

THE IMPACT OF SEX AND GENDER ON THE PERCEPTION OF THE PERSONAL SECURITY OF UNIFORMED PUBLIC SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

The article presents a psychological approach to sex and gender in uniformed public services, and is based on the author's own research. The research examines the role of women in the military and the popular perception of women participating in the armed forces, as well as possible differences in this regard between the military and the civilian environment. The paper also presents the results of research on the perception of personal security by uniformed public service members when on duty. In the course of the analysis of the factors significant for the investigated phenomenon, i.e. for the psychological gender, a number of specific research problems has been identified. The identified problems are dependent in nature and relate to the significance of relations between variables. The analysis of the research problem, conducted on the basis of subject literature, indicates that psychological gender is one of the significant factors that determine perceived personal

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security. This factor is chosen as the primary independent variable in this paper. Psychological gender is understood here as spontaneous readiness to apply the dimension of gender in relation to oneself and the external world.

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INTRODUCTION¹

The argument with the strongest impact on the negative perception of the functionality of women in uniformed public services relates to the biological differences between men and women. The physical ability is of great importance in life- and health-threatening conditions. It is of particular importance with regard to the activities of “primary response” services – the Police, Border Guard, Municipal or Communal Guard.²

On average, women are shorter than men by 10–12 centimetres and weight approximately 10 kg less, which is why they may potentially be in an unfavourable position in the majority of situations where the physical stature of service members plays a role. These differences are most prominent in the upper body, and less noticeable in the lower limbs. Female results in fitness tests are thus lower than male results, which is caused by indelible differences in morphological structure.

The Military Office for Social Research (Polish: Wojskowe Biuro Badań Społecznych), a unit that studies the social reality of the military and also monitors female service, has conducted research relating to the role of women in the military and the popular perception of women participating in the armed

¹ This paper is based on the author's master's thesis titled *Płeć a spostrzegane bezpieczeństwo personalne podczas wykonywania zadań służb mundurowych na przykładzie podchorążych Wyższej Szkoły Oficerskiej Wojsk Lądowych imienia Generała Tadeusza Kościuszki* [Sex and gender and the perceived personal security of uniformed public service members when on duty: the example of the cadets of General Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces], Wrocław 2015.

² J. Maciejewski, K. Dojwa, *Uczestnictwo kobiet w siłach Zbrojnych Straży Granicznej i Policji (analiza socjologiczna)*, Wrocław 2012, pp. 57–58.

forces, as well as to possible differences in this regard between the military and the civilian community.³ The results indicate that both communities are to a similar extent in favour of allowing women to choose the military as their career path; interestingly enough, however, the civilian community is more likely to speak in favour of excluding women from the service areas in which they would have to take part in active combat. The respondents also claimed that women disrupt small units because men with women at their side do not fight as effectively as in all-male teams, and a woman's death would have a demoralising effect on men and be perceived negatively by the wider public.

Both the civilian and the military group are largely opposed to compulsory military service for females. The respondents who expressed their objection to females serving in the military cited as reasons the possibility of women being taken into slavery or mistreated, though this argument was predominantly raised by the civilian group, not the military (a difference of 24 per cent). Both the civilian and the military group of respondents claimed the most important argument against women serving in the military to be that women perform their duties poorer than men do.⁴ These results lead to questions regarding how individual security is perceived by uniformed public service members performing their tasks. It is valid to conjecture that they would feel more secure performing tasks together with other men. Women in modern societies have served, serve and will serve in uniformed public services. Thus, such discussions are important and conclusions must be drawn so as to be able to develop future strategies which contribute to both the perceived and experienced security of these professional groups, which are of great importance to society.

1. THE AUTHOR'S RESEARCH

The aim of the described research, which was conducted by the author herself, was to investigate the relation between gender and the level of perceived personal security in uniformed public service members while on duty. The study was conducted on a group of officer cadets studying at the Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces in Wrocław, Poland. The choice of the

³ The data obtained by the Office on Women in the NATO Forces are presented after: B. Szubińska, *Konferencja Komitetu ds. Kobiet w SZ NATO*, [in:] *Materiały z konferencji pod patronatem I. Jarugi-Norwackiej*. Udział Kobiet w Systemie Bezpieczeństwa Państwa, Warszawa 2003, p. 111.

⁴ M. Baran-Wojtachnio, *Wojskowa Służba kobiet w odbiorze społecznym. Komunikat z badań*, [in:] K. Dojwa, J. Maciejewski, *Kobiety...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15.

group means that the purpose of the sample is to be representative of Polish uniformed public services.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Several research problems were identified in the course of analysing factors important to the phenomenon of gender. The problems are dependent in nature and relate to the significance of relations between variables.

Three groups of dependency problems were identified with regard to the following relations:

Problem 1: The relation between the primary independent variables and the dependent variable

- Is there a relation between gender and the perceived level of personal security? If so, what is it?
- Are there any differences between gender and the perceived level of personal security?

Problem 2: The relation between the secondary independent variables and the dependent variable

- Is the sex of the respondents a differentiating factor in relation to the perceived level of personal security?
- Is the study year a differentiating factor in relation to the perceived level of personal security?

Problem 3: The relation between the secondary independent variables and the primary independent variable

- Is the sex of the respondents a differentiating factor in relation to their gender?
- Is the study year a differentiating factor in relation to gender?

1.2 DEFINITIONS AND VARIABLE STRUCTURE

1.2.1 DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PERCEIVED LEVEL OF PERSONAL SECURITY

Personal security consists of two components: the objective component – external to the subject, related to the lack of threats to one's life and property; and the subjective component – internal to the subject, psychological in nature and related to one's sense of security and perceived lack of threats. Personal security is thus a complex structure consisting of both mental and non-mental components.⁵

⁵ A. Wawrzusiszyn, P. Wasilewski, *Bezpieczeństwo personalne grup dyspozycyjnych społeczeństwa*, [in:] W. Horyń, L. Wełyczko (eds), *Edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa w XXI wieku. Człowiek – bezpieczeństwo – państwo*, Wrocław 2012, p. 454.

1.2.2 PRIMARY INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

An analysis of the problem based on the relevant literature indicates that gender is an important factor which determines how personal security is perceived. In this paper, this factor is assumed to be the primary independent variable.

1.2.3 GENDER – DEFINITION

Gender is understood to mean a spontaneous readiness to apply a gender dimension in relation to oneself and the world.⁶

1.2.4 SECONDARY INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

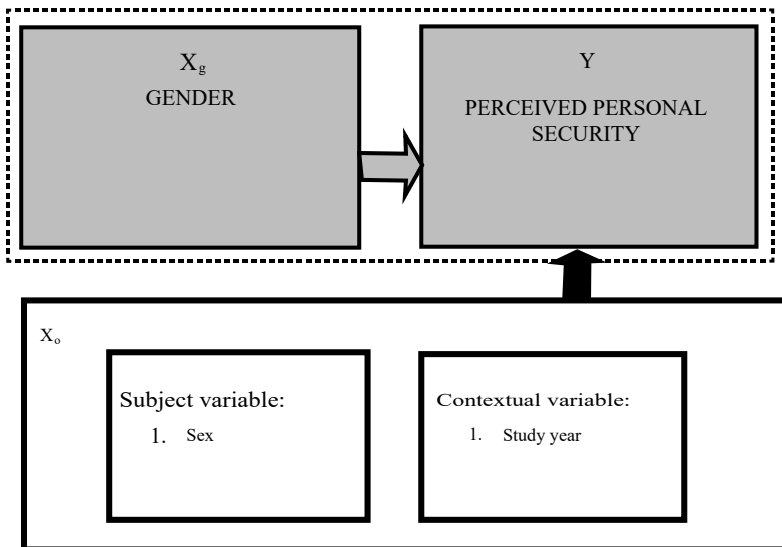
Two secondary variables were taken into account: the subject variable relating to the respondents and the contextual variable.

- **Subject variable** – the following variable was studied: the respondents' gender.
- **Contextual variable** – a variable was introduced which relates to the social context of the respondents: their study year.

1.2.5 RELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIABLES

Figure 1 presents all variables studied and the expected relations between them.

FIGURE 1. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIABLES.



Source: Author's own work

⁶ A. Kuczyńska, *Inwentarz do oceny płci psychologicznej*. Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych Polskiego Towarzystwa Psychologicznego, Warszawa 1992, pp. 8–9.

1.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Three sets of hypotheses on the relations between the variables were formed – each corresponding to a different group of research problems. All hypotheses are two-tailed non-directional hypotheses. Based on the relevant literature,⁷ it is not possible to determine that a distinctly linear relation exists between the variables studied, or to presuppose any particular tendency as regards the differences between the studied groups with regard to a given factor.

- **Hypothesis 1:** relation between gender and the perceived level of personal security
- **Hypothesis 2:** relation between the secondary independent variables and the perceived level of personal security
- **Hypothesis 3:** relation between the secondary independent variables and gender

1.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND TOOLS

The study adhered to the correlation procedure, meaning that the variables were not manipulated in any manner.⁸ The study was divided into two stages. The first stage consisted of a pilot study conducted on a group of 17 respondents with the aim of assessing whether the research tool was easy to understand. The pilot study was conducted on 29th April 2015. The respondents were officer cadets studying at the Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces. Their task was to assess the legibility of the questionnaires and determine the amount of time necessary to complete them. The results indicated that there was no need to alter the tools. The second stage, i.e. the study proper, was aimed at verifying the hypotheses. Between 30th April 2015 and 14th May 2015, a total of 347 officer cadets attending the same university were examined using the research tools.

The study used two research tools: the author's own questionnaire and Kuczyńska's *Gender Assessment List (Inwentarz do oceny płci psychologicznej, IPP)*.⁹

The questionnaire consisted of ten entries – seven of those related to the general level of security, and three related to the personal level of security. Answers were given on a scale of 1 to 3, where 1 indicated a low level of

⁷ Cf.: M. Kempa, *Płeć a spostrzegane bezpieczeństwo personalne podczas wykonywania zadań służb mundurowych na przykładzie podchorążych Wyższej Szkoły Oficerskiej Wojsk Lądowych imienia Generała Tadeusza Kościuszki*, Wrocław 2015, Chapters 1–3.

⁸ J. Brzeziński, *Metodologia badań psychologicznych*, Warszawa 2007.

⁹ A. Kuczyńska, *Inwentarz...*, *op. cit.*

perceived personal security, 2 indicated a medium level of perceived personal security, and 3 indicated a high level of perceived personal security.

The sample consisted of 347 respondents. All respondents were officer cadets studying at Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces. Military students from all years participated in the study. The respondents were selected according to their availability, which was determined by their class and study attendance. Men constituted 87.5% of all respondents, with women making up 12.5% of the total.

The study was conducted between 30th April 2015 and 14th May 2015 on a group of officer cadets studying at the Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces.

1.5 ASSESSMENT AND RESULT INTERPRETATION PRINCIPLES

No default standard values were specified for the results, which were just measured quantitatively. The level of security was expressed on a scale of perceived personal security, which itself was divided into three categories: **general perception of personal security** as the sum of individual answers to the first 7 questions, perception of **one's own personal security** calculated as the sum of individual answers to the final 3 questions, and **global perception of personal security** calculated as the sum of individual answers to all 10 questions.

2. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

After the research procedure, the answers of 347 respondents were studied. Due to incomplete data in several questionnaires, the data from 336 of them were entered into SPSS software, and only those results are analysed in this paper. *Perceived level of personal security* was adopted as the dependent variable.

The variable was analysed from the perspective of the personal security of a uniformed public service member while on duty, taking into account the mental and physical features of the respondents and their gender, which constituted the primary independent variable. Two secondary independent variables were also taken into account – *study year* and *sex*.

The first stage of the analysis, in accordance with Kuczyńska's list manual, was to divide the respondents into feminine, masculine, androgynous and sexually undefined groups.

The initial analyses also involved the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for all dependent and independent variables. The subsequent stages served

to statistically verify the research hypotheses. One-way variance analysis, Student's t-test and its non-parametric alternative, the Mann-Whitney test, were used to study the relation between the *perceived level of security* and *gender*; the Mann-Whitney test was also used for independent samples to verify the remaining sets of hypotheses. The additional analyses also incorporated single-variable variance tests as part of the general linear model.

2.1 PRIMARY INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: GENDER

All study participants responded to the questions included in Kuczyńska's Gender Assessment List. The result distribution for this variable is as follows: 86.9% of the respondents aligned with the androgynous gender schema ($N = 292$), 10.7% aligned with the female schema ($N = 36$), 1.8% aligned with the male schema ($N = 6$) and only 0.6% of the respondents aligned with the undefined gender schema ($N = 2$).

Table 1 presents the above gender distribution data.

TABLE 1. GENDER DISTRIBUTION BY SEX

Sex/ gender schema	Undefined		Femininity		Masculinity		Androgyny	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	0	0	5	11,9	1	2,4	36	85,7
Male	2	0,7	31	10,5	5	1,7	256	87,1

Source: Author's own work

2.2 PRIMARY DEPENDENT VARIABLE – LEVEL OF PERCEIVED PERSONAL SECURITY

All study participants responded to the questions included in the questionnaire created for the purpose of the present study. The distribution of the *perceived level of security* variable is presented in Figures 2 to 4.

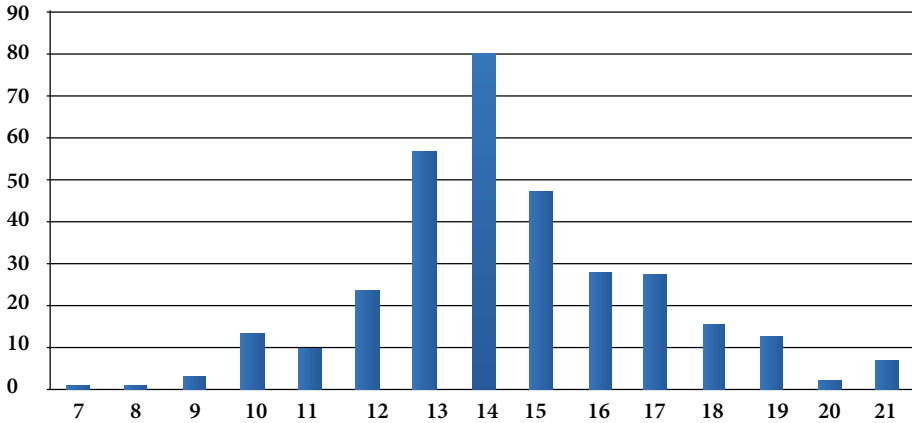
2.2.1 GENERAL PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL SECURITY

The variable *general perception of personal security* was calculated as the sum of individual answers to the first 7 questions in the author's questionnaire. The maximum number of points available was 21, and the minimum number was 7. The results ranged from 7 to 21 ($M = 14.48$, $SD = 2.42$). The distribution of the variable is presented in Figure 2.

2.2.2 PERCEPTION OF ONE'S OWN PERSONAL SECURITY

The variable perception of *one's own personal security* was calculated as the

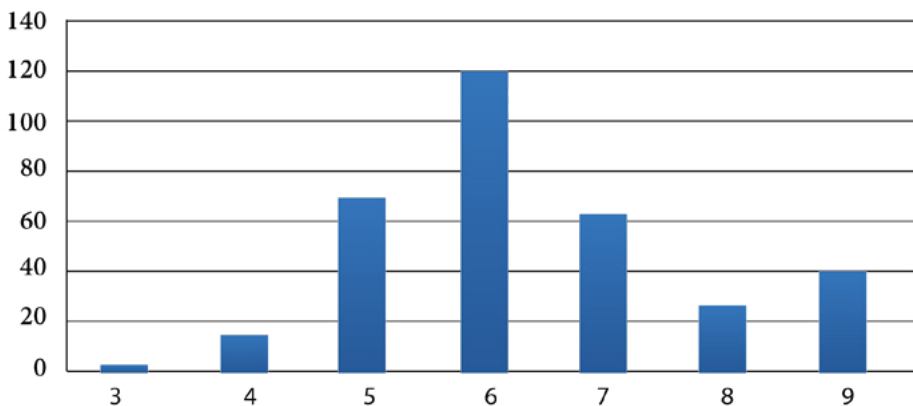
FIGURE 2. GENERAL PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL SECURITY – RESULT DISTRIBUTION



Source: Author's own work

sum of individual answers to the last 3 questions from the author's questionnaire. The maximum amount of points available was 9, and the minimum amount was 3. The results ranged from 3 to 9 ($M = 6.41$, $SD = 1.37$). The distribution of the variable is presented in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3. PERCEPTION OF ONE'S OWN PERSONAL SECURITY – RESULT DISTRIBUTION

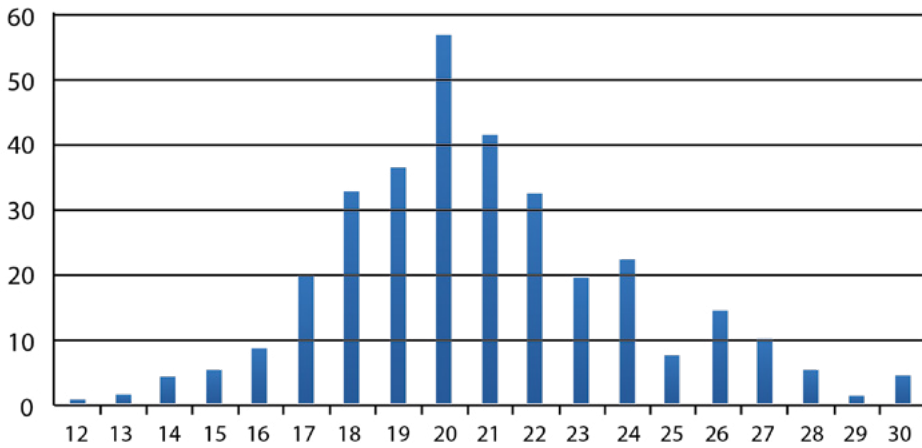


Source: Author's own work

2.2.3 GLOBAL PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL SECURITY

The variable *global perception of personal security* was calculated as the sum of individual answers to all 10 questions from the author’s questionnaire. The maximum amount of points available was 30, and the minimum amount was 10. The results ranged from 10 to 30 ($M = 20.88$, $SD = 3.37$). The distribution of the variable is presented in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4. GLOBAL PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL SECURITY – RESULT DISTRIBUTION



Source: Author’s own work

Tables 2 and 3 present the responses given to particular questions in the author’s questionnaire.

TABLE 2. PERCEPTION OF GENERAL PERSONAL SECURITY – DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Women’s assessment of security	1	123	36.6%
	2	131	39%
	3	81	24.1%
Men’s assessment of security	1	23	20.5%
	2	164	63.7%
	3	149	15.8%

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Men's and women's assessment of security	1	69	20.5%
	2	214	63.7%
	3	53	15.8%
Women's assessment of security, physical	1	204	60.7%
	2	103	30.7%
	3	29	8.6%
Men's assessment of security, physical	1	11	3.3%
	2	105	31.3%
	3	220	65.5%
Women's assessment of security, mental	1	129	38.4%
	2	146	43.5%
	3	60	17.9%
Men's assessment of security, mental	1	14	4.2%
	2	177	52.7%
	3	144	34.2%

Source: Author's own work

TABLE 3. PERCEPTION OF INDIVIDUAL PERSONAL SECURITY – DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Assessment of individual personal security, with women	1	148	44%
	2	130	38.7%
	3	58	17.3%
Assessment of individual personal security, with men	1	9	2.7%
	2	109	32.4%
	3	218	64.9%
Assessment of individual personal security, with men and women	1	59	17.6%
	2	200	59.5%
	3	77	22.9%

Source: Author's own work

2.3 THE STATISTICAL VERIFICATION OF THE HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: relation between gender and the perceived level of personal security

To test the hypothesis related to the impact of *gender* on the perceived level of personal security, three variables were used: the *general level of perceived personal security*, which is the sum of the answers to the first 7 questions from the questionnaire; the *level of individual personal security*, which is the sum of the answers to the last 3 questions from the questionnaire; as well as the *global level of perceived personal security*, which is the sum of the answers to all questions.

After conducting the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was observed that the raw output for all variables did not feature a normal distribution. The non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for independent samples was used for the purpose of performing calculations using these scales, as well as ANOVA.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted. No statistically significant differences exist between *gender* and the *perceived level of personal security* – not for the assessment of this level ($F(3.332) = 0.508$; $p = 0.677$) or the assessment of one's own level of security ($F(3.332) = 1.374$; $p = 0.251$). The total result did not indicate any statistically significant differences in *gender* ($F(3.332) = 0.953$; $p = 0.415$). No grounds exist to discard the null hypothesis.

Results summary: The results analysed were not statistically significant. It can therefore be said that Hypothesis 1 has not been confirmed. No relation exists between gender and the perceived level of personal security.

Hypothesis 2: relation between the secondary independent variables and the perceived level of personal security

A comparison of the two genders was conducted using the Mann-Whitney U test. The difference in *perceived security* observed was statistically significant. Women ($M = 22.43$; $SD = 2.63$) scored higher in *perceiving security* than men ($M = 20.66$; $SD = 3.41$) for $p = 0.000$. Analogous differences occurred between women ($M = 15.48$; $SD = 1.85$) and men ($M = 14.33$; $SD = 2.46$) with regard to *perceiving general security* ($p = 0.001$) and *one's own security* (women: $M = 6.95$; $SD = 1.15$; men: $M = 6.33$; $SD = 1.38$; for $p = 0.002$). The null hypothesis must be discarded.

Results summary: The results analysed were statistically significant. It can therefore be said that Hypothesis 2 was confirmed. There exists a relation between the secondary independent variable (in this case – *sex*)

and the *perceived level of personal security*. In general, women feel more secure than men.

TABLE 4. PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL SECURITY BY STUDY YEAR – DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Study year	N	Average	Standard deviation
Security (sum)	1	72	21.38	3.30
	2	76	21.92	3.33
	3	101	19.80	3.29
	4	55	21.02	3.05
	5	32	20.50	3.63
	Total	336	20.88	3.37
General security	1	72	14.74	2.35
	2	76	15.11	2.36
	3	101	13.78	2.47
	4	55	14.60	2.17
	5	32	14.38	2.58
	Total	336	14.48	2.42
One's own security	1	72	6.64	1.20
	2	76	6.82	1.45
	3	101	6.02	1.26
	4	55	6.42	1.41
	5	32	6.13	1.48
	Total	336	6.41	1.37

Source: Author's own work

A one-way ANOVA was conducted. Statistically significant differences exist in relation to the *perception of security* between *study years*. The results for the *global perception of security* were $F(4.331) = 5.139$; $p = 0.000$; for the *general perception of security*, the results were $F(4.331) = 3.733$; $p = 0.005$; for the *perception of one's own security*, the results were $F(4.331) = 4.783$; $p = 0.001$.

The null hypothesis must thus be discarded. The results analysed were statistically significant. It can therefore be said that Hypothesis 2 was confirmed. There exists a relation between the secondary independent variable

(in this case – *study year*) and the *perceived level of personal security*. In general, second year students feel the most secure, and third year students' sense of security is the lowest.

Hypothesis 3: relation between the secondary independent variables and gender

The Mann-Whitney U test did not indicate any significant differences in *gender* between men and women ($p = 0.828$). No grounds exist for discarding the null hypothesis.

The results analysed were not statistically significant. It can therefore be said that Hypothesis 3 has not been confirmed. There exists no relation between the secondary independent variable (in this case – *sex*) and *gender*.

3. DISCUSSION

A very numerous group of officer cadet students was studied. Students from all years participated in the study. The questionnaires were handed out during lectures and workshops with the consent of the lecturers. Student attendance was most frequently high. Only 42 women and as many as 294 men were studied, though the number of women was representative of the great majority of female officer cadets in all study years, and was sufficient for the purposes of the statistical analysis of study results.

The author's own research confirmed several of the proposed relations in the group studied. The results indicate no statistically significant relation between gender and the perception of personal security in members of uniformed public services on duty, considering that the group was homogeneous with regard to gender. However, the results do indicate interesting relations between the perceived level of personal security while on duty and sex.

3.1 GENDER

Nearly 90 per cent of the respondents aligned with the androgynous gender schema, i.e. integrate both stereotypically male and female characteristics in a complementary fashion. It can thus be conjectured that such respondents are well-adjusted socially, considering that their reactions are flexible, open and sensitive to external requirements. Such respondents are thus resistant to stress, have a positive view of themselves, are in better health and have stronger personalities. Only 10 per cent of the respondents align with

the female gender schema, including only 5 women and approx. 30 men. It can thus be assumed that sex is not an important variable in this regard. The male and undefined gender schemata were represented minimally at only approximately 2 per cent. Based on the above, it can be concluded that the sample studied aligned with the gender schema which is the most conducive to mental health – androgyny. Androgynous persons possess the greatest adaptability, seeing as they can apply both stereotypically male and female gender schemata to match the situations they find themselves in. However, the results obtained do not align with the results obtained by Chojnowska in her study conducted at the Polish Naval Academy, where both the men and women more frequently aligned with the male schema, which was in line with the researcher's predictions.¹⁰

3.2 LEVEL OF PERCEIVED PERSONAL SECURITY WHILE ON DUTY AS A MEMBER OF A UNIFORMED PUBLIC SERVICE

The general perception of personal security by the respondents was medium, and their personal security was assessed to be above-average to relatively high. The global perception of security was also medium to high. An analysis of the answers given to particular questions leads to the conclusion that the respondents assess the physical security of women as rather low (approx. 60 per cent of all responses), and the security of men is regarded as high (approx. 65 per cent of all responses). 39 per cent of the respondents assessed the security of women as low, and the same applies to their mental security (nearly 39 per cent), but the mental security of men was regarded as low by only 4 per cent of all respondents. With regard to the individual security of uniformed public service members while on duty, security with men was assessed the highest – nearly 65 per cent of all respondents assessed security as high in this context, and only 17 per cent of all respondents claimed they would feel a high level of security with women. Mixed team security was assessed as medium by nearly 60 per cent of the respondents. It can thus be claimed that the respondents consider the security of both men and mixed teams to be higher than the security of women, both on the general level and with regard to individual security while on duty with female team-members.

¹⁰ M. Chojnowska, *Płeć a męskość i kobiecość w heterogenicznym środowisku podchorążych Akademii Marynarki Wojennej*, [in:] K. Dojwa, J. Maciejewski (eds), *Kobiety...*, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

3.3 RELATION BETWEEN GENDER AND THE PERCEIVED LEVEL OF PERSONAL SECURITY

The results did not indicate a statistically significant relation between gender and the perceived level of personal security while on duty as a uniformed public service member. Thus, it follows that the gender stereotypes embedded in our culture appear to have no impact on the assessment of personal security, both in the general, individual and global aspect. However, it is more likely that the majority of the respondents (nearly 90 per cent) being androgynous, i.e. using both stereotypically male and female characteristics depending on the situation, was what motivated these results. The results thus appear to be congruent with the gender distribution identified in the sample.

3.4 RELATION BETWEEN THE SECONDARY INDEPENDENT VARIABLES AND THE PERCEIVED LEVEL OF SECURITY

The study discovered that women perceive their personal security as higher than men both on the global and individual level. The women who participated in the study thus perceived their security as higher than men. The reason for this may be that women feel more secure than men in general as they are aware that, as a minority in uniformed public services, they can always expect help and support from men, who constitute the majority and whose abilities with regard to guaranteeing security are assessed as markedly higher than those of women, or, alternatively, that women differ from men in their awareness of the threats they may face while on duty. It is possible that women apply the stereotype according to which men are expected to a larger degree to ensure personal security, considering their greater mental aptitude, which was also described as higher than in women by the respondents. The results of these analyses may also be motivated by the preconception that women in uniformed public services occupy positions which are less exposed to threats than positions occupied by men.

Differences in the perception of the level of personal security were also identified between particular study years. Second year students consider the personal security of uniformed public service members, both generally and individually, to be high. Third year students, however, assess their perceived level of security to be the lowest out of all study years. These results are not reflected in the relevant literature analysed in this paper. The initial conjecture was that any significant differences in this respect would occur between students in their first and final year. This prediction was not confirmed

by the statistical analysis conducted, however. It can thus be conjectured that the results obtained are motivated by factors which would have to be determined and analysed in a separate study.

3.5 RELATION BETWEEN THE SECONDARY INDEPENDENT VARIABLES AND GENDER

Study results did not indicate a statistically significant relation between gender and sex. These results are a consequence of the fact that the sample consisted in 90 per cent of persons of androgynous gender. It can thus be conjectured that, regardless of sex, the sample featured the type of gender which is the healthiest from the point of view of psychology. No statistically significant differences were identified between gender and study year either, which is motivated by the predominantly androgynous gender schema of the sample. The present study thus failed to clear the doubts expressed in Chojnowska's study on the gender of the military students of the Polish Navy Academy,¹¹ in which the sample studied was predominantly male-gendered regardless of sex. In the study cited, the authors expresses doubts as to whether it is women who align with the male gender schema that enrol in such schools, or whether they begin to align with the male gender schema as a result of attending a military school. These doubts could be settled with the help of a longitudinal study conducted in the first and the final year of study, as is the case for the present study. However, due to the dominance of the androgynous gender schema, the research conducted is incapable of solving the issue.

3.6 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The research conducted was limited in several important aspects. Sample selection was the most important process. In the case of this study, the initial hypotheses were verified on a sample of students attending a single university and pursuing education in a particular professional field, hence any extrapolation of the results achieved to the remainder of the large group that are members of all uniformed armed services must be limited. Research on a representative sample of members of all uniformed public services in Poland is beyond the scope of a master's thesis.¹² However, the present study does appear valid due to the fact that, when studying certain

¹¹ M. Chojnowska, *Plec...*, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹² See Footnote 1 (editor's note).

relations, it is worth verifying if they do occur even in groups of this size. This study can thus be described as a valid pilot study leading to more comprehensive research conducted on a representative sample, which may help solve the stated research problems.

Another highly important limitation of the study was lack of standardisation of the questionnaire assessing the perceived level of personal security of a member of a uniformed public service while on duty. The questionnaire was developed by the author, which is why it may have been inaccurate with regard to the data it helped obtain. However, its application in the present study provided great utility and enabled the author to assess, for the purposes of the research plan, the perceived level of personal security in members of uniformed public services while on duty. The main goal of the questionnaire, which was indeed achieved in the course of the study, was to confront the results obtained with the results of a fully-standardised and professional psychological tool, i.e. Kuczyńska's Gender Assignment List.

Yet another limitation of the study was the small number of women in the sample, though it was sufficient to conduct statistical analyses with a satisfactory level of significance to meet the requirements of the research plan. In addition, the author used her best efforts to ensure the largest number of women participants possible out of all available respondents, resulting in a very high total number of study participants, which had an impact on the empirical value of this thesis.

4. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted constitutes an interesting indication regarding how sex and gender may impact the perceived level of personal security of members of uniformed public services on duty. At the same time, sex was treated not only as an indelible biological characteristic of every human, but its psychological aspects (gender) were also analysed, taking into account both its cultural and social features, which function as undisputed stereotypes in society and are assigned to individuals based on their behaviour, thus helping them set order to the reality which surrounds them.

From the point of view of the theory and research cited in section 1 of this paper, as well as the author's own research, it can be assumed that the sample studied was androgynous with regard to the gender schemata of the respondents, which is certainly the most desirable schema, primarily in relation to mental health and fortitude, and one which relates to better everyday performance, both in professional and private matters. With

regard to working as a member of a uniformed public service, this gender schema also appears more desirable, considering that such individuals are characterised by higher social adaptive potential to various conditions. It should be noted that this characteristic may prove to be beneficial to the entire education process and the following service, particularly in the context of the military. In addition, the range of behaviours of androgynous individuals is also broader and more flexible, enabling them to adapt to various situations by using both stereotypically male and female characteristics, depending on what is more desirable. Androgyny thus relates to better adaptability, higher self-esteem, health and stronger personality compared to the male and female gender schemata, which relate to rigidity of behaviour, higher levels of anxiety, neuroticism and lower self-acceptance. One of the major conclusions to be drawn from the present study is that the officer cadets at the Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces align with the gender schema which is the most beneficial one from the point of view of psychology, and should thus be conducive to being a member of a uniformed public service.

The level of personal security when on duty was assessed by the respondents as above average, which leads to the conclusion that the majority of the respondents perceived the general and individual security of uniformed public service members as relatively high. The conclusions which can be drawn based on the responses to the questions relating to the perceived level of security are alarming, though in line with the relevant literature. The assessment of the security of women with regard to their own physical and mental characteristics, and the assessment of all respondents' own security when on duty with women, is lower than the respective assessment of men, both physical and mental, when on duty with women. It thus follows that the assessment of security in mixed male-female teams and their member's own personal security is assessed predominantly as medium by the respondents, i.e. lower than that of male teams and higher than that of women's; something the author expected. The results lead to the conclusion that the security of men and women when on duty is influenced by sex, even despite the fact that the majority of the respondents aligned with the androgynous gender schema. Based on the research conducted, it can be conjectured that the differences in the perception of personal security by the respondents are determined by sex, which is a factor that impacts both the general, individual and global level of security. Men are more likely to be perceived as a group capable of guaranteeing a higher level of security, both general and individual, which is also reflected in the fact that, in the present

study, women perceived all types of security as significantly higher than men, which may confirm that men constituting the majority of uniformed public service members, with their physical and mental characteristics, have a positive impact on the perceived level of personal security when on duty.

It thus appears valid to analyse the influence of sex-related factors on the perception of security by uniformed public service members, considering that the present study confirms that they do have an impact on the assessment of security, both for women and men, and both in terms of the general and the individual level of security. It should be added that the general level of security as assessed by both sexes is satisfactory.

The overall value of this thesis thus appears to be high due to the large sample size (which is insufficiently representative, however), being able to successfully prove the impact of sex-related aspects on the perception of security while on duty, as well as the holistic approach to sex and gender research, which incorporates both biological and psychological aspects and takes gender into account as a primary variable and sex as a secondary variable. In addition, the questionnaire compiled for the purpose of this study proved to be an effective research tool, considering that it took into account the division of security into both general and individual types, the physical and mental aspects of sex/gender in assessments of perceived security, as well as the security of mixed male-female groups, which combined these aspects. The conclusions drawn from the study thus appear valuable both from the point of view of assessing and explaining the factors determining the perception of the personal security of uniformed public service members and the holistic approach to studying gender and the related social and cultural aspects. Further research on the personal security of uniformed public services should take into account gender- and sex-related aspects and use the information obtained using this holistic approach with the aim of achieving the highest level of both perceived and practical personal security of uniformed public service members.

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