

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND CONFLICTS HISTORY

COMMUNICATION IN THE ARMY IN THE SITUATION OF INSECURITY

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ABSTRACT

Decision making involves the responsibility and skill that the commander must acquire to effectively command the human team. The situations in which they are taken are different and varied. No one with such skill is born. It's a long and hard work on yourself. A good commander is one who can subordinate orders in a clear and clear manner, and confident and determined regardless of the circumstances and circumstances. This article presents communication skills among the commanding staff.

DOI: 10.26410/SF_2/17/10

KEY WORDS

Communication in the army; information; range of information; process of information flow; commanding staff; leadership in the army.

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Introduction

One of the situations that professional soldiers face during their professional service is to make decisions in a state of uncertainty.

In the subject matter of the term, communication means communication between people, the exchange of thoughts, views and meanings (Latin *communicato* – communicating, transmitting thoughts, giving news)¹.

As it is known, communication is one of the most fundamental processes in any organization. By continually exchanging information, you can design and achieve goals. The most effective communication is when the transmitted information is undisturbed to the recipient. At the same time, it is understandable to him, consistent with the original meaning of the message as well as with

the intention of the sender of the message or information. The purpose of this article is to identify the specific characteristics of interpersonal communication taking place in a military environment characterized by variability of activities and decisions, therefore, in so-called uncertainty situations

Communication in the army

Very often the process of transmitting information in a public organization is strictly defined. We undoubtedly deal with such an approach in military units. If the information flow in the organization is rigid and the directions of information flow are clearly defined, we say that it is a chain of type. In this case, a subordinate is not in a position to communicate directly with a similar position, but only with a supervisor. We deal with this kind of information flow in a military unit. It should therefore be noted that properly processed information can become action requests, that is, management information

¹ J. Penc, *Komunikacja i negocjowanie w organizacji*, wyd. Dyfin, Warszawa 2010, s. 109. See the review of definitions of the term communication. B.R. Kuc, J.M. Moczyłowska, *Zachowania organizacyjne. Podręcznik akademicki*, wyd. Dyfin, Warszawa 2009, pp. 187-188.

and lead to decisions and actions².

As A. Flower noted, communication in the organization is not limited to the generation, transformation and transmission of information within the organization. Instead, it is a social process, i.e. the dynamic, constant formation of attitudes, behavior of individuals and modification of knowledge. It creates a mutual relationship, a bond, and also performs control, motivation and persuasion functions in the cultural context of the organization. As the author further writes, institutional (organizational) communication is a level targeted at a recipient of a formal nature, the clearly defined roles of the broadcaster and the receiver, communication that follows a particular structure. It should also be mentioned that communication within an organization is limited by a formal structure. This structure sets the place in the service hierarchy of the sender and receiver, and formalization - the manner and form of the message. In each organization, in parallel with official formal communication channels, there are less formal or informal ones³.

It is worth noting that it is particularly important to communicate in a hierarchical organization what an army is that is supposed to act in the situations of uncertainty. Proper communication has an impact on the process of formulating tasks, planning, coordinating and coordinating activities, maintaining communication, organizing work and monitoring.

A way of communicating in the military can be seen as a set of activities, such as:

- transmission,
- understanding,
- impact,
- connecting, creating community,
- interaction,

² J. Penc, *op.cit.*, p. 96.

³ A. Kwiatek, *Komunikacja społeczna w organizacji* [w:] F. Byłok, E. Robak (ed.), *Zachowania ludzi w organizacji. Wybrane zagadnienia*, wyd. Politechniki Częstochowskiej, Częstochowa 2009, pp. 104-108.

- exchange,
- component of the social process⁴.

From the perspective of soldiers, it is important that a communication process is most effective. This is particularly true of the flow of messages:

- vertical and horizontal,
- formal and informal,
- verbal and nonverbal⁵.

Vertical communication refers to the flow of information up and down in line with the order line, while horizontal communication is the flow of information between people working in the same workplace.

As far as formal communication is concerned, it comes from the very essence of the organization, communication is made through the help of superiors, e-mail, normative acts, individual conversations, briefings, conferences, and many other means of communication.

In the case of informal communication, we deal with the transmission, reception and reconciliation of information about activities and behaviors that are independent of the forms and channels of formal communication.

Verbal communication refers to the message conveyed between the receiver and the sender. Non-verbal communication includes:

- mime of the sender and receiver of the message,
- mutual looks,
- body positions,
- gestures,
- intonation of voice,
- expression of feelings.⁶

⁴ J. Penc, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111.

⁵ Cf.: B. R. Kuc, J. M. Moczydłowska, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193 i 200-204 and cf. S. P. Robbins, *Zasady zachowania w organizacji*, wyd. Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2001, pp. 130-131.

⁶ J. Penc, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116. See: T. Rzepa, *O komunikowaniu się w organizacji* [w:] *Komunikowanie się w sytuacjach społecznych*, K. Markiewicz, J. Syroka (eds.), Wyd. UMCS, Lublin 2009, p. 59. More In: B. Kożuszniak, *Zachowania człowieka w organizacji*, wyd. PWE, Warszawa 2007, pp. 157-196.

It is worth mentioning that in addition to the types of communication proposed by J. Penc, A. Kwiatek also distinguishes the oblique flow of information. It is used in informal communication, for example in peer groups, or in exceptional situations, where teams are composed of members of different divisions of the organization that occupy different positions in the hierarchy. These are also project or task groups. It requires efficient coordination of activities and proper selection of members in such groups⁷.

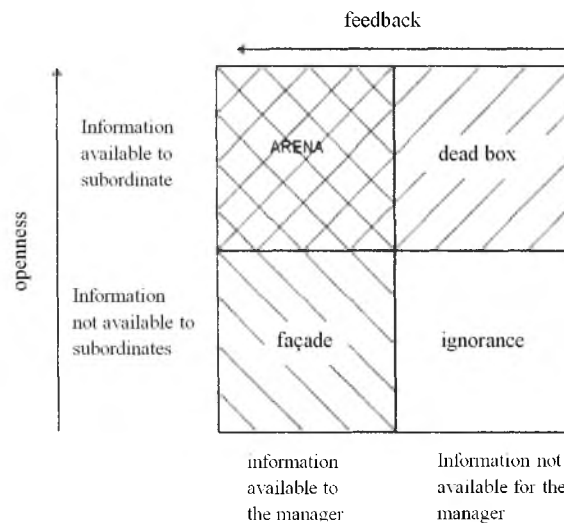
The key issue that needs to be addressed is that S.P. Robbins distinguishes four main

functions of communication in the organization, namely:

- control,
- monitoring,
- expressing feelings,
- information⁸.

There is no doubt about the fact that also in public organizations, such main functions are fulfilled in the process of communication. According to T. Rzepa, in the communication between subordinates and superiors the following combinations are possible, which are based on the very famous „JOHARI window” (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Types of information fields.



Source: T. Rzepa, *O komunikowaniu się w organizacji* [w:] K. Markiewicz, J. Syroka (eds.), *Komunikowanie się w sytuacjach społecznych*, wyd. UMCS, Lublin 2009, p. 58.

Well:

- arena - is an area of agreement where both parties are fully informed and their knowledge is common,
- dead box – is when information is known

to a subordinate and unknown to an employer, which can often lead to discomfort, misunderstanding and difficulty in making decisions,

- façade – is associated with the wrong conduct of the superior, which mainly consists of hiding data or transferring

⁷ A. Kwiatek, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

⁸ S.P. Robbins, *op.cit.*, p. 216.

them incomplete, thus preventing the effective operation of subordinates,

- ignorance – we deal with it when some information is not known to both parties, so one can be tempted to say that it does not have much influence on the communication process between them.⁹

In the context of what has been written so far, it must be stated that many communicators communicate in the organization with the cardiovascular system, which determines active interaction between employees, superiors and subordinates and intra-organization within the organization, which determines the success of each organization. As B. Dobek-Ostrowska argues, communication is the process of communication between individuals, groups or institutions. Its purpose is to exchange thoughts, share knowledge, information, and ideas. She also mentions that this process takes place at different levels using differentiated measures and produces specific outcomes¹⁰.

An important factor that should also be considered when discussing issues related to communication between a public organization and the environment is the message itself. It should be clearly formulated in accordance with the customs, standards and requirements adopted in the organization, and attention should also be paid to the important aspects of the situation. Communication is a kind of knowledge, a message that is thought out and specific, which undoubtedly influences the course of action an employee takes.

The following functions of the communication are described in the literature:

- descriptive - consists in conveying knowl-

- edge about a selected area of action,
- imperative – it consists in pointing out or forbidding something,
- valentine – consisting in imparting an objective or subjective assessment of the meaning, value of the case, assessment of a selected area of reality,
- inspirational – consists in inducing a certain emotion, a certain emotional tension,
- relational – consists in establishing and confirming contact between partners,
- aesthetic – is to pay attention to the "cultural" form of transmission¹¹.

Also in this case, it is not questionable that, the above functions of the message itself and, as a rule, are fulfilled in communication in a public entity with the environment under uncertainty.

Communication effectiveness requires, first and foremost, a good message creation and communication, and then an increased engagement of both parties in the task the recipient is expected to perform. It must be emphasized that the proper understanding of the message affects the degree to which the message is delivered.

A communication process should include the following elements:

- a clear concept of message,
- an appropriate form of transmission,
- it should ensure that the information reaches the recipient,
- it has to be ensured that the intent of the broadcast is understood,
- the recipient's reaction is monitored,
- feedback is received when the situation requires so¹².

It is important to communicate in a public organization, both inside and outside, with all kinds of communication barriers. This is of major importance in the circulation of information primarily because the resulting

⁹ T. Rzepa, O komunikowaniu się w organizacji [w:] Komunikowanie się w sytuacjach społecznych, K. Markiewicz, J. Syroka (eds.), Wyd. UMCS, Lublin 2009, p. 58.

¹⁰ B. Dobek-Ostrowska, Podstawy komunikowania społecznego, wyd. ASTRUM, Wrocław 2004, p. 12.

¹¹ J. Penc, op. cit., p. 118.

¹² J. Penc, op. cit., pp. 123-133.

communication barriers are the distortion or lack of reception, messages or information.

And on the sender's side of the message, the following should be changed

- lack of feedback between participants in the message,
- the avoidance of visual contact,
- lack of sensitivity to the feelings, beliefs and vocabulary of the recipient,
- no acceptance of responsibility for spoken words,
- no information,
- the use of only one way of transmitting information,
- lack of attention to the correspondence between words and gestures,
- no communication of the message in its entirety with all the side information that may be relevant to the recipient.

On the other hand, the recipient must change the following:

- he hears what he wants to hear,
- he ignores information that is in conflict with his past experience,

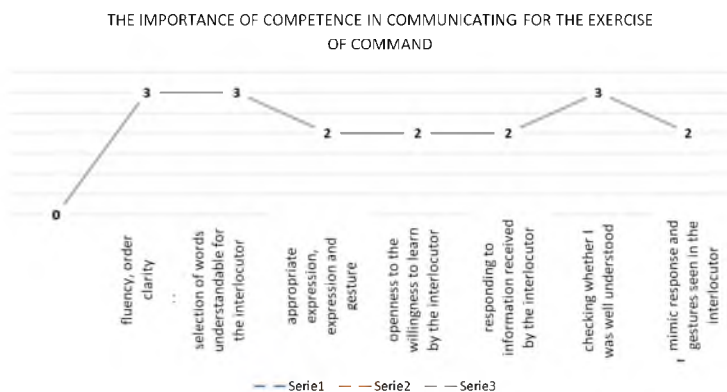
- he negatively evaluates the source of information,
- he misunderstands the words used in the sender's statement,
- he ignores non-verbal information,
- he does not receive reliable information from the sender.

In 2014, the WCEO conducted research on the social competencies of the commanding staff in the context of carrying out their missions.

A total of 740 respondents were examined: commanders and cadets in the last year in military academies.

The social competencies mentioned included communication. According to the respondents, it is a skill which is sometimes needed. The elements of communication most important for the commanders include fluency and orderliness, the choice of words for the caller, and checking if one was well understood¹³.

Figure 2. Profile of the importance of communicating for the exercise of command.



Source: Predel G., Łatacz J., *Kompetencje społeczne kadry dowódczej WP w kontekście realizacji zadań służbowych. Sprawozdanie z badań, WCEO, Warszawa, 2014, p. 14.*

- 1 – This is not necessary
- 2 – This is sometimes necessary
- 3 – This is very necessary

¹³ Predel G., Łatacz J., *Kompetencje społeczne kadry dowódczej WP w kontekście realizacji zadań służbowych. Sprawozdanie z badań, WCEO, Warszawa, 2014, pp. 13-14.*

Decisive, or the art of getting out of uncertainty

If we discuss the process of communicating in a military unit, decision-making cannot be forgotten as a means of getting out of uncertainty.

It is therefore worth going out of the definition of the notion of decision, so it is derived from Latin. *Decisio* means – I decide, decide. On the other hand, making a decision, literally, means choosing an intentional, non-selective choice of one of two options, two options (variants), ways or directions of action desirable from the point of view of the interest of the individual or system (enterprise) under which the choice is made and recognized as feasible¹³.

In the relevant literature, the following theories of a decision are distinguished:

- a classic decision theory – which seeks the best solutions in a field where problems are formalized and well-defined,
- the cognitive theories of decision - which seek solutions of sufficient (real, effective) so-called real, pragmatic problems that are hard to define.

This classic theory of decision mainly deals with:

- analysis of decisions – which deals with a specific case of a decision taken by a person or a group. In this case, the analysis consists in determining the optimum decision and, if the decision was not optimal, finding the reasons for the derogation or mistake,
- decision support – which mainly involves trying to determine the best solution for a given knowledge resource and information about possible consequences. This also applies to group decisions.

In addition, it seems reasonable to describe cognitive science, which as a young

science, deals with the modeling of phenomena related to the functioning of the mind. It is interdisciplinary, the main area of interest for research is what is most important for every decision maker in every situation: knowledge, language, learning processes, thinking, perception, consciousness, intelligence, and especially cognitive intelligence.

Currently, decision problems are divided into three groups:

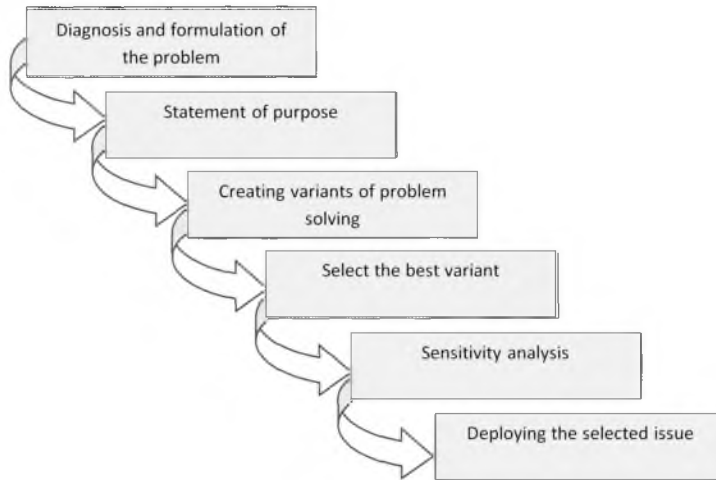
- a decision made under certainty – each decision entails specific, known consequences;
- decision taken in risky conditions – each decision entails more than one consequence, we know the set of possible consequences and probabilities of their occurrence;
- decision made under uncertainty – we do not know the probabilities of the consequences of a decision¹⁴.

From the point of view of the above division, the issue of making decisions in the context of uncertainty regarding the actions of soldiers in a military unit is most interesting. It is not debatable whether, when a situation comes to a decision, there must first be a problem. In the professional literature there are seven stages of a problem solving process. Below are some examples of a decision-making process (Figure 3).

¹³ B.R. Kuc, J.M. Moczydlowska, *Zachowania organizacyjne. Podręcznik akademicki*, Difin, Warszawa 2009, p. 118.

¹⁴ B.R. Kuc, J. M. Moczydlowska, *op. cit.*, p. 118-121.

Figure 3. Stages of a decision-making process.



Source: B.R. Kuc, J.M. Moczyłowska, *Zachowania organizacyjne. Podręcznik akademicki*, wyd. Dyfin, Warszawa 2009, p. 124.

S.P. Robbins mentions a model of rational decision making, which consists of 6 stages:

- defining a problem,
- defining decision criteria, considering criteria,
- searching for other opportunities,
- evaluation of each pot according to each criterion,
- taking the optimum decision¹⁵.

Regardless of which decision-making option is chosen, the key is that ultimately the decision is made and implemented in the organization.

When dealing with the situation of uncertainty, it should be noted that this complexity and dynamics are the psychological causes of uncertainty. It should be emphasized that the complexity of the situation is mainly due to the large number of its dimensions, such as the characteristics, quality and categories necessary to describe problems or their aspects. Because

a person tends to simplify as a consequence, uncertainty arises and the decision situation is recognized with a certain degree of uncertainty. The second source of uncertainty is the variability of the situation. You can be tempted to say that the state of uncertainty is a complex state.

This uncertainty has two independent dimensions:

- uncertainty arising from the lack of or incomplete knowledge of objectively existing event-generating mechanisms,
- uncertainty arising from the consciousness of one's own cognitive limitations, incomplete information or knowledge, experience.

The first type of uncertainty can be defined as external uncertainty because the source of its origin lies in the degree of trust in the knowledge of objective mechanisms for the emergence of certain events. External uncertainty can be represented in the mind as a distribution of events or as a unique singular event.

¹⁵ *Zachowania w organizacji*, wyd. PWE, Warszawa 1998, p. 87.

The second type of uncertainty has its basis in the lack of trust in your own conclusions, ideas, or assessments, resulting from personal experience or as a result of thinking. Internal uncertainty assumes the form of uncertainty requested or experienced¹⁶.

At this point, you should consider how to really make a decision in your organization. Is it true that when making decisions in uncertainty, we refer to the rational model cited above and, perhaps, when deciding on a dynamically changing situation, a decision is made that is acceptable but not optimal.

According to S.P. Robbins, decision making in an organization consists of the following:

- limited rationality – to facilitate the decision-making process, man creates simplified models that cover the essence of the problem but do not represent it in all its complexity,
- intuition – then intuitive decisions are made quickly based on information that seems very limited,
- problem identification – the most frequently encountered problems rather than important problems are faced
- searching for possible solutions – most often when deciding to look for a satisfactory than optimal solution,
- making choices – where heuristics are used, i.e. simplified judgments,
- individual differences – these are the style of decision-making and the level of moral development of the decision-maker,
- organizational constraints – performance evaluation, reward system, time constraints imposed by the system, historical procedures,
- cultural differences¹⁷.

For comparison, below are the factors that, according to B.R. Kuć and J.M. Moczydlowska, interfere with decision-making, and thus influence uncertainty:

- excess of information – too many numbers and additionally new, varied technical measures, have a negative impact on decision making,
- an information fatigue syndrome – which manifests itself as follows:
 - it is impossible to analyze growing information resources,
 - increased self-confidence,
 - responsibility for their own mistakes is transferred to others,
 - the effect of authority,
 - conformity,
- group membership – which reduces the individual sense of responsibility for a particular decision,
- rewards, punishment, stress and strong emotions – which reduce the flexibility of thinking and lead to irrational behavior¹⁸.

Some of these factors are presented by each of the authors, which may indicate a convergence of views on what elements of the decision-making process adversely affect the decision-making process, thereby disrupting decision making and at the same time introducing uncertainty.

In addition to the above factors that negatively affect the decision-making process, the barriers to effective decision-making should be presented for discussion purposes:

- relaxed avoidance – when we are not afraid of the consequences of lack of decision,
- relaxed change – when we focus on risky decisions,
- defensive avoidance – when we postpone making decisions for the future,
- panic – when a threat of criticism or sanctions builds up,

¹⁶ B.R. Kuc, J.M. Moczydlowska, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

¹⁷ S.P. Robbins, op. cit., pp. 89-98.

¹⁸ B.R. Kuc, J.M. Moczydlowska, op. cit., pp. 138-142.

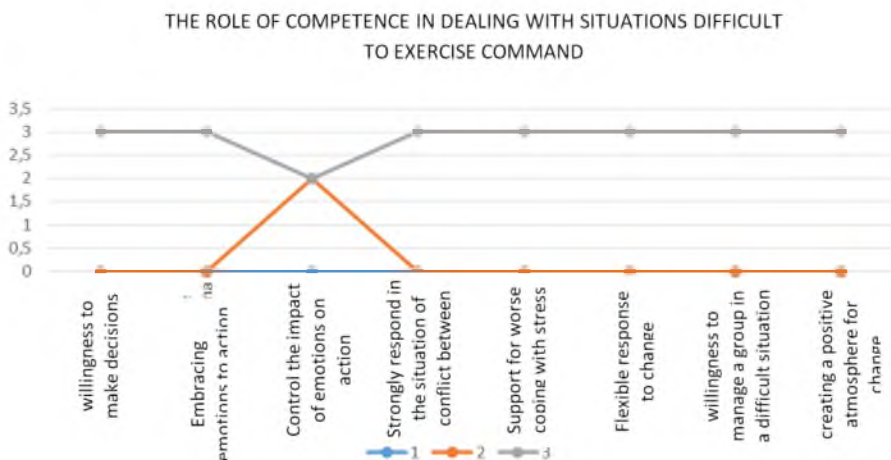
- application of the rule of domination
- when one side emphasizes the positive aspects,
- limited rationality – when we stop at the sanctioning elections,
- positive picture of yourself
- excess of ambition - when ambition exceeds opportunities,
- excess emotion and stress – when distress produces many disorders,
- a low degree of uncertainty tolerance when there is a low willingness to risk.

The relevant literature shows that decision making is a response to the uncertainty inherent in the situation. Working under uncertainty requires continuous decision-making. Constant uncertainty compels us

to continually decide which option of action is more reliable and more profitable on the way to our goal. The decision fixes (should solve) a problem of uncertainty action. A man in a decision situation feels uncertain because he does not know which possible outcome will produce the desired outcome. Every decision is a solution to the problem of uncertainty. As a result of the decision – the uncertainty is abolished or significantly reduced – it becomes the controlled situation affected¹⁹.

Leadership is important in the ability to behave in difficult situations in this communication. According to the WCEO study conducted in 2014, the following trends were noted.

Figure 4. Profile of the importance of competence in situations difficult to exercise command



Source: Predel G., Łatacz J., *Kompetencje społeczne kadry dowódczej WP w kontekście realizacji zadań służbowych. Sprawozdanie z badań, WCEO, Warszawa, 2014, p. 16.*

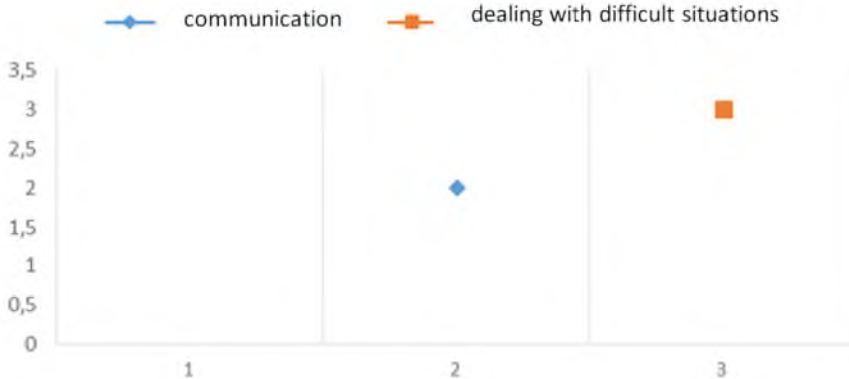
- 1 - This is not necessary
- 2 - This is sometimes necessary
- 3 - This is very necessary

Analyzing the profiles of the powers of the firemen to perform commanding functions, it is more appropriate to possess the competencies of appropriate behavior in the pursuit of intimidation rather than the communication commons.

¹⁹ B.R. Kuc, J. M. Moczyłowska, op. cit, s. 137 i 143.

Figure 5. Communication skills and competence in difficult situations

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND COMPETENCE IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS



Source: Predel G., Łatacz J., *Kompetencje społeczne kadry dowódczej WP w kontekście realizacji zadań służbowych. Sprawozdanie z badań, WCEO, Warszawa, 2014, p. 17*

- 1 - This is not necessary
- 2 - This is sometimes necessary
- 3 - This is very necessary

Conclusion

By analyzing the above research and content, it can be seen that the commandos' communication and communication skills in difficult, uncertain situations are quite high. Soldiers are well versed in the fluency and orderliness of speech, the choice of words suitable for the interlocutor, the openness of the speaker's willingness to speak, react to the mimicry and gestures of the interlocutor. Nevertheless, they devote less attention to their own nonverbal behavior.

On the other hand, the behavior in uncertainty is characterized by willingness to make difficult decisions, controlling emotion for decision-making, self-control, and resolutely reacting to conflicts between people and supporting those who are less likely to cope with stress or managing a group.

Improvements, however, require communication skills such as verifying that one was well understood in the area of coping with the difficult situation of creating a positive atmosphere for change.

The above skills should be improved during a number of courses and training covering the above issues²⁰.

To sum up, the only way out of uncertainty in the decision-making process is to be able to speak properly and react to the needs of the environment. Of course, a decision maker, an employee, a supervisor, and in this case a soldier should remember that decision-making is a complex and very dynamic process. It is worth pointing out that there are a number of de-

²⁰ Cf.: Predel G., Łatacz J., *Kompetencje społeczne kadry dowódczej WP w kontekście realizacji zadań służbowych. Sprawozdanie z badań, WCEO, Warszawa, 2014, p. 7.*

terminants in decision making, which can make it difficult or even impossible to make the right decision.

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