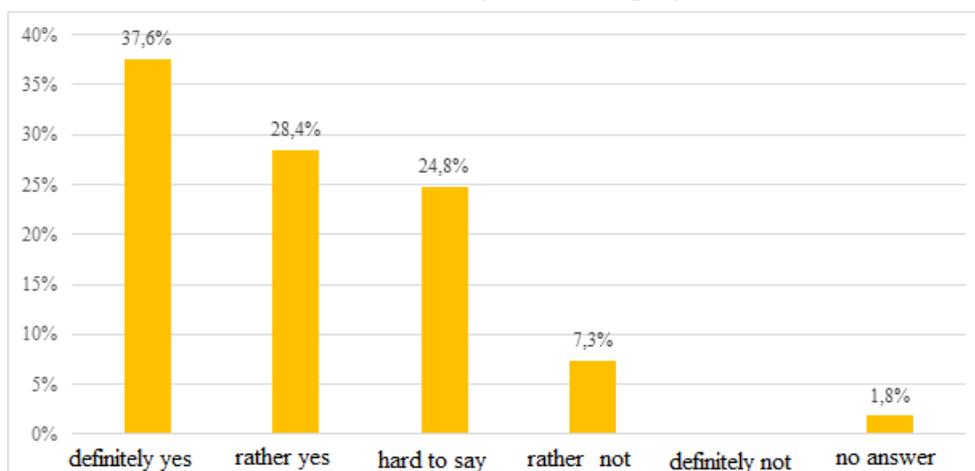


Figure 7. Employer/supervisor views on the impact of training/courses taken while on active duty on a retired officer’s employment.

Source: own study based on own research.

According to the majority of respondents, training/courses by former officers had a definite impact on their employment. This shows that participation in training or courses by retired officers is important to future employers/supervisors and has a positive impact on the duties performed by former officers. An employee, who has taken multiple training courses or courses prior to employment and has increased their skills as a result, is a valuable resource to an organization.

Additionally, training or courses taken by retired officers are rare and therefore all the more valuable to potential employers. It is worth mentioning that gaining additional competences is, quite often, connected with high costs and retired officers are, for example, former officers with doctoral degree and those who know in detail how to properly manage people.

Figure 8 shows the respondents' responses on the importance of the work style, the culture elevated while serving in the Polish Army.

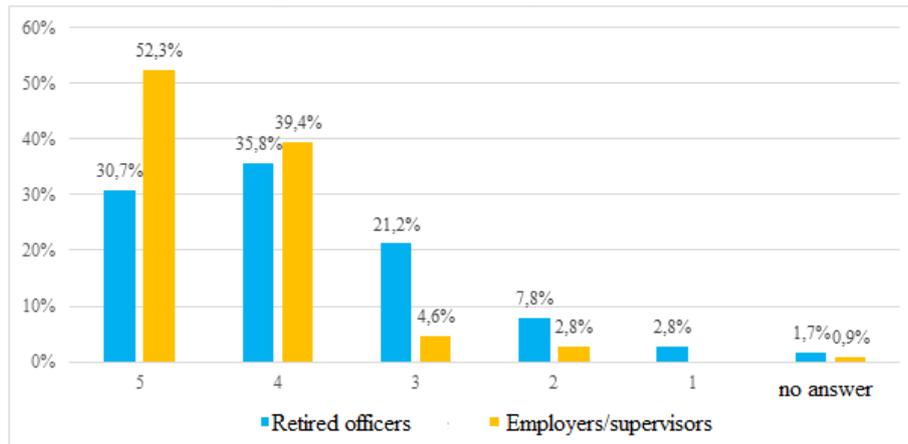


Figure 8. Respondents' views on the importance of culture and work style learned from the military while on duty according to retired officers and employers/supervisors.

Source: own study based on own research.

According to both groups of respondents, work style, culture is of great importance.

It can be seen that for more than half of the employers/supervisors it is definitely of great importance (52,3%). This can be evidenced by the fact that the skills brought from the military are an added value to the future organization, the new work environment in which the former officer will be employed. A retired officer is a disciplined person who operates according to specific procedures.

An officer of the Polish Armed Forces, in addition to commanding others, also listens to his superiors, cooperates in a group, but if the situation requires it, he acts individually. Orderly style of work, awareness of one's place in the hierarchy will only positively affect the performance of duties.

4. Conclusion

In the Polish Army, hierarchical culture has a significant impact on the functioning of this institution. Thanks to specific regulations, e.g. on the professional development system, officers of the Polish Army can acquire specialized knowledge and skills useful in a given official position. They also participate in trainings, courses that complement the already acquired knowledge. However, it is important to manage human resources in such a way that it is possible to develop the desired competencies of officers, while remembering to use their competence potential after leaving the service.

It is worth noting the importance of the culture and work style that is brought by a retired officer from the military. For most employers/supervisors it is definitely of greater importance than compared to the responses of retired officers. As already mentioned in the dissertation discipline, organization of time, knowing one's place in the hierarchy and responsibilities are valued by employers/supervisors.

Hard competences are very important, but compared to soft competences, they can be acquired, learned. Soft competencies cannot always be learned as quickly as knowledge, for example. It is especially this kind of competences that characterize a former officer, because it is difficult to find an employee, who knows how to work under time pressure, how to take responsibility for his decisions, and how to cooperate in a group or, if the situation requires it, also individually. It can be said that a large role is played by the organizational culture, which creates the above-mentioned qualities in the officers of the Polish Armed Forces.

As a result, having the so-called competent employee, which is an innovative solution, you can immediately go into action towards achieving the goals set by the organization, because you do not have to focus on the development of the former officer. He from the very „entrance” to the organization is ready to work.

It is also worth noting that the competencies acquired by officers during their service should be used more by state institutions and enterprises, where their experience and knowledge will certainly be of benefit to society. Also, it is important to help future retired officers to enter the civilian market, where they compete for employment and employers highly value the competence of a former officer in the economy. Therefore, consider expanding job opportunities to more closely match their potential. You can also enrich their capital through additional studies, interpersonal trainings or special programs that will allow them to complement the competencies already acquired. Thanks to that their potential enriched with additional qualifications will be more desirable in the civilian environment.

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