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## **FACTORS SHAPING OBSTACLES TO TASK PERFORMANCE IN THE POLICE FORCE AS SEEN BY AN EMPLOYEE**

### **ABSTRACT**

Conducting research and using the results of these studies is an important factor influencing the achievement of the goals set by any organization. In relation to such areas as, for example, management, sociology or psychology, it is important to learn the opinions of people operating within the organization in order to achieve success when building decision-making procedures and the functionality of these organizations. The knowledge resulting from research should be used not only in enterprises and organizations of the private sector but also in the centralized sector, including organizations in the area

of security. It is of particular importance in relation to uniformed services, because they function in very complex conditions and, above all, in an environment that strongly influences their work. With regard to the police or the army, as shown by the experience from history, decisions are determined, on the one hand, by legal solutions that indicate a service to society, and, on the other hand, by the implementation of tasks determined by the authorities and administration. It should be emphasized that central and decentralized authorities influencing the functioning of uniformed services are usually guided by the principles set out in the programs of political parties. All this builds internal relations within the uniformed services and determines their functioning. These issues became the subject of research aimed at identifying obstacles that hinder the performance of tasks in the police formation.

The research to achieve the objective was conducted primarily among police officers who are participants in postgraduate courses and police school students in 2020 – 2021. The research sample selection was purposive and included 189 people. The identification of obstacles from the perspective of police employees shows the need to undertake work eliminating factors in the functioning of this uniformed formation that hinder the fulfilment of tasks.

**KEYWORDS:** *Police, obstacles in the performance of tasks, politics, motivators*

## ADMISSION

According to the law in force in Poland, the uniformed services are guided in their activities by ensuring the security of citizens and at the same time maintaining neutrality in political matters (Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997). Thus, the efficiency of the functioning of uniformed services is very closely related to the security of citizens in all its areas and should not be associated with political parties. It should also be emphasized that the efficient implementation of tasks is also influenced by the resources at the disposal of these services, including, in particular, the quality of executive and management staff. This raises the question of how to ensure the proper implementation of tasks by the police and what is an obstacle to achieving the expected results? This is what became the subject of the conducted research

among policemen. The research problem was reduced to the question: what are the obstacles in the performance of their tasks and in achieving higher effectiveness of the tasks in the opinion of employees of the Police. For this purpose, a diagnostic survey was carried out, assuming that the factors related to the functioning motivation system and the unfavorable impact of the environment on decisions within this organization have a large impact on the performance of tasks by employees of these formations. The work also uses the expert knowledge of the authors who have been conducting research in the field of management in public and private organizations for many years, especially in relation to the factors influencing the effectiveness of the organization.

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TASKS IN HIERARCHICAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Today, the functioning of all economic entities has been determined by the state of emergency caused by the pandemic and the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This forced changes to the rules of operation of many organizations, including uniformed services. The changes related not only to adapting to crisis conditions, but also to providing citizens with basic living conditions. Therefore, the functioning of uniformed services should be based on previously developed principles relating to the functioning incentive system and the use of material and non-material resources. The functioning of the police in a crisis situation should aim at the use of modern industrial technologies and new generation products (Schwab, 2018, pp. 13-14 – referring to the creator and president of the World Economic Forum in Davos, we have to assume that we are in the midst of the 4th industrial revolution). In everyday activities, a policeman should more often be an independent creator of activities, relying on modern machines and technologies (Furmanek, 2018, pp. 55-63). This applies to tasks carried out in the run-up to the pandemic and currently performed in conditions of overlapping threats related to the pandemic and the armed conflict beyond the eastern border of Poland. The degree of implementation in the Police of the latest scientific achievements

relating not only to the procedures for counteracting threats to life and health, but also affecting efficient management, including the use of human resources and material resources, has become the subject of interest of many circles in recent years, including employees science and the policemen themselves. It should be emphasized, however, that the recommendations resulting from these studies, hence the conclusions and recommendations that could improve the functioning of the Police, are not always of interest to those managing this formation. An example may be the implementation of modern and transparent methods of human resources management based on job description and job evaluation or material resources management, especially the budget at individual levels in the Police structure (Kozłowski, Czaplicka-Kozłowska, 2020, pp. 79-88).

The implementation of tasks in any organization depends primarily on the qualifications of the people who make up this organization and its organization so that these qualifications are used to the maximum. Therefore, on the one hand, knowledge and the ability to use it, and on the other hand, conditions conducive to the use of these qualifications are conducive to achieving success by the organization. Achieving the intended goal is measured, on the one hand, by planned and thought-out activities, taking into account the costs of their implementation, and on the other hand, determining the achievement of success resulting from the activities undertaken earlier (Zieleniewski, 1981, p. 225). It should be emphasized that with regard to uniformed services, the factors determining efficiency (Pszczółowski 1982), efficiency (Homborg, Vogel, 2016, p. 747) and effectiveness (Kotarbiński, 1958, p. 131) in the area of task performance have a more complex dimension. This does not mean, however, that these organizations should not use the achievements of science, especially the results of research conducted within these services. From the point of view of science, in the case of organizations operating in special conditions, it is important to use primarily the results of research carried out within these organizations and the opinions presented by employees of these organizations.

It can be assumed that effective or efficient operation means that the costs, on the one hand, of the materials used or of the organization's material resources in general, and, on the other hand, of the effort put in by employees

to achieve the goals, are as low as possible. It may turn out that the costs incurred, but also some activities in the organization, including those resulting from the implemented area of pay and non-pay incentives, may be effective, but at the same time ineffective. The scientific literature emphasizes the importance of many external factors, but also internal resources of the organization in achieving the goals of the organization. It can be assumed that the effectiveness of the organization's implementation of tasks depends primarily on a properly constructed current action plan along with the development strategy. Within such a strategy, what matters is the person in the organization, his qualifications and the competences assigned to him in the position. Competences in the position should result from a properly developed job description and job evaluation (Kozłowski 2018, pp. 177-192), therefore on adjusting qualifications (understood as knowledge and the ability to use it) to competences (understood as rights) and material and non-material motivators. Proper reference of tasks to the organizational structure, especially assigning them to individual positions and respecting employees' involvement in their implementation, is a strong motivating factor for subordinates and superiors. Undoubtedly, transparency in the supervisor-subordinate relationship and the elimination of conflicts translate into the proper implementation of tasks. In the area of efficient implementation of tasks, it is very important to develop an appropriate incentive system based on clear promotion and reward criteria (Borkowska, 2004, p. 15).

Police officers are a uniformed and armed formation serving the public and designed to protect safety and public order (Act of April 6, 1990 on the Police). The police are part of the public administration and their activities are always undertaken in the public interest within the law. The functioning of the police, apart from central state authorities and administration bodies, is also influenced by local public administration bodies at the voivodeship and poviast level. It can be assumed that the police formation should be guided by the rule of law and the principle of apoliticity in carrying out its tasks.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It can be assumed that a properly functioning incentive system, based on transparent principles and motivators positively influencing the attitudes of police officers, is a particularly desirable good, conditioning the proper implementation of tasks specified in legal acts and adapted to social expectations. The aim of the research was to identify the obstacles hindering the implementation of tasks in the police formation. The undertaken research problem, which can be reduced to the factors determining the proper performance of tasks by policemen, aims to determine what constitutes an obstacle in the performance of tasks in the position and whether it translates into proper management of own resources at the disposal of this hierarchical organization. In order to diagnose this problem, research was carried out by the method of a diagnostic survey with the use of the survey technique among student officers and command staff at the turn of 2020 – 2021. The research tool in the form of a questionnaire was used in the research. 189 people participated in the research, including mainly those participating in extramural and postgraduate studies. The research to achieve the objective was conducted primarily among police officers who are participants in postgraduate studies and students of the police school in 2020 – 2021. The research sample was purposive and included 189 people. The research used a research tool in the form of a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaires were distributed to respondents during class and collected in a specially prepared ballot box. The analyses carried out referred to dependent variables; the lack of a metric (identifying independent variables) in the questionnaires was intentional and was driven by the need to guarantee as much anonymity as possible for the respondents. Respondents in the survey rated the indicated obstacles to task completion on a scale from 1 to 10. It should be emphasized that the research was conducted in the first period, when new rules for the functioning of the state and uniformed services resulting from the pandemic began to be implemented. Also in the period when new, less demanding criteria for admission to the police and promotion to the first officer rank were started (<https://www.rekrutacja-do-policji.pl/stopnie-w-policji>, access date: 2022.03.16).

## FINDINGS

### THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICS ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE POLICE

The research conducted among policemen shows that the greatest obstacle in the implementation of tasks, and the same factor preventing efficient operation and effective performance of tasks, is the politicization of uniformed services, thus the politics that entered this formation. The largest number of respondents, as many as 7.9 of the average value, indicated the influence of politics on promotion, and secondly (7.9 the average value with 1,422 responses by 180 people) – on the politicization of decision-making procedures. It should be noted that the value of indications from 1 the lowest to 10 the highest indicated factor amounted to a total of 1443 points; if the respondents had marked the maximum value, then the total would have been 1830; dividing these values by the number of people who answered – 5 people did not answer this question – we obtain an average value of 7.9 indicating the size of the indications critically assessing the phenomena occurring within the Police. With regard to the impact of politics on promotion, as many as every third respondent on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest) indicated that this factor had the greatest impact on promotion. As many as 72.1% of respondents indicated values from 8 to 10 with regard to the influence of politics on promotion, and similarly with regard to the politicization of decision-making procedures. In 7th place, the respondents mentioned the impact of the policy on the stability and security of employment, which obtained the weighted average of 7.2. Therefore, it can be assumed that politics (understood as the direct and informal influence of political parties – their representatives on the functioning of the organization), which entered the uniformed services, has a negative impact on the implementation of tasks and constitutes the greatest obstacle to the efficient functioning of this formation. When analyzing the research conducted before 1990 (Kozłowski, 1991), some similarities can be found. This applies to the politicization of hierarchical organizations, especially uniformed formations and the entire administration area within public sector organizations. Acceptance of such a large influence of politics on the functioning

of the police, as it was in the times of Polish socialism, has a negative impact on the proper implementation of tasks by officers and the entire formation.

### **FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROMOTION**

The second area of obstacles preventing the proper implementation of tasks includes, first of all, the implemented promotion policy – as it resulted from the research results presented earlier, politics dominates here. In the opinion of the respondents, protection is dominant in the personnel policy (7.6), as as many as 67.7% of the respondents indicated factors from 8 to 10 and nepotism (7.4), but also the lack of clear criteria in the assessments constituting the basis for promotion (7.4). This leads to low qualifications among managerial staff (7.4), which was pointed out by 59.1% of respondents, who primarily indicated a score from 8 to 10. In the research conducted by the authors (Kozłowski, Czaplicka-Kozłowska, Świrski, 2016, p. 117-141) in the local government administration in 2016 indicated primarily corruption, protection and nepotism at a very high level among local management and employees. It can be assumed that in the Police this problem occurs in a similar dimension and it poses a great danger in the use of highly qualified personnel in the personnel policy.

Although there were further obstacles such as the lack of opportunities for self-fulfillment at work (5.8) and the lack of professional development and qualifications (in both cases, the value of 4.9), identifying these obstacles requires changes in this area.

### **POLICE EXECUTIVES – DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES**

The respondents were also asked for their opinion on the functioning decision-making procedures. In the area of these problems, in the first place (7.2), the respondents pointed to the unpredictable behavior of their superiors (55.7% indicated values from 8 to 10) and the lack of clear decision-making procedures (6.8) and excessive centralization (6.6). These factors also include a bad flow of information (6.6), the inability to make decisions in the position (6.3), and inadequate organization of work (6.1) and the inability to act



independently (5.4). It can therefore be assumed that the Police is dominated by a system of incapacitation in executive positions and it should be assumed, due to the high centralization of decision-making processes, that this also applies to the management staff. Unpredictability is primarily related to the lack of developed and implemented management strategies in anticipated situations – often the influence of politicians destroys these strategies and the policeman who submits to them has to choose between the adopted and imposed actions in a very specific situation. Often the actions of the police result from commands originating in the field of politics and not related to the developed and implemented principles related to the safety of citizens.

### **THE INCENTIVE SYSTEM IN THE OPINION OF POLICEMEN**

In an organization where the implementation of tasks is based on people who are its members and who also carry out tasks aimed at achieving the goals the need to develop a specific behavior influencing the quality of the tasks performed. In the conducted research, the issue of earned income in the incentive system was not classified as the most important obstacle, because the respondents indicated, first of all, the inadequate equipment of the workplace (6.7 – as many as 22.2% indicated the highest value, therefore it is the biggest obstacle in their implementation). tasks). Among the obstacles affecting the performance of tasks, the respondents indicated low income per family member (6.3), and only then low wages (6.2) and also a low level of salaries in the police force (6.1). ). The respondents also indicated that there are no transparent criteria for job evaluation (6.1) and an unfair system of awarding financial rewards (6.1).

The respondents also indicated obstacles related to the atmosphere at work. In this area, the surveyed police officers indicated a bad atmosphere at work (5.7) and bad relations with superiors (5.7) and colleagues (5.2). It is also worth noting that the respondents indicated the low prestige of the workplace (5.5) and positions (4.6) as well as inconvenient working hours (4.3).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Already in ancient times, there are many examples of rulers / politicians influencing the behavior of subordinates, including philosophers, teachers and uniformed services (Laertios, 2012). An example is the death of Socrates, convicted by a court for proclaiming views inconsistent with what the rulers expected. Also, the death of Christ (New Testament) is based on opposition to the rulers and people who have an influence on the rulers, and the execution of the sentence was carried out by uniformed services blindly following the orders of politicians. In this distant history, but also the most recent one, in the world and in Poland, there are many examples of the behavior of uniformed services blindly following the orders of politicians. Uniformed services are known to have killed defenceless citizens during martial law in Poland in the 1980s. The lessons of the past should be the basis for building the rules shaping the contemporary behavior of uniformed services.

There are many studies based on research showing the influence of politics on the incentive system and the behavior of employees of various enterprises, as well as officials and uniformed services at work and in private life. At the time when the ruling party's influence on the whole of social and economic life was dominant, membership in such an organization was the basic condition for achieving success in almost all areas of human life. This is why belonging to the ruling party, primarily uniformed services (for example, protection against possible threats from dissatisfied citizens) and officials (for example, the implementation of party resolutions transformed by competent authorities into laws, regulations or ordinances) was of fundamental importance for the rulers and was also supposed to ensure success for those who had the "right" ID. Looking at the behavior of people working mainly in the Police, who, like in the period of socialism, are subordinated to the ruling political party (but also to centralized administration subordinated to political leadership), one cannot help but feel that nothing has changed in this respect.

The research documents the unfavorable state of management in uniformed services, especially in the police. The influence of politics, and not knowledge based on research and the search for truth, leads to behavior inconsistent with the principles of the social contract and contradicts the rational principles

of the organization's functioning. The research conducted is of a unique and innovative nature – the authors have not found similar research conducted in recent years in the Police.

Research has shown that the negative impact on the functioning of the police is primarily the influence of politics, and this impact applies to all dimensions related to the performance of tasks by policemen. Politics affects the promotion system and also the relations between employees. Undoubtedly, the functioning of the police is influenced by the crisis conditions caused by the pandemic and, in particular, by assigning policemen duties related to the control of compliance with the quarantine rules, maintaining appropriate distances and the number of people, or wearing masks (previously helmets) in public places. All this translated into employee relations, into the expansion of tasks to be performed by police officers and also into the obligation to perform activities which, in the opinion of the courts, were and are inconsistent with the applicable law.

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