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Military ceremony as a tool for educational transformation: Challenges in change management

Ceremoniał wojskowy jako narzędzie transformacji edukacyjnej: wyzwania w zarządzaniu zmianą

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Abstract:

Research objectives and hypothesis/research questions

The primary research objective is to analyze the role of military ceremony as a tool for educational transformation in the context of change management, with particular emphasis on identifying logistical, emotional, and cultural challenges associated with implementing educational programs based on military ceremony, and proposing change models that enable effective management of this process. The main research question asks how military ceremony can support the educational transformation process while simultaneously minimizing resistance to change.

Research methods

The study employs qualitative methodology based on triangulation of sources. The research design includes analysis of subject literature, particularly reviewing change management theories (Lewin, Kotter, ADKAR) and pedagogical literature concerning defense education. An internet query was conducted to analyze informational and program materials available in the public domain.

Main results

The research identified three main categories of challenges in implementing military ceremony into education: logistical challenges including infrastructure limitations, staff qualifications, and inter-institutional coordination; emotional challenges encompassing resistance from teachers and parents along with concerns about militarization of education; and cultural challenges involving perception of ceremony as anachronistic and risks of ideologization. The study demonstrated the utility of three change management models in the educational context. Lewin's model (unfreeze-change-refreeze) provides simple conceptual frameworks, Kotter's eight-step model enables building broad social support, and the ADKAR model facilitates managing change at the individual level.

Implications for theory and practice

The research extends the application of classical change management models (Lewin, Kotter, ADKAR) to the context of defense and cultural education, demonstrating their relevance beyond traditional organizational settings. The study conceptualizes military ceremony as a living tool for educational transformation rather than merely a representative element, contributing to theoretical understanding of how traditional cultural forms can be adapted to contemporary educational challenges. The findings emphasize the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach combining pedagogical, cultural, and managerial perspectives when implementing value-based educational initiatives.

Keywords:

education, management, change management, defense education, military ceremony

Abstrakt:

Cel badań i hipotezy/pytania badawcze

Głównym celem badawczym jest analiza roli ceremoniału wojskowego jako narzędzia transformacji edukacyjnej w kontekście zarządzania zmianą, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem identyfikacji wyzwań logistycznych, emocjonalnych i kulturowych związanych z implementacją programów edukacyjnych opartych na ceremoniale wojskowym oraz zaproponowanie modeli zmian umożliwiających skuteczne zarządzanie tym procesem. Główne pytanie badawcze dotyczy tego, w jaki sposób ceremoniał wojskowy może wspierać proces transformacji edukacyjnej przy jednoczesnym minimalizowaniu oporu wobec zmian. Hipoteza badawcza zakłada, że ceremoniał wojskowy jako ugruntowany element kultury narodowej może stanowić efektywne narzędzie transformacji edukacyjnej.

Metody badawcze

Badanie wykorzystuje metodologię jakościową opartą na triangulacji źródeł. Projekt badawczy obejmuje analizę literatury przedmiotu, w szczególności przegląd teorii zarządzania zmianą (Lewin, Kotter, ADKAR), oraz literatury pedagogicznej dotyczącej edukacji obronnej. Przeprowadzono kwerendę internetową w celu analizy materiałów informacyjnych i programowych dostępnych w domenie publicznej.

Główne wyniki

Badania zidentyfikowały trzy główne kategorie wyzwań w implementacji ceremoniału wojskowego do edukacji. Wyzwania logistyczne obejmują ograniczenia infrastrukturalne, kwalifikacje kadry oraz koordynację międzyinstytucjonalną. Wyzwania emocjonalne dotyczą oporu ze strony nauczycieli i rodziców wraz z obawami przed militaryzacją edukacji. Wyzwania kulturowe związane są z postrzeganiem ceremoniału jako anachronizmu oraz ryzykiem ideologizacji. Badanie wykazało przydatność trzech modeli zarządzania zmianą w kontekście edukacyjnym. Model Lewina (rozrożnienie–zmiana–zamrożenie) dostarcza prostych ram koncepcyjnych, model ośmiu kroków Kottera umożliwia budowanie szerokiego poparcia społecznego, a model ADKAR ułatwia zarządzanie zmianą na poziomie indywidualnym.

Implikacje dla teorii i praktyki

Badanie rozszerza zastosowanie klasycznych modeli zarządzania zmianą (Lewina, Kottera, ADKAR) na kontekst edukacji obronnej i kulturowej, wykazując ich przydatność poza tradycyjnymi środowiskami organizacyjnymi. Studium konceptualizuje ceremoniał wojskowy jako żywe narzędzie transformacji edukacyjnej, a nie jedynie element reprezentacyjny, przyczyniając się do teoretycznego zrozumienia, w jaki sposób tradycyjne formy kulturowe mogą być adaptowane do współczesnych wyzwań edukacyjnych. Ustalenia podkreślają konieczność interdyscyplinarnego podejścia łączącego perspektywę pedagogiczną, kulturową i menedżerską podczas wdrażania inicjatyw edukacyjnych opartych na wartościach. Z praktycznego punktu

widzenia badanie dostarcza praktycznych wskazówek dla decydentów edukacyjnych, podkreślając znaczenie podejścia systemowego obejmującego konsultacje społeczne, szkolenie kadry oraz monitorowanie efektów. Wykazano, że liderzy szkół wymagają kompetencji w zakresie zarządzania zmianą i budowania koalicji wśród interesariuszy. Nauczyciele potrzebują odpowiedniego przygotowania merytorycznego i praktycznego do efektywnej realizacji programów zawierających elementy ceremonialne.

Słowa kluczowe:

edukacja, zarządzanie, zarządzanie zmianą, edukacja obronna, ceremoniał wojskowy

Introduction

Contemporary education systems face the challenge of adapting to dynamically changing socio-cultural and technological conditions. In the face of globalisation, digitalisation, and growing cultural diversity, schools seek effective tools for shaping the national identity and civic attitudes of the younger generation (Fullan, 1993, p. 176). One such tool, deeply rooted in Polish tradition, is military ceremony – understood as a system of formalised practices and symbols with established historical and social significance, which serves to maintain the ethos of national service and communal values.

In the educational space, ceremony extends beyond the representative function of the Armed Forces, becoming an element supporting the formation of patriotic and civic attitudes and building amongst the younger generation a sense of belonging to the social community. The introduction of military ceremony elements into the education system is not a process devoid of difficulties. It encounters a number of barriers of a logistical nature (lack of infrastructure, limited resources), emotional nature (resistance from teachers and parents, concerns about the militarisation of education), and cultural nature (perception of ceremony as anachronistic in the age of mass culture and digital media) (Sapierzyńska, 2023).

In this context, the question arises about the possibility of applying proven change management models to the process of implementing military ceremony in education. Models such as Kurt Lewin's three-phase model, John P. Kotter's eight-step model, or the ADKAR model, successfully applied in organisational transformation, can provide conceptual frameworks for effective management of this complex process (Lewin, 1951; Kotter, 1996; Boca, 2013).

The aim of this article is to present military ceremony as an element of educational transformation from the perspective of change management theory. Particular attention has been devoted to identifying key challenges accompanying its implementation and discussing models that can support effective overcoming of these barriers. The adopted perspective enables better understanding of the mechanisms of adapting traditional forms of educational influence to contemporary social and systemic conditions.

1. Military ceremony in the education system: Current state

The contemporary education system increasingly addresses issues related to security, national identity, and civic education. In this context, military ceremony constitutes an important element of educational influence, whose presence in schools takes varied forms and scope. This chapter is devoted to characterising the current state of utilisation of military ceremony in the Polish education system, with particular emphasis on existing programmes and their educational functions.

1.1. Educational programmes and initiatives with military ceremony in Poland

In recent years in Poland, there has been growing interest in incorporating elements of defence education into the formal education system. One manifestation of this process is the development of educational programmes utilising military ceremony as a means of shaping patriotic attitudes, discipline, and respect for tradition amongst children, youth, and young adults. In this context, it becomes appropriate to undertake an analysis of military ceremony as an educational element, considered from the perspective of contemporary theories of change and transformation of educational systems.

Several programmes integrating military ceremony elements with the didactic process currently function in the Polish education system. The most extensive form is the Military Preparation Units (OPW), directed at pupils of secondary schools. This programme combines theoretical classes in the field of state defence with practical training conducted in military units. An important component of OPW is the teaching of drill, participation in state ceremonies, and familiarising pupils with military symbolism and tradition, which gives the programme a distinct ceremonial dimension (Ministry of National Defence, 2024c).

Another initiative is the Certified Military Uniform Classes, functioning since 2017. This programme is directed towards systematic preparation of youth for potential military service. Within its framework, pupils participate in, amongst other things, several-day training camps in field conditions, during which they learn the basics of tactical operations and elements of military ceremony. Particular emphasis is placed on shaping attitudes of discipline, responsibility, and respect for hierarchy through daily practices of a ceremonial nature (Ministry of National Defence, 2024a). The „Education with the Military” programme has a different but complementary character, whose aim is to raise awareness amongst children and youth in the area of security and state defence. The programme includes short training sessions conducted by soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces directly in schools. Although military ceremony does not constitute a central element here, the classes include basic content concerning military symbolism and rules of ceremonial behaviour (Ministry of National Defence, 2024b).

A natural complement to the pro-defence education path realised at the school education level is the “Academic Legion” programme, directed at university students. This programme, in addition to military training, also has a distinct ceremonial dimension. Participation in military oaths, celebrations of state holidays, and representative events enables young adults to directly experience the tradition of the Polish Army. It should be emphasised that also at the stage of higher education, education fulfils an important educational and formative function, encompassing students as a group of young people often continuing earlier interests and passions related to defence and public service. Participation in programmes such as “Academic Legion” fosters maintaining this engagement, whilst simultaneously providing impetus for undertaking professional or social activity in the area of security and state defence. In this sense, this programme constitutes the culmination of the pro-defence education path, combining elements of military ceremony with the shaping of mature civic attitudes and responsibility for state security.

The indicated programmes are complemented by educational initiatives which – although not always strictly military in nature – significantly utilise elements of military ceremony in the process of educating and raising youth. An example is the “School Remembers” programme, whose aim is to cultivate historical memory and shape attitudes of respect towards national heritage. Pupils’ participation in patriotic ceremonies, care for places of memory, laying wreaths, or organising roll calls for the fallen constitute forms of educational activities based on ritual and symbolism characteristic of military ceremony.

The “Know Poland – Know History” programme, implemented in schools to familiarise pupils with national history, with particular emphasis on places of memory and Polish military tradition, fulfils a similar function. Direct contact with the space of historical memory, participation in anniversary ceremonies and events of a state and local character mean that military ceremony fulfils an educational and formative function, becoming a carrier of communal and historical values.

The presented educational programmes demonstrate the multidimensional character of the presence of military ceremony in the Polish education system. Its elements appear at various stages of education – from activities of an informational and symbolic-patriotic nature to more formalised and practical forms. The differentiation in scope and intensity of these initiatives indicates that military ceremony fulfils not only a representative, but primarily educational and formative function in education.

An important dimension of this influence is the practical aspect, from learning about the history and tradition of military ceremonies to direct participation of pupils and students in ceremonial activities. Learning through knowledge, action, observation, and co-participation in state and school ceremonies enables not only the assimilation of knowledge about national symbols and traditions but also the internalisation of associated values. This process is significantly moderated by teachers and lecturers, who fulfil the role of educational leaders and intermediaries

in transmitting meanings and norms. Through their own attitudes, manner of interpreting ceremony, and daily didactic-educational practice, they give meaning to ceremonial activities and teach the younger generation conscious, reflective participation in communal culture. As a result, military ceremony becomes an educational experience strengthening the formation of civic attitudes, national identity, and awareness of community and security.

1.2. Educational functions of military ceremony

Military ceremony fulfils primarily an educational function in education, being not only a carrier of cultural values but also an important element of the process of shaping patriotic attitudes, respect for tradition, and building national identity amongst the younger generation.

Analysis of subject literature and programme documents allows identification of three main functions of military ceremony in education:

Firstly, ceremony fulfils the function of shaping patriotic and civic attitudes. Participation in ceremonies based on ritual – such as solemn state holidays, military oaths, honour guards, or roll calls for the fallen – has a character that is not only informational but primarily educational. Young people, observing and participating in this type of event, learn respect for national symbols and for history and those who gave their lives for the Fatherland (Sawicki, 2018, pp. 71-77).

Secondly, ceremony supports the process of socialisation and social integration. Its formalised character, based on clearly defined rules and hierarchy, introduces pupils to the world of communal values: discipline, loyalty, responsibility, and readiness for social service. Research conducted amongst pupils of schools with uniformed classes shows that participation in military ceremonies positively influences the sense of community and national identity (Nowakowska, Świdorski, 2018).

Thirdly, ceremony constitutes a tool for strengthening bonds with national tradition. In the age of globalisation and dominance of mass culture, military ceremony offers youth an experience of historical continuity and rootedness in tradition. Symbols used in ceremony – the standard, anthem, flag, military uniform – become carriers of collective memory and values that for centuries have been the foundation of the national community (Sapierzyńska, 2023).

Regardless of the indicated educational and cultural functions, military ceremony also fulfils an important educational role in the didactic sense. Through its formalised structure, repeatability, and clearly defined principles of operation, it promotes learning through experience, observation, and participation. This type of non-formal education enables youth to assimilate social norms and principles of cooperation in a practical way, which increases the durability of acquired attitudes and competences.

2. Challenges in implementing military ceremony in education

The introduction of military ceremony into the education system constitutes a complex process that extends beyond programmatic and organisational issues. Its effectiveness is conditioned by a number of structural, social, and cultural factors, influencing both the manner of realising educational activities and their reception by participants in the education process. Identification and analysis of these conditions allows better understanding of barriers accompanying the implementation of military ceremony and constitutes a starting point for seeking effective solutions supporting this process.

2.1. Logistical challenges

Implementation of military ceremony in the education system requires not only ideological acceptance but primarily ensuring appropriate organisational and material conditions. One of the key categories of difficulties related to this process are logistical challenges, which significantly determine the effectiveness of realising educational programmes.

The first category of challenges related to introducing military ceremony into education are logistical barriers. Effective realisation of programmes such as OPW or Certified Uniform Classes requires significant infrastructural and organisational inputs.

Firstly, access to appropriate infrastructure is necessary – drill grounds, lecture halls equipped with multimedia equipment, and also possibilities of organising trips to military units and training grounds. Not all schools, especially those located in smaller localities, have such resources (Lorens, 2021, p. 440).

Secondly, programmes require the involvement of qualified staff. Teachers conducting classes in ceremony and defence education should possess not only theoretical knowledge but also practical military experience. This means the necessity of organising training and workshops for teachers, which generates additional costs and requires time (Karpińska, Zińczuk, Kowalczyk, 2021, p. 307).

Thirdly, logistics also includes coordination of activities amongst various institutions – schools, military units, local government bodies. Such multi-entity cooperation, although beneficial, requires efficient mechanisms of communication and project management (Jung-Konstanty, 2023, p. 266).

An additional logistical aspect is the differentiated level of standardisation of implemented programmes. The lack of uniform organisational procedures and flexible adaptation of the scope of classes to the capabilities of a given institution may lead to inequalities in pupils' access to education with military ceremony elements. Consequently, the quality and intensity of educational experiences can be differentiated, which hinders assessment of programme effectiveness and their long-term development.

2.2. Emotional challenges

The second significant category of barriers in the process of implementing military ceremony into the education system are challenges of an emotional nature, resulting from natural resistance to change and differentiated concerns of individual stakeholder groups. These factors have important significance, as they can influence the level of social acceptance and effectiveness of implemented solutions. Teachers may experience anxiety related to introducing ceremony elements into the curriculum, fearing “militarisation” of education or loss of pedagogical autonomy. Fear of the unknown, as well as lack of experience in working with military ceremony, can lead to reluctance towards new solutions (Nowosad, 2011, p. 23). Parents, in turn, may express concerns regarding children’s safety during practical classes, and also the ethical dimension of shaping pro-defence attitudes in school. In Polish society, there exists a certain part of public opinion critically relating to the presence of the military in the educational space (Atroszko, 2019, pp. 25-40). Pupils may also display ambivalent attitudes towards ceremony. On the one hand, youth may be fascinated by contact with the military and the possibility of participating in ceremonies. On the other hand, the formalised character of ceremony, requiring discipline and subordination, may collide with values of individualism and freedom preferred by contemporary youth (Augustyniak, 2017, pp. 19-28).

Taking into account the emotional dimension of the implementation process has particular significance in the school environment, where the effectiveness of educational influences largely depends on the acceptance of teachers, parents, and pupils. Lack of actions directed at reducing fear and uncertainty can lead to superficial realisation of programmes and limitation of their educational potential.

2.3. Cultural challenges

The third category of challenges is cultural in nature and concerns broader social transformations influencing the reception of military ceremony. Contemporary culture, dominated by social media and short forms of message, favours the shallowing and banalisation of symbolic content. Military ceremony, based on ritual, gravity, and depth of meanings, may be perceived by part of society as an anachronism not fitting with the dynamic and individualised culture of the 21st century (Nowakowska, Świdorski, 2018, pp. 47-60). Moreover, in the media environment, ceremony is sometimes presented in a simplified manner, as a “uniform show” devoid of deeper educational dimension. Such superficial interpretation can weaken its educational and social value (Materac, 2021, p. 23). Finally, there exists a risk of ideologising military ceremony. In some public debates, militarism is associated with an authoritarian past or national exaltation, which leads to rejection of symbolic forms that – although connected with tradition – do not have a propagandistic but educational character (Sapierzyńska, 2023, pp. 77-88).

From the perspective of pedagogy of culture, an important challenge also remains the decreasing ability of the younger generation to read symbolic and ritual meanings. As J. Nikitorowicz notes, contemporary education increasingly rarely prepares pupils for understanding symbols as carriers of values and collective memory, which leads to their shallow or instrumental interpretation (Nikitorowicz, 2017, pp. 13-24).

3. Change management models in the context of military ceremony

Implementation of new educational solutions, especially those rooted in tradition and symbolism, involves the necessity of managing change both at the organisational and social level. In this context, change management models offer an ordered approach to analysing the process of implementing military ceremony in education, taking into account both structural factors and human conditions.

3.1. Kurt Lewin's model – unfreeze, change, refreeze

The classical three-phase model of Lewin (1951) assumes that effective change management requires passing through three stages: unfreezing, change, and refreezing. In the context of implementing military ceremony into education, the unfreezing phase would include preparing all stakeholders – teachers, parents, pupils – for change. It would be crucial to explain why ceremony is needed and what benefits it can bring. This can be achieved through social consultations, information meetings, workshops for teachers, and educational campaigns directed at parents.

The change phase would consist of gradually introducing ceremony elements into the curriculum. It would be important to monitor reactions and adaptation of participants and ensure appropriate support – training for teachers, didactic materials, access to military infrastructure.

Finally, the refreezing phase would aim to stabilise the new state through regular evaluations, maintaining quality standards, and building school culture supporting ceremony as an integral element of patriotic education.

Lewin's model, due to its simplicity and clarity, can be particularly useful for school headteachers and programme coordinators who need clear conceptual frameworks for managing the transformation process. At the same time, it should be emphasised that Lewin's model, despite its usefulness, has a linear and simplifying character, which in the conditions of the contemporary education system may constitute a certain limitation. The process of implementing military ceremony in schools often has a long-term and non-linear character, and individual stages may overlap or require renewed “unfreezing” of established attitudes. For this reason,

Lewin's model should be treated as a starting point for analysing the change process, which in practice requires flexibility and adaptation to the specificity of the school environment.

3.2. John P. Kotter's model – eight steps to change

A more elaborate tool is Kotter's eight-step model (1996, p. 187), which pays particular attention to building broad support for change and communicating the vision. In relation to military ceremony, the first step – creating a sense of urgency – would require clear communication of why change is necessary. One can refer to contemporary challenges: crisis of national identity, globalisation, need to shape civic attitudes in the age of digitalisation.

The second step – creating a coalition for change – would mean engaging leaders at all levels: Ministry of National Defence, education superintendents, school headteachers, leading teachers, and representatives of local communities. The diversity of such a coalition would allow taking into account the perspectives of various stakeholder groups.

The third step – developing a vision – would include creating a convincing vision of school as a place where military ceremony supports the shaping of mature, responsible citizens aware of their national identity.

The fourth step – communicating the vision – would require transparent and systematic communication with all stakeholders, using various channels: meetings, informational materials, social media, broadcasts from school ceremonies.

The fifth step – removing obstacles – would consist of identifying and eliminating logistical barriers (lack of resources, infrastructure) and emotional barriers (teachers' resistance, parents' concerns). This may include ensuring training, financial support, mentoring.

The sixth step – achieving short-term successes – would mean showing visible achievements already at an early stage. For example, successful school ceremonies with ceremony participation, positive opinions from pupils and parents, awards for schools implementing uniformed programmes.

The seventh step – consolidating gains – would require maintaining the change process through continuous monitoring of progress, identifying areas requiring improvement, and introducing corrections.

The eighth step – anchoring changes in organisational culture – would include incorporating ceremony as a permanent element of school culture, so that it is naturally accepted and practised by the entire educational community.

Kotter's model, although more complex than Lewin's model, offers detailed guidance regarding building broad support for change – which is crucial in the context of such a complex and sensitive process as introducing military ceremony into education. Compared to Lewin's model, Kotter's conception allows for more detailed management

of the change process in conditions of complex organisational structures, such as the education system. Of particular significance here is the emphasis on communication, leadership, and gradual building of stakeholder engagement, which has crucial importance in the case of initiatives based on values and symbolism. At the same time, it should be noted that the effectiveness of Kotter's model depends on consistency in implementing individual stages and real engagement of change leaders. Lack of authentic leadership or reduction of the process to formal actions may lead to superficial implementation of military ceremony, devoid of permanent rooting in school culture.

3.3. ADKAR model – change at the individual level

The ADKAR model (Boca, 2013) concentrates on individual adaptation to change, which makes it particularly useful in the educational environment, where the success of transformation depends on the engagement of individual teachers, pupils, and parents. The ADKAR acronym refers to five stages: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement.

In the Awareness phase, it is crucial to build awareness of why military ceremony is important for youth development. This can be achieved through workshops, meetings with veterans, demonstrations of military ceremonies, educational materials showing benefits flowing from uniformed programmes.

The Desire phase requires awakening the desire to participate in change. It is important to show that ceremony is not only a formal obligation but a valuable experience shaping character and identity. This may include motivational programmes, awards for the best uniformed classes, possibility of participation in prestigious state ceremonies.

In the Knowledge phase, it is necessary to ensure knowledge about how change will be realised. This means training for teachers concerning military ceremony, didactic materials for pupils, handbooks describing the history and significance of national symbols.

The Ability phase focuses on developing skills necessary for practising ceremony. This may include drill training, learning ceremonial protocol, exercises in the scope of proper behaviour during state ceremonies.

Finally, the Reinforcement phase consists of strengthening new behaviours through regular evaluations, positive feedback, awards, and cultivating school traditions based on ceremony.

The ADKAR model, concentrating on individual experience of change, allows better understanding and addressing the needs of individual participants in the educational transformation process. The advantage of the ADKAR model is its strong focus on the human factor, which makes it particularly useful in the educational environment, where change occurs primarily at the level of attitudes, motivation, and individual competences. At the same time, it should be noted that this model to

a lesser extent takes into account structural and institutional conditions, such as legal frameworks, organisational resources, or hierarchical dependencies typical of the education system. In practice, this means that effective implementation of military ceremony requires combining the individual approach proposed by ADKAR with systemic solutions characteristic of Lewin's and Kotter's models.

4. Case study: Educational programmes with military ceremony

The theoretical considerations thus far regarding the functions of military ceremony in education and change management models constitute a starting point for analysing practical solutions implemented in the Polish education system. In order to empirically illustrate the discussed issues, this chapter adopts the form of a case study of several selected educational programmes utilising military ceremony elements, namely Military Preparation Units, Certified Military Uniform Classes, and the "Academic Legion" programme. Analysis of these initiatives allows demonstrating how theoretical assumptions are realised in practice and what challenges and effects accompany their implementation in the school and academic environment.

4.1. "Military Preparation Units" programme – implementation analysis

The OPW programme, directed at secondary school pupils, constitutes the most comprehensive example of implementing military ceremony into education. Analysis of its implementation allows identifying practical challenges and good practices in the scope of change management. Logistical challenges encountered within OPW included primarily the necessity of ensuring access to military units and coordinating activities between schools and the army. In many cases, it was necessary to organise transport of pupils to distant training grounds, which generated additional costs and organisational requirements. The solution proved to be establishing permanent cooperation between local schools and nearby military units, which allowed optimising logistics and building long-term relationships. Emotional challenges concerned mainly parents' concerns related to children's safety during practical classes. Crucial for overcoming these concerns proved to be ensuring transparent communication – organising meetings with parents, presenting detailed class plans, informing about safety measures. As a result, most parents changed their initial reluctance to acceptance, and even enthusiasm towards the programme. Cultural challenges were connected with the necessity of changing the perception of military ceremony – from an archaic ritual to a living educational tool. Promotional activities helped in this: media coverage of school ceremonies, presentations of pupils' achievements, organising open ceremony demonstrations for the local community. Gradually, ceremony began to be perceived as a valuable element of patriotic education.

Analysis of OPW programme implementation indicates that its relative effectiveness resulted from applying elements characteristic of various change management models. Informational and consultative activities with parents and teachers corresponded to the “unfreezing” phase in Lewin’s conception, whilst building permanent institutional cooperation and systematic promotion of programme effects fitted into the logic of Kotter’s model. In turn, individual support for pupils and teachers, gradual acquisition of ceremonial competences, and reinforcement of positive experiences reflected the assumptions of the ADKAR model. The OPW case study therefore confirms that effective implementation of military ceremony in education requires a hybrid approach, combining systemic activities with taking into account the needs and attitudes of individual participants in the educational process.

4.2. “Academic Legion” programme – functional dimension

The “Academic Legion” programme constitutes an example of implementing military ceremony elements at the stage of higher education and can be analysed as a case study illustrating practical application of the assumptions of pro-defence education amongst young adults. Directed at university students, the programme combines military training with influences of an educational and formative character, in which military ceremony plays an important role.

In the organisational dimension, “Academic Legion” is based on cooperation between higher education institutions with the Ministry of National Defence and military units, which requires coordinated activities at the interface of two different institutional environments – academic and military. The process of implementing the programme itself involves the necessity of adapting its assumptions to the specificity of higher education, in which participants are characterised by greater autonomy, formed attitudes, and differentiated motivations for participation.

An important element of the programme is its ceremonial dimension, manifested, amongst other things, in students’ participation in military oaths, celebrations of state holidays, and events of a representative character. Direct participation in these forms of ceremony enables students to experience the tradition of the Polish Army not only at the cognitive level but also emotional and symbolic. Ceremony here fulfils an integrating function and strengthening identification with communal values such as responsibility, public service, or solidarity.

From the perspective of change management, the “Academic Legion” programme illustrates the importance of gradual implementation and building acceptance amongst participants. Students often join the programme as persons continuing earlier interests related to uniformed classes, OPW, or other forms of pro-defence education. For some of them, participation in the programme constitutes a stage of deepening competences and conscious choice of a professional or social development path in the area of security and state defence.

Analysis of “Academic Legion” also shows that the effectiveness of ceremonial influences largely depends on the role of military instructors and academic staff, who fulfil the function of leaders and mediators of values. Through the manner of conducting classes, interpretation of the significance of ceremony, and their own attitudes, they shape the educational context favouring reflective and conscious participation of students in activities of a ceremonial character. As a result, “Academic Legion” can be perceived as the culmination of the pro-defence education path, in which military ceremony does not constitute merely a formal element but becomes a tool for shaping mature civic attitudes, responsibility for state security, and readiness to undertake service for the common good.

4.3. “Certified Military Uniform Classes” programme – good practices

The Certified Uniform Classes programme, implemented since 2017, introduced a number of innovative solutions in the scope of change management.

Firstly, the programme from the outset assumed close cooperation with parents and local communities. Schools organised information meetings, workshops for parents, and also ceremonies with the participation of representatives of local governments and military units. Such a participatory model of change management contributed to building broad support for the programme.

Secondly, the programme placed strong emphasis on training for teachers. Pedagogical staff participated in intensive workshops conducted by professional soldiers, which allowed them to acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills. Teachers became ambassadors of the programme, convincing others of its value.

Thirdly, the programme utilised modern communication tools. Schools maintained coverage of classes on social media, created video materials from ceremonies, organised competitions for pupils. Such a communication strategy allowed reaching youth in an attractive and understandable manner.

Finally, the programme introduced a system of regular evaluations and feedback. Pupils, teachers, and parents had the opportunity to express opinions about the programme, which allowed for ongoing introduction of improvements and adaptation of activities to participants’ needs.

Review of the Certified Uniform Classes programme indicates that its effectiveness largely resulted from consistent application of principles characteristic of modern change management models. Building broad social support and engaging various stakeholder groups corresponded to the assumptions of Kotter’s model, especially in the scope of creating a coalition for change and communicating its vision. In turn, systematic teacher training and utilisation of modern communication tools favoured individual adaptation to change, which remains consistent with the ADKAR approach.

4.4. Lessons from practice – synthesis of experiences

Analysis of educational programmes allows formulation of several key conclusions regarding conditions of effective change management in education with military ceremony elements:

1. Communication is the foundation. Transparent, systematic, and multi-channel communication with all stakeholders – teachers, parents, pupils, local community – is a necessary condition for the permanence of implemented solutions and success of change.
2. Educational leaders have a crucial role. School headteachers, programme coordinators, leading teachers – they set the tone for change, inspire others, and solve everyday problems. Their competences in the scope of leadership and change management are indispensable and have direct influence on the success of implementation.
3. Gradualness of implementation is crucial. Too rapid and radical changes lead to chaos and resistance as well as disorganisation. Phased introduction of ceremony, testing of solutions, and learning based on experiences enables building mature and stable educational practices.
4. Institutional support has important significance. Programmes achieving success are characterised by institutional backing in the form of cooperation with the Ministry of National Defence, education superintendents, local governments, and military units. Multi-entity coordination, despite its complexity, increases the effectiveness of activities.
5. School culture must evolve. Ceremony should not function as an additional element but as an integral part of the school's organisational culture. This process requires time, consistency, and long-term engagement of the entire educational community.

The indicated conclusions confirm that effective implementation of military ceremony in education has a procedural character and requires simultaneous influence at the organisational, social, and cultural level.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The conducted considerations demonstrate the significance of military ceremony as an element of educational influences in the education system and allow identification of factors determining the effectiveness of its implementation. This section presents a synthetic presentation of key findings and formulates recommendations of a practical character. Based on the conducted analysis, a number of recommendations important from the perspective of educational practice can be formulated. The process of implementing military ceremony in schools should

begin with building awareness and social acceptance for planned activities. Of key importance in this scope is conducting consultations, information meetings, and workshops directed at teachers and parents, whose aim is to explain the sense and educational dimension of ceremony.

An important element of effective implementation is also appropriate preparation of pedagogical staff. Investing in systematic training, enabling teachers to acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, favours building competences necessary for realising programmes with military ceremony elements. Support in this scope can be provided by training conducted by professional soldiers, mentoring, and participation in events of a ceremonial character.

Equally important is creating a broad coalition for change, encompassing educational leaders, central institutions, local governments, and local communities. Multi-entity cooperation enables taking into account differentiated perspectives and favours building social legitimacy of undertaken activities. The process of implementing military ceremony should be realised gradually, utilising pilot programmes, systematic collection of feedback, and flexible adaptation of activities to the needs of the school environment.

An indispensable element of change management also remains regular monitoring and evaluation of effects. Analysis of progress, participants' opinions, and educational results allows ongoing identification of problems and improvement of realised practices. Ultimately, the permanence of introduced changes depends on their anchoring in the school's organisational culture, so that military ceremony is perceived not as an ad hoc activity but as an integral element of school life and long-term educational process.

Application of the above recommendations can increase the permanence of implemented changes and strengthen the educational potential of military ceremony in education.

Summary

Military ceremony, as a deeply rooted element of Polish national culture, constitutes a valuable tool of educational transformation. Programmes such as Military Preparation Units, Certified Military Uniform Classes, or Academic Legion show that it is possible to effectively integrate ceremony elements with the didactic process, provided appropriate change management.

In summary, the article indicates that integration of military ceremony with the educational process constitutes a complex issue requiring an interdisciplinary approach combining pedagogical, cultural, and managerial perspectives. Military ceremony can fulfil an important educational function in the process of shaping civic attitudes, provided its conscious and planned implementation. Implementation of

this type of solution involves logistical, emotional, and cultural challenges, which require a systemic approach based on change management models. The effectiveness of utilising military ceremony in education depends on the quality of process management, level of social acceptance, and permanent anchoring in school culture.

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