Dissertation summary

Shaping the leadership competencies of military students during the initial adaptation process

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The search for a new concept of shaping leadership competencies of future officers of the land forces during the period of initial adaptation, presented in this dissertation, parallel to the interesting cognitive sphere, was determined mainly by the need to introduce a new quality of command in the Polish Armed Forces. While the dissertation did not attempt to address the entirety of this complex task, it did attempt to implement changes "at the very beginning" of a cadet's career at a military academy. That was seen through the measurable improvement of adaptation and enhancement processes in the initial period of training officer candidates in the military academy environment.

Effective education of officer personnel has always been a particular challenge for any army. Studies of historically known battles and war campaigns indicate that there are a number of factors that influence the outcome of a battle. The most frequently mentioned are the potential of the fighting forces, the type of weapons and equipment, the level of material reserves, etc. Undoubtedly, however, an important criterion for victory in armed combat is always the determination and level of training of private soldiers and the skills, respectively: tactical, operational and strategic, of their commanders. Biographies of outstanding military commanders, which can include: Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Napoleon Bonaparte, Tadeusz Kościuszko (national hero - current patron of the Polish Academy of Land Forces AWL), provide ample evidence that the greatest victories and conquests were achieved by comprehensively educated leaders and not only in the area of tactics or art of war. They also all point to their special leadership aptitudes. However, their case studies confirm that it was only a well-directed education that turned them into commanders, permanently inscribed in the histories of every nation.

Generalizing, we may risk a statement that the interest in preparing leaders is a natural element of activity of organizations focused on ensuring broadly understood security. Typically, this interest increases during periods of intense change and growing economic, political, environmental and health crises. From the perspective of armies, which are organizations focused on operating under conditions of high threat, this justifies the need for high-quality training of leaders whose effectiveness of command will be a guarantor of sovereignty.

For armed forces to effectively achieve their goals and objectives in a volatile geo-economic and geopolitical environment, they need leader-commanders who successfully function at all levels of command, i.e., team, operational and strategic [J. Adair, 2007]. Individuals capable of performing leadership roles in the armed forces at various levels of command, as in other organizations, are the key to successfully achieving objectives. Not without reason, it is recognized that the decisive influence on the functioning and image of any army is its officer cadre, whose preparation is determined by the way they are trained [D. Kozerawski, 2002]. This confirms the view that the specificity of the officer’s profession determines both the ways and educational opportunities that
are applied in specific types of the Polish Armed Forces. For this reason, the entities fully responsible for the education of military officers are specialized universities, which implement educational programs consistent with the areas of their purpose. The primary task of military universities is therefore to match the competencies of junior officers with the duties they will perform in their first duty positions.

Narrowing the topic of this dissertation to the formation of leadership competencies of future land forces officers at the stage of initial adaptation is due to the role, function and requirements for military students, ultimately junior commanders, of the essential component of the Polish Armed Forces. This is due to the fact that commanders of ground forces perform the most important operational and tactical tasks. The responsibility that commanders bear in securing borders, protecting the indivisibility of the state and supporting alliances requires appropriate competence. In the management science and quality literature, both military commanders and civilian managers are first prepared to command at the team level and then to the operational and strategic levels [J. Adair, 2007; R.W. Griffin, 2017].

Under Polish conditions junior officers are prepared to command a team during a five-year education at a military academy, where cadets simultaneously study and serve as military candidates preparing practically for their profession. The purpose of the study is, among other things, to competently shape future officers who will be able to achieve a high level of team cohesion and trust, ethical behavior and attitudes, and maintain relational capital to ensure effectiveness in conducting multilateral activities in a service environment. Knowing the leadership potential of cadets and committing to molding their leadership competencies from the moment they begin their education imposes many responsibilities and challenges on the university. In order to meet them, it is essential to understand: What is the essence of leadership concepts? What is leadership and what place does it have in command?

Familiarization with these issues should be implemented at the earliest of possible stages of training to the level of military team leader, i.e. initial adaptation. In this situation, it is necessary to determine the role, functions, key personal characteristics and behaviors that will successfully contribute to the development of adequate competence potential of junior officers. An important task is also to identify and define the period of initial adaptation, including the requirements for the adaptation system functioning inside the university and the basic assumptions, without which it would be impossible to properly prepare cadets for further training in subsequent years of study at the university.
Since this dissertation is devoted to competencies, which are an important social category (the most important qualitative characteristic of human capital for organizations), the problems of their proper formation are in the center of activities [U. Jeruszka, 2016]. Pointing to the concept of competence matching in the framework of education at universities, U. Jeruszka argues that nowadays in the educational system it is an absolute priority to obtain better competence matching with the needs of employers [U. Jeruszka, 2016]. For cadets, it is undoubtedly a military university, while for young officers it is a unit of the Polish Armed Forces.

Therefore, an important task is to define the range of expectations in relation to the competence potential of cadets. The realization of this undertaking required the selection of an appropriate set of competencies that fit into the minimum standards of military education [Standard of Military Education, MON 2020]. The specified level of development during initial adaptation, based on the above-mentioned standards, will be a solid base for further improvement. This would not be possible without taking into account the specifics of initial adaptation to the military academy and aspects of command and their impact on the actions of people in teams, including the formation of behaviors and attitudes. Due to the interpretive diversity of the issue of competencies, their characteristic features, characteristics and evaluation criteria should be adapted to the specifics of the organization, role and function. In the case of this dissertation it was about using competencies to manage the development of intellectual potential in military universities and solving the problem of designing strategies for the formation of leadership competencies at the stage of initial adaptation.

Undertaking coordinated ways of action in the research procedure the author of the dissertation adopted with the following justification:

1. Based on the literature, as well as on the opinions of experts from selected military academies (both Polish and foreign), it was assumed that cadet leadership competencies are the key condition not only for successful completion of the first year of studies, but most importantly for obtaining officer's commission and success in the process of command at the first and subsequent duty stations.

2. The possessed leadership competencies of students after completion of the first year, at the level specified in the model, are applicable to further candidate service. The premise is to use a high level of leadership competence in serving officers where there is a need to lead teams of people under conditions of peace and/or threat of armed conflict.

3. By leadership competencies of cadets the author will understand an appropriately collected set of attributes defined by sets of personal qualities, knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, etc.,
which are the criteria for their evaluation and are necessary in the processes of command at the level of task forces in the military service performed as a candidate for a professional soldier - officer.

4. Initial adaptation is an important part of candidate service and takes place in the private corps. The entire period of candidate service under the conditions of Polish military universities is 5 years. During this time cadets follow the curriculum of their field of study, general military training and military-specialized training related to the type of military.

5. The development of the model of leadership competences to be implemented at the Polish Armed Forces with the fact that graduates of this university play a key decision-making (command) role in the Polish Armed Forces.

6. The formation of leadership competencies and initial adaptation occur in many land army universities in the world. In most cases, the problem of formation of leadership competencies and induction of military students into candidate service boils down to multilateral well-thought-out activities that are based on clearly defined principles. They refer to educational models, adaptation models and formation of leadership competencies.

7. One of the reasons for using the examples of foreign universities, including USMA at West Point, to create solutions for the Polish academy of land forces (AWL), i.e. to design a model, is the high quality of education high quality of education and experience in preparing ground forces officers to command.

The presented considerations and arguments indicated the main and detailed research problems, which the author tried to solve during the research. Thanks to them, it was also possible to formulate the main objective of this dissertation, i.e. to design a model for the formation of leadership competencies of candidates for land forces officers at the stage of initial adaptation to candidate service at the Land Forces Academy.

The realization of the main objective of the dissertation required support through the following two main research problems, viz:

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1 Based on literature review, research in online databases and press materials, the author selected foreign universities with high potential in developing leadership competencies viz: United States Military Academy West Point (USMA), United States; École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr (ESM), France; Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS or RMA Sandhurst ), England; Hellenic Army Academy (Στρατιωτική Ζώολυ Ευελπίδων), Greece; Universität der Bundeswehr München, (UniBw München), Germany; Theresianische Militärakademie (TM), Austria.
I. What set of leadership competencies of military students, with their distinctive characteristics, is desirable and necessary in the process of initial adaptation to military candidate service?

II. How do you shape (improve) cadet leadership competencies during the initial adaptation to candidate service?

The search for answers to the above questions - research problems required the formulation of a number of additional, specific questions - research problems, which were divided into the following groups.

1. In designing the cadet leadership competency model:
   a. What is the nature of leadership, including military leadership?
   b. How are leadership competencies formulated in the literature of management science management and quality sciences?
   c. What are the experiences of selected military foreign AWL partner universities in utilizing the desired leadership competencies of military students?
   d. What are the opinions of experienced officers and military academics regarding the structure of the desired leadership competencies?
   e. What leadership competencies should a military commander - junior officer possess?
   f. What should be the parameters/criteria for assessing leadership competencies in the model?

2. In terms of explaining the phenomenon of initial adaptation to military candidate service at a military college:
   a. How is the role of initial adaptation of military students (cadets/cadets) perceived in land army colleges?
   b. What is the scope of the concept of initial adaptation to military candidate service in a land army university setting, (what can be considered pre-adaptation, what are the specifics, assumptions and boundaries, what activities/practices are undertaken as part of pre-adaptation)?
   c. What factors contribute to the positive outcomes of cadet pre-adaptation?
   d. How can the lessons learned from the initial adaptation process be applied to the cadet's continued candidate service?
3. In terms of using the cadet leadership competency model to shape them during the initial adaptation process:

a. Which cadet leadership competencies should be improved first?

b. How should leadership competencies be improved during Basic (Unitarian) Training at a military college and during the first year of residency at the academy?

c. How to prepare cadet group commanders (officers) for command and training functions in improving leadership competencies of subordinate cadets (How to use senior cadets in the initial adaptation process of first-year cadets)?

Determination of the main objective and the main and specific problems determined the scope of the conducted analysis. This allowed to determine the boundaries of the study and to choose methods and conditions for the application of research tools. The starting point of the adopted research methodology was the assumption that the phenomena of leadership competency formation during adaptation in military academies occur and have certain characteristics. Such a thesis led the author to search, analyze, recognize, and evaluate and, as a result, formulate descriptive patterns in terms of: possible leadership behaviors and attitudes and leading practices in their formation, at the stage of initial adaptation.

The key aspect here was the cognitive, diagnostic aspect, which was to enable the use of a diverse set of data collection techniques, including returning to earlier stages of the research and supplementing them. These arguments, as well as the author’s experience resulting from her many years of active presence in the studied environment, influenced the decision to use a multiple case study as the main research method in this study. On this basis, the strategies proposed by the following authors were adopted: R.K. Yin, 2015, K.M. Eisenhardt, J.W. Creswell, 2013, W. Czakon, 2016 [R.K. Yin, 2015; K.M. Eisenhardt, 1989; J.W. Creswell, 2013; W. Czakon, 2016]. The advantages of the proposed strategies were mutual complementarity and flexibility, the ability to conduct in-depth and detailed analysis, cyclical data collection from multiple sources using a variety of methods and tools.

With the above in mind, data collection for the case studies was based on the adopted strategy of mixed - transformative research in the nature of parallel information retrieval, allowing the use of data sets from different studies (quantitative and qualitative) [J.W. Creswell, 2013]. The author of the dissertation assumed that the use of both quantitative research - a survey (questionnaire study conducted among young commanders of the ground forces and qualitative research, conducted through workshops with the participation of experts (commanders and academics from selected universities of the ground forces - Polish and
foreign), would be the best way to conduct in-depth analysis and design a competency model [M. Armstrong, S. Taylor, 2016]. The workshop used advanced business game techniques including repertory grid and critical incidents, group interviews, and discussions.

In order to achieve the assumed objective, the author of the dissertation realized a research strategy consisting of seven stages with the intention of proposing a utilitarian model to the university authorities, which is now - according to the author - almost ready for official use. As a result of the work and the adopted research strategy, the obtained tool, here: a model for improving leadership competences, is addressed both to the cadets in their first year of studies and to the teaching and command staff at the military academy. The author hypothesized that lessons learned from the implementation processes would quickly disseminate the evident benefits of competency management in military units, not just ground forces. Despite the widely present declarations and the constant presence of leadership content in the process of educating future commanders, comprehensive and consistent educational solutions in this area have still not been adopted. The author perceived the main difficulty in the proper and comprehensive understanding of the meaning of leadership competencies, the formulation of a coherent definition and the need for their improvement at the level of commanding military task force, which was repeatedly emphasized in the work.

Taking into account the adopted methodological assumptions of the research, a systematic review of the literature on the subject was conducted in terms of determining the context of conducting the study, confirming the relevance of the studied issues and the scope of the concepts of competence and leadership in general (mainly managerial) and military terms. The conducted analysis, which was presented in the first part of the paper, showed significant diversity and lack of certain definitional consistency of the analyzed concepts, thus indicating the necessity of their systematization. The analysis also confirmed that the leading role in creating the image of the army and in maintaining the quality of its functioning is the officer corps. In this context, officers of the ground forces perform the most important operational and tactical tasks not only in land combat, but also in air and sea combat. Therefore, it was obvious that their obligations to command the assigned human capital required adequate competence resources. These were to fit in with the current pace of change in terms of scientific-technological, social, environmental or economic-political developments. Thus, in order to meet the challenge of matching military leaders with their service requirements for building relational capital, it was determined in the course of the research that it was necessary to at least improve the effectiveness of the study already in its initial stage, called in the paper initial adaptation.
Analyses have shown that the current leading paradigm of modern intellectual potential management is based on competence systems. Employee competencies are widely recognized as the most valuable capital, affecting the competitiveness of any organization. Competency resources of employees are achieved under the influence of appropriate development activities, which are carried out both within higher education (preparation for the profession), as well as in non-educational organizations, within the framework of established professional development paths.

From this point of view, also for the Polish Armed Forces, the key task is the quality of human capital preparation, which is largely determined by the way future ground forces officers are trained. Therefore, the author assumed that the use of competence development methods to shape the leadership competencies of future commanders increases the value of the organization, gives a good chance to increase the fit to professional roles, functions related to building relational capital, which young officers will perform after taking their first duty station, and which will also fit into the competencies of the "officer of the future". The desired competencies center around science, automation, and ethical values and highly developed competencies related to working with others.

As a result of the analysis, it was also determined that the demand for high leadership potential of junior officers is primarily due to their primary service tasks, which include commanding subordinate teams of soldiers. In this context, the specificity of education in a military college is to prepare for the officer profession in such a way that graduates immediately after graduation, officer promotion and without much experience are prepared to command a small team, that is, to work effectively with soldiers, and to be able to assume responsibility for entrusted property and training and interpersonal decisions in military units of the Polish Armed Forces.

The current model of land forces cadet education, which was repeatedly referred to in the dissertation, is a combination of academic education and military candidate service. This is a consequence of including higher military education in the common European Union educational system, resulting from the Bologna Declaration, in which the curricula are based on standards and expected learning outcomes, characteristic for a specific level of education. The above mentioned standards are fully respected by the present University of Land Forces. The consequence of combining general academic education with the preparation of military students in various military specialties was less orientation to the improvement of leadership competencies of the first year cadets. The author of the dissertation pointed out that the use of competence management concepts already at the stage of initial adaptation to military service
should be helpful in this regard. These solutions took into account both the five-year period of adaptation to professional military service and the one-year probationary period resulting from military law.

Designing a model of leadership competencies of candidates for land forces officers at the stage of initial adaptation and the postulated model of the course of initial adaptation, which are the purpose of the study, turned out to be extremely complex, if only due to the conceptual diversity and methodology of the project work. The author specified that the leadership competencies of officer command staff have a multifaceted character and are directly related to the implementation of command tasks (in peacetime/war time), functions performed, roles assumed and the totality of social relations in the army and outside it. They are characterized by: recognizability, changeability and manifestation in the form of behaviors closely related to the situation, maintaining team cohesion and vitality, building trust and self-discipline. They have a formal dimension, which means that their definition and possibilities of use should be regulated in the normative documents of the armed forces.

The second stage of the research included the need to identify solutions applied in universities with similar specificity and character of education. Looking for practices in the organisation of teaching and training of future officers, the author chose solutions applied in other foreign military universities, i.e. the American USMA, the Austrian TM and the Greek SSE. The encountered solutions turned out to be so interesting that a considerable part of the work was devoted to them. This also influenced the shape of the final models.

The third and fourth phases of the study focused on research methodology, preparation of case study tools, methods for leadership competency development, initial adaptation at land army colleges, and data collection for preliminary determination of the competency range and desired level of development of desired leadership competencies of cadets during the initial adaptation phase.

The fifth stage was devoted to the analysis of the collected information. The key finding was that in the Polish five-year system of education the first year of candidate service is extremely sensitive and crucial for successful graduation. The definition of the concept of initial adaptation, crucial for this dissertation, was also adopted. It was also affirmed that purposeful pre-adaptation in military universities should include educational content for the development of leadership competencies, which measurably contributes to the effectiveness of candidate service. The gaps in the process of pre-adaptation at the Air Force Academy were demonstrated,
which inspired the preparation of a postulated model of the assumed effects of pre-adaptation at a military academy.

The postulated model of initial adaptation to military candidate service at a land army college:

1. Performs the function of adaptation, ensures the effective implementation of the cadet to the candidate service, i.e. introduction into the role of a military student, colleague, subordinate, and adapting him to the new environment, environment, place and conditions of study;

2. Represents the final step in an effective recruitment process;

3. Provides structured activities set in time, sequentially following each other using multifaceted socialization methods. The stages of adaptation described in the model, in conjunction with the competency model, provide a guideline for forming desired habits based on ethical attitudes and leadership behaviors.

4. Provides information on gaps, progress, and effectiveness, as well as those responsible and areas for improvement.

5. Provides facts and data, applied descriptions of expected adaptation outcomes, and the ability to observe and record them (in the form of a conventional 1-5 scale) to truly assess the changes in adaptees' behavior and consciousness necessary to fully recognize candidacy service and build effective interpersonal relationships.

During the sixth stage, a target model of leadership competencies of officer candidates in the initial adaptation stage was designed and reviewed by selected experts. The diagnostic and developmental function for designing solutions to shape cadet leadership competencies determined the structure of the model. It was based on two basic leadership competencies, i.e. team morality and the habit of self-discipline. The competency Habit of Self-Discipline, is related to the power that automated self-motivation activities have to reign in one's subordination, which in candidate service is essential to effective performance. The idea here is that cadets develop an incentive system that enables them to develop desired behaviors in candidate service, including ethical behaviors. The Team Morality competency, on the other hand, consists of 5 values defined by the character strengths of a candidate as a ground forces officer. These values include: authenticity, kindness and gratitude, generosity, humility and modesty, justice; ability to find the meaning of existence and higher feel. These form the foundation for the development of a set of eight competencies, which include: responsibility; resilience to stress; communicativeness; pro-statehood; personal courage; commitment; loyalty; and a growth mindset. An indispensable element of the model's structure are also the criteria for
the level of intensity of leadership competencies, i.e.: knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences, motives for action, behaviors, personal traits (i.e. repeated patterns of behavior and experiences), which for the purposes of this study determine the level of intensity of each of the leadership competencies.

The presented model of leadership competencies of candidates for officers of the land forces at the stage of initial adaptation, thanks to its structure:

1. Provides the possibility of a comprehensive diagnosis of first-year cadet leadership competencies (defines the scope of competencies and their detailed definitions);
2. exhausts the features of behavioral competency models by establishing observed criteria that confirm the cadets' level of mastery of specific leadership competencies;
3. Provides measurable values through the criteria of the level of intensity of leadership competencies established in the sequence from A to G, which determine the desired level of achievement of the required competencies;
4. The following are some of the ways in which the organization can help its leaders to achieve their goals;
5. Provides reproducible, objective assessments and orderly development based on facts and objective assumptions, but only when the assumptions of the model are properly applied;
6. Provides objective information about gaps and development needs, training needs, setting individual and team development paths;
7. Provides information on the desired leadership competency match for first-year cadets in the context of a junior officer's first duty station.

The completion of the final version of the model was necessary for the final seventh phase of the study and fulfillment of the primary objective. The realization of this stage required the identification of methods and guidelines for the formation of leadership competencies in the course of purposeful pre-adaptation. On the basis of the model of leadership competencies and the postulated model of pre-adaptation, the concept of multifaceted training of leadership potential of cadets was proposed.

The essence of the concept of leadership potential training at the stage of initial adaptation should be:
1. Launch introductory activities, open to new challenges that await students during candidate service, build positive energy and enthusiasm, positive motivation. Celebration of welcome, active familiarization, integration activities, voice of the supervisor;

2. Theory-practice interaction, strong theoretical foundation (knowledge) combined with practical learning in the process of repeated testing of acquired knowledge and its application in different situations, as the basis for the effective development of cadets to learn the level of team leader;

3. Simplicity, practicality, variety, participatory nature, usefulness, brevity and elements of fun and humor;

4. The activity of the taught person, i.e. multifaceted intellectual (assimilation of knowledge), emotional (experiencing and revealing emotions) and practical (carrying out tasks imposed by others) activity, which affects the development of human personality and its unification;

5. The activity of experienced teachers, commanders, cadet mentors, the adoption of a natural system of developing leadership skills, "leaders educate leaders":
   a. monitoring - relationship: mentor/experience mentor - student-mentee;
   b. Coaching - taking independent initiatives and own development.

6. Addressing the various stages of deployment that occur at the university by adapting to: the physical environment and location of the candidate service, the role of the officer candidate, the group/team, and the supervisor.

   It is important to note here that the model targets the development of emotional intelligence, which plays a particularly important role in high-risk occupations. A high level of emotional intelligence is associated with the ability to form relationships with people and with self-awareness. In this situation, a high level of emotional competence is associated with the ability to build and maintain teamwork, achieve a high level of communication or form appropriate relationships. On the basis of emotional ties, reciprocity and diverse individuals working together, a unified team is formed, which often determines success or failure.

   Considering the arguments presented, it can be concluded that the model/process of formation of cadet leadership competencies at the initial adaptation stage fills the gap of education in a land army college during the first year of training. In the author’s opinion, the proposed structures of the models provide the desired consistency of the competency base respectively to the stage of initial adaptation. They indicate the most important aspects of improvement in building relational capital (leadership competencies) and preparation for further
candidate service at the university. The models can be regarded as a guide of good practices and knowledge in the field of diagnosing and improving leadership competences in candidate military service, induction into a military academy and improvement of recruitment processes. The author is convinced that they will also be used as research tools in other projects and for practical training and adaptation solutions. The use of the designed tools at a land forces college will also enable measurable improvements in the college recruitment process, including recruitment for diverse military specialties.

By virtue of the connection of the studied issues with the process of recruitment to a military university, although it was not the main focus, the author considered the use of the leadership competency model to diagnose leadership predispositions in the recruitment process of military applicants. This is mainly due to the need to obtain information about the potential of students' leadership aptitude for college and its impact on subsequent adaptation processes in a military university. Important in this case was also a reflection on the diagnosis of personal characteristics through validated psychological tests. In this context, the author considered the possibility of including military psychological laboratories or specialist psychologists, in the process of diagnosing selected personal traits (mainly leadership predispositions) of candidates for military studies.

In terms of adaptation, it will ensure the achievement of the various stages of targeted deployment to service, and in terms of competency formation, it will ensure the purposeful development and achievement of planned levels of leadership development. The solutions recommended in the models significantly affect the order of competency matching of cadets to candidate service, providing a sound basis for team leadership and building relational capital.

The scientific contribution of the paper is a measurable enrichment of the literature in the field of unified definition of leadership competencies in small team leadership, initial adaptation to candidate service, comprehensive behavioral diagnosis of the level of development of leadership competencies based on designed observed criteria of the level of intensity of leadership competencies, purposeful formation and evaluation of positive effects of initial adaptation.

It is also recommended that models be used to further develop cadets in achieving high command performance at the team level. The models can also be successfully used at other military academies that choose to follow a similar methodological approach to solving adaptive problems during the initial training period.
By using the models and solutions, earlier recognition of the leadership potential of individuals who are deployed to military service is increased. The author, following J. Adair, believes that competency development based on models in aspects of social functioning and intellectual capital never ends, it requires monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.

The designed model of leadership competencies enables wider use of the Assessment and Development Center method to assess the level of leadership competencies achieved. It requires, however, preparation of an appropriate set of exercises and trainings during which it will be possible to observe the level of revealed competences. However, it requires the preparation of an appropriate set of exercises and trainings, during which it will be possible to observe the level of revealed competencies. It is also necessary to adopt an appropriate level of competence development achievement, which will be acceptable to the university authorities.

With this in mind, the author recommends that the results of the project, i.e. the structure of the models, the purpose and the way they are used, be presented to those interested in the institutions and those responsible for them. Conducting instructions and training in the use of models should also serve the purpose of monitoring and collecting data that will be necessary to improve them in the future.

Considering the interest of the Polish Armed Forces in improving the quality of human resources command through the development of leadership competencies of ground forces officers within and outside the military academy, it is suggested to use the designed models for leadership development in the remaining years of training to the level of military team leader. Refining the models to the training challenges of officers in active professional military service will be an added value that will give military units effective solutions for competency alignment and adaptation of officers to new command positions. Thus, it indicates a gap in the use of competency models in the active duty military for continuous improvement of commanders. To sum up, it can be stated that this dissertation is a source of information and brings closer the issue of shaping leadership competences of future commanders of the basic component of the Polish Armed Forces, which are the land forces, at a military higher education institution. The thesis extends and organizes, in a theoretical and empirical context, the issue of leadership competence of military students and the initial adaptation to military candidate service, which takes place in the first year of the five-year training process for commanders of land forces. On the example of case studies of Polish and foreign land forces universities, leading practices in the field of recruitment (to a lesser extent), initial adaptation and formation of leadership competencies were recognized, evaluated and selected for creative work in designing their own solutions. Empirically, desired leadership competencies and characteristics
of pre-adaptation in candidate service were identified. Then, a model of leadership competencies of officer candidates and a postulated model of initial adaptation were designed. Finally, the actions taken, i.e. systematized knowledge in the theoretical aspect and empirical data made it possible to realize the main objective of the dissertation, i.e. to design a model of formation of leadership competencies of candidates for land forces officers at the stage of initial adaptation to candidate service military leadership.