Małgorzata Cieciora (corresponding author)
Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology
ORCID: 0000-0002-4161-4653

Piotr Pietrzak
Warsaw University of Life Sciences
ORCID: 0000-0002-1319-4815

Wiktor Bołkunow
SGH Warsaw School of Economics
ORCID: 0000-0002-1480-1031

Maciej Dębski
University of Social Sciences
ORCID: 0000-0002-8339-5073

Differences in the perception of the current state and the desired state of organizational culture in public and non-public universities in Poland from students' perspective: a study based on Cameron and Quinn's model

Abstract

Higher education institutions (HEIs) play a significant role in modern economies, and it is worthwhile to analyze the factors that affect their effectiveness. To our knowledge, few studies have focused on the attitudes of students in Poland to their work environment. The purpose of this paper is to present differences in the perception of current and desired organizational culture in public and non-public HEIs in Poland from the perspective of students. A synthetic review of the literature on organizational culture at HEIs was conducted and presented. Research in the form of a survey based on Cameron and Quinn's model was conducted in two public and two non-public HEIs in Poland.

A sample of opinions of 402 students was gathered and analyzed. According to students from public and non-public schools alike the present culture was clan culture. Both groups also pointed at clan culture as the desired one, with adhocracy culture following closely. The findings may be useful for higher education decision makers in their attempts to create an effective working environment at HEIs. A further, more comprehensive research into the subject will be worth conducting.

Introduction

The higher education sector is an important pillar of modern knowledge-based economies as its task is to create and disseminate new knowledge and educate competent human capital [M. Pietrzak, P. Pietrzak, Baran, 2016]. This also applies to Poland. The positive impact of education, including higher education, on the standard of living of citizens in Poland is quite significant. Research conducted by Statistics Poland showed that, in the opinion of Poles, there is a clear positive correlation between graduation from a higher education institution (HEI) and the possibility of getting a job, the amount of earnings, the chances of promotion and professional development, increasing social prestige, as well as developing the practical ability to cope with life and gaining personal satisfaction [Statistics Poland, 2013].

When discussing the role and importance of higher education, it is also worth noting that HEIs are workplaces, employing highly qualified workers and providing educational services to a considerable number of students. For these reasons, it is worth investigating factors influencing effectiveness and development of HEIs. One of them is the organizational culture. Therefore, a challenging problem which arises is the type of organizational culture that would have the most positive influence on the functioning of HEIs and would be satisfactory to all their stakeholders.

Although studies have been conducted by many authors, this problem is still insufficiently explored. To our knowledge, few studies have focused on the perception of students in Poland in this respect. As a matter of principle, they constitute an important group of HEIs' stakeholders and equipping them with the right competencies for the labour market is now one of the main tasks of HEIs. In countries that have been operating for a long time under the conditions of a developed market economy, such as Great Britain or Hong-Kong, aimed at evaluating student satisfaction with the education offered 'from the customer's perspective' have been conducted for quite a long time [Curtis, Anderson, 2021; Hartman, Schmidt, 1995; Huang, 2022]. In Poland, however, it seems that until recently HEIs did not pay much attention to the employability of their graduates, or student satisfaction with the education quality. This was somewhat justified by the fact that until the political transformation at the turn of the 1990s university enrollment rates were around 10% – for example, in the 1990/91 academic year

the gross enrollment rate was 12.9, while 25 years later it soared to over 47. Polish HEIs were characterized by high selectivity, with graduates able to find their way in the labour market independently. Therefore, it is only fairly recently that attempts have been made to study the effectiveness of Polish HEIs in preparing students for the labour market, and there are still no standardized solutions for managing the quality of educational processes at HEIs, or measuring student satisfaction [Cieciora, Pietrzak, Gago, 2021]. Therefore, in this study we aim to advance the understanding of students' perception of the educational environment. We are going to present the results of our research conducted in two public and two non-public HEIs in Warsaw – the capital city of Poland on a sample of 402 respondents. It would be of special interest to compare the attitudes of students with the results of our previous studies, in which we tried to examine the opinions of two other groups of university stakeholders, i.e. teachers and researchers and administrative staff.

Literature review

Organizational culture in HEIs

As Dębski et al. noticed [2020], studies on organizational culture in higher education date back to the 1960s. Early studies investigated such topics as student cultures [Clark, 1972; Davie, Hare, 1956], organizational sagas [Clark, 1972], or academic cultures [Becher, 1981; Gaff, Wilson, 1971]. In 1988 a distinguished scholar, William Tierney stressed the need to conduct studies on organizational culture in higher education and made an attempt to define its 'essentials', such as the environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, or leadership in the higher education context [1988]. It is worth mentioning that in the 90s of the previous century first attempts were made to study correlations between the organizational culture type and the level of mission agreement on the organizational effectiveness [Fjortoft, Smart, 1994], and the relationship between institutional culture and management approaches [Sporn, 1996]. Quite interestingly, some authors used colourful metaphors in their studies, envisioning universities as an 'organised anarchy', characterized by a problematic preference, unclear technology, fluid participation, and irrational decision-making process [Cohen, March, Olsen, 1972], 'a loosely coupled system', where various 'social structures' of a university community (the head of a university, lecturers, administrative staff, and students) are not tightly organized [Weick, 1976], or 'a cybernetic model', with a self-regulating mechanisms to control their performance through feedback [Birnbaum, 1989].

Recently, there has been a growing body of literature on the subject. Studies explore many different aspects of organizational culture in HEIs, such as differences between the non-public and the public sector [Cieciora et al., 2021; Dębski et al., 2020; Ferreira, Hill, 2008], a correlation between the type of organizational culture and knowledge management processes [Omerzel, Biloslavo, Trnavčevič, 2011], interconnections between trust and quality culture [Dzimińska,

Fijałkowska, Sułkowski, 2018], or the impact on the university environment on academic attitudes among black students [Cokley et al., 2023]. An interesting observation was made by Gaus et al. [2019], who stressed, quite confusing for novice researchers, the complexity and multiplicity of perspectives in studying organizational culture in HEIs.

Students in public and non-public HEIs in Poland

As it has been already mentioned, students are one of the main groups of HEIs' stakeholders. In 2021, there were over twelve thousand students in Poland. Most of them were students of public institutions, they constituted almost 70% of the student population, slightly over 30% were students of non-public HEIs operating in Poland since the political transformation in 1989, when the centrally planned economy was transformed into a market economy [Statistics Poland, 2021].

It should be mentioned here, as Dębski et al. noted [2020], that there are significant differences between public and non-public HEI in Poland, although there are also many similarities. As far as the differences are concerned, it should be stressed that, in general, public schools in Poland are older, bigger, and more prestigious than non-public ones. They also receive substantial subsidies from the state budget, whereas their non-public counterparts function on a commercial basis and have to strive to acquire funds on their own, although it should be emphasized here, however, that other types of studies than regular daytime studies, for example extramural, weekend, or evening studies are offered on a paid, commercial basis by both public and non-public HEIs.

Nevertheless, both types of the institutions are controlled and supervised by the same regulatory bodies, i.e. the Ministry of Education and Science and the Polish Accreditation Committee.

As for students' expectations towards their HEIs, according to the research carried out by Cieciora [2017], when choosing their studies and the school, students are increasingly paying attention to the prospects of acquiring a good job after graduation; the most popular faculties are those that guarantee high future earnings (e.g. IT, medicine, law). A similar observation was made in an analysis commissioned by the Sejm (the Lower Chamber of the Parliament) in Poland in 2013. It should also be stressed once again that one of the authors of the study pointed out that there are no studies conducted at the national level devoted to expectations towards higher education among candidates for studies and among students, although a number of HEIs, e.g. the University of Warsaw, make attempts to carry out such analyses on their own [Wroczyńska, 2013]. Although meetings with representatives of students aimed at learning their opinions about their HEIs are an obligatory part of every inspection made by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) in all HEIs in Poland, there has not been established a standardized format of a student satisfaction survey that would be applicable nationwide. The knowledge of students' expectations towards their HEIs in Poland and the degree of their satisfaction is, therefore, fragmented and the general conclusion would be

limited to acknowledging a high salary upon graduation as the main student expectation from their institution. One does not know, however, what type of culture would, in the opinion of students, be the most desirable one.

Objective and methodology

Objectives of the study

The present study is a continuation of studies on organizational culture in Polish HEIs conducted by the authors in 2020 and 2021 with the use of the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) developed by Robert Quinn and Kim Cameron [Cieciora et al., 2021; Dębski et al., 2020]. The aim of this study was to investigate the current and future (or desired) state of organizational culture in public and non-public HEIs in Poland from the point of view of students. Previous research showed some differences in the current organizational culture between predominantly hierarchy-based public HEIs and more market-oriented non-public HEIs in Poland [Dębski et al., 2020]. Also, quite interestingly, a series of recent studies on organizational culture in HEIs conducted with the use of OCAI have indicated that family-like clan culture is perceived in a most positive way by students in a number of institutions worldwide, e.g. in Ohio (USA), Debrecen (Hungary) [Maria, Istvan, Julia, 2017], or St. Petersburg (Russia) [Pomyalova, Volkova, Kalinina, 2020].

Therefore, two hypotheses were formulated based on the literature review and the objectives of the study:

H1: There are significant differences in opinions between students from public and non-public HEIs in Poland concerning the current state of the organizational culture in their schools.

H2: The desired type of the organizational culture for students from both public and non-public HEIs in Poland is clan culture.

The rest of the work is organized as follows: first, the OCAI instrument is introduced. Next, a synthetic review of the results of studies on organizational culture in higher education conducted with use of the OCAI instrument is presented. After that, the results of a survey conducted with the use of OCAI on a sample of 402 students from two public and two non-public HEIs in Warsaw, Poland, are shown and discussed. Finally, conclusions of the analysis and suggestions for further research are presented.

Competing Values Framework and the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument: an overall description

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) was developed by Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn at the University of Michigan. It is a validated research method used to assess organizational culture based on Competing Values Framework (CFV), a model

created to identify the organizational effectiveness criteria. In the model, two key dimensions are taken into consideration: internal/external orientation and focus on stability/flexibility of the organization. Taken together, these two dimensions create four quadrants which represent four sets of values that guide organizational tasks of environmental management and internal integration. It should be stressed that the underlying dimensions present 'competing', i.e. contrasting values. The organization cannot focus inward on its development, collaboration, and integration of activities and look outside at the volatile market at the same time. Similarly, one can either assume that the environment is known and can be controlled, thus the focus may be put on building internal clear structures, planning, budgets, and the organization's reliability, or, quite on the contrary, one can believe that the organization cannot control the outside environment and in order to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, it should focus more on people and activities than on its internal structure, procedures, and plans.

The four quadrants result from mapping the two polarities (internal/external and flexibility/stability) and form four types of organizational culture: clan, hierarchy, adhocracy, and market.

Clan culture workplace is like an extended family, and it highly rates loyalty, commitment, and teamwork. Focus is on participation, long-lasting partnerships, and relationships. Clan culture is typical in such sectors like healthcare, education, and not-for-profits.

Hierarchy culture a conservative, very formalized, and structured workplace, characterized by predominance of procedures, formal rules, stability, and predictability. Attention is put to details, main values include consistency, cautiousness, and reliability. Hierarchy culture is typical in sectors like medicine, nuclear power, military, government, banking and insurance, and transportation.

Adhocracy culture workplace is dynamic; the main values include experimentation, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Both leaders and workers are risk-takers. Entrepreneurship, individual initiative, and freedom and are highly valued. Adhocracy culture is typical in sectors such as technical start-ups, technology-driven industries (communications, sustainability), and disruptive services like Airbnb, Uber.

Market culture is a result-oriented workplace which focuses on competition and success. Keywords are targets, deadlines, profits, and results. Market culture is typical of sectors like consultancy, accountancy, sales and marketing, services, and manufacturing.

Interestingly, Quinn and Cameron found that flexible organizations are most effective, which sometimes leads to contradictory behaviour. It means that the most effective organizations use all four value sets when necessary. It should be stressed, however, that the CVF model is descriptive, not normative, which means that it does not claim superiority of one organizational culture over another. A valuable finding was that a culture type works best in the activities domain that aligns with its values, e.g. clan culture is the most effective one in the healthcare sector.

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) is a method to examine the present and desired organizational culture of the organization in question according to the four types described above. Respondents are asked to score the following six aspects of

the organizational culture: dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, organization glue, strategic emphases, and criteria of success. For each of them, they must divide one hundred points over four statements. They assign the most points to the statement that is most true, and the least or none to the statement that does not fit with their organization. They do it in two rounds. After the first round one can define the dominant present type of the organizational culture; after the second round and calculating the differences between the two, the preferred future organizational culture and the desire for change emerge [Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument online, 2023].

We have chosen the OCAI instrument for our studies because, as it has been already mentioned, it is a universal, well-researched, and validated method that has been used by over 10,000 institutions from various industries in 30 years. The survey is relatively short and can be completed in about fifteen minutes. The model is descriptive – not normative, as it does aim at defining the one, 'ideal' culture, and yet it has its practical value, as it helps to envisage the future, desirable work environment in the organization [Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument online, 2022].

Competing Values Framework in higher education

The OCAI has been successfully used in examining organizational culture in many branches of the industry, e.g. accounting [Nguyen et al., 2022], social work institutions [Vlaicu et al., 2019], hotel industry [Elnagar et al., 2022], kibbutz industries [Moskovich, 2020], and even in the army [Mierzwa, Materac, 2022]. The instrument was also used to analyze the relationship between the predominant organizational culture and business innovation capacity in micro and small enterprises [Cruz Junior, Profeta, Hanai-Yoshida, 2022], or, quite recently, it has been employed to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organizational culture [Petrová, Konecna, Hornungova, 2023]. It has also been used in studies on organizational culture in higher education. As Dębski et al. noticed [2020], the research showed that cultures vary in different countries and institutions. For example, clan culture was the dominant culture at Ohio State University [Berrio, 2003], whereas universities in Slovenia were characterized by highly developed market culture [Omerzel, Biloslavo, Trnavčevič, 2011]. Clan culture was also the dominant culture at most of the educational institutions in Germany that were analyzed with the use of a slightly modified version of the OCAI, i.e. OCAI-SK (Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument – School Culture); quite interestingly, the fewest schools were rated as adhocratic [Berkemeyer et al., 2015]. A study conducted on staff of economic and social faculties in five public universities in Poland revealed that Polish HEIs are heading towards the culture of market and hierarchy, although the most desired type was clan culture, with adhocracy following closely [Danuta Mierzwa, Dominika Mierzwa, 2020].

As already mentioned, the OCAI instrument was previously used by the authors of the study to analyze differences in organizational cultures in public and non-public HEIs and attitudes of academic and administrative staff in non-public HEIs in Poland [Cieciora et al.,

2021; Dębski et al., 2020]. The prior research revealed that in Polish public HEIs the dominant present culture is hierarchy culture, characterized by adherence to exact procedures and regulations, emphasis on efficiency, low costs, stability, control, and employment stability. Non-public HEIs seem to function rather along the lines of market culture, focused on aggressive competition and achievements, although with hierarchy culture following closely in the ranking. Interestingly, in non-public HEIs academic workers pointed at market culture as the dominant one, whereas in the opinion of administrative workers the prevailing present culture was hierarchy culture. It is worth mentioning that both groups of workers chose clan culture, which rates high loyalty, commitment, partnership, and teamwork and as the preferred culture [Cieciora et al., 2021; Dębski et al., 2020].

It is of particular importance that some of the research based on the OCAI method focused on students' attitudes. A study conducted at a faculty of science and technology in a HEI in Hungary revealed that in the opinion of students, the faculty's organizational culture was at an average level of clan, market, and hierarchy cultures, with a few elements of adhocracy culture. They would welcome an increase in clan and adhocracy cultures, and a decrease in hierarchy and market cultures. The ideal faculty culture would be a mixture of average adhocracy, average hierarchy, high clan, and low market features [Maria, Istvan, Julia, 2017]. Interesting research conducted in HEIs in St. Petersburg, Russia, aimed at finding a correlation between the organizational culture and the level of students' commitment; identification with their university revealed that it was clan culture that had the most positive impact. Quite surprisingly, competition-based market culture as well as formal procedures-based hierarchy culture were likely to decrease students' commitment; the concept of innovation-based adhocracy culture was not fully understood by students [Pomyalova, Volkova, Kalinina, 2020]. Another study, conducted in four leading HEIs in Türkiye revealed that in the opinion of Turkish students the prevailing university culture was hierarchy culture (followed by market culture), which might be connected with the national culture at the country level, as workplaces in Türkiye are hierarchical, based on control, order, authority, and smooth functioning [Caliskan, Zhu, 2019].
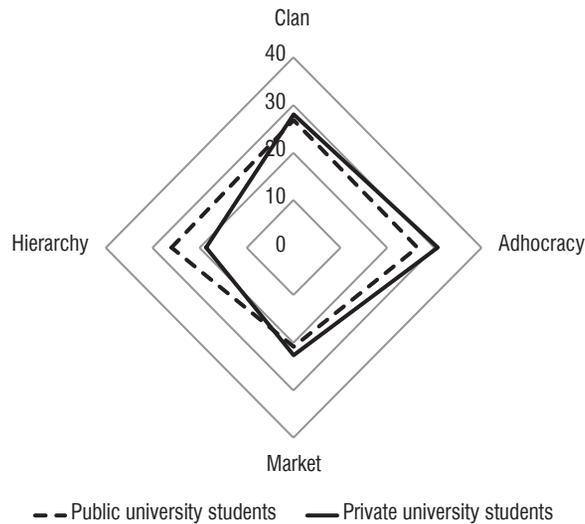
From the review above two key findings emerge: the first one that evidence is mixed, and one could not draw an unequivocal conclusion concerning the existence of one type of dominant organizational culture in the academic environment. And the second is that clan culture is perceived most positively by the three groups of HEIs' stakeholders, i.e. students, academic staff, and administrative workers alike.

Results

In the research, the OCAI developed by Cameron and Quinn was used. The research was conducted in two public and two non-public HEIs operating in Warsaw, Poland, in the period between November 2022 and April 2023. The authors of the study did not obtain permission to publish the names of the HEIs participating in the study.
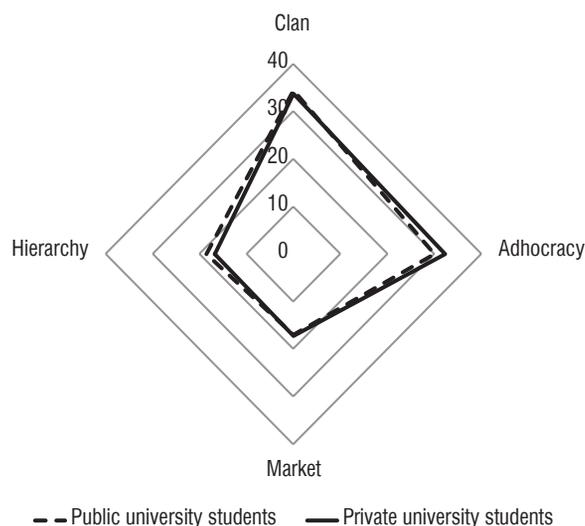
The survey involved 448 students selected by random sampling. After a preliminary analysis of the collected research material, the answers of 402 respondents were selected for further analysis. It is worth noting that the research sample is half made up of students from public (52.0%) and non-public HEIs (48.0%). 50.2% of the respondents identified as male, 49.3% as female, and 0.5% of the respondents. i.e. two persons chose the 'other' option in the question concerning the gender feature.

Figure 1A. Dominant characteristics: current situation

Source: own research.

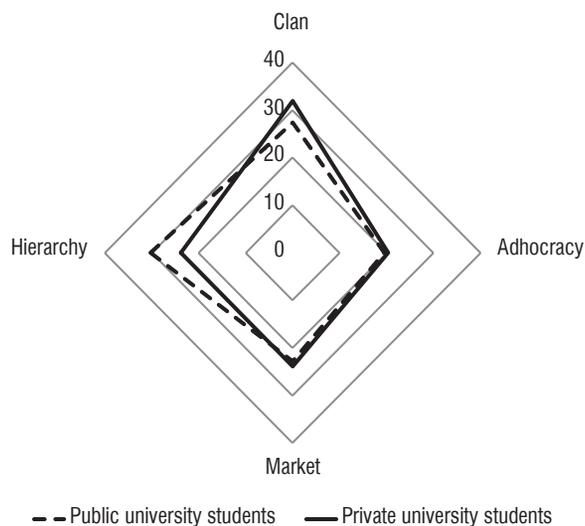**Figure 1B. Dominant characteristics: future situation**
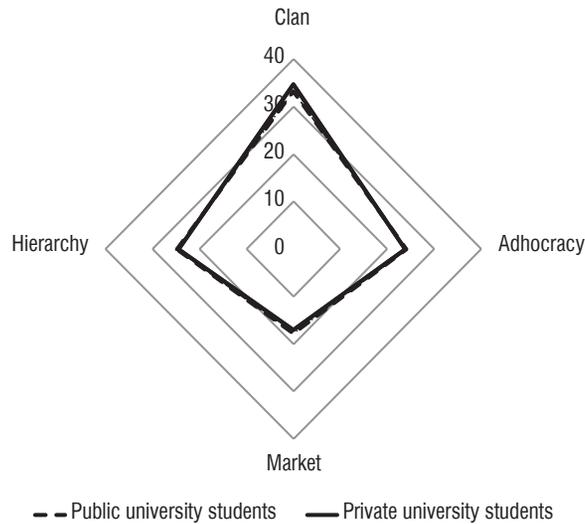

Source: own research.

The results of the survey are presented in Figures 1–6. The black solid lines represent the students of non-public HEIs, and the black dotted lines represent the students of public HEIs. Figure 1A. shows the values related to the current dominant characteristics of the HEIs. The results allow us to conclude that on average, as far as this dimension is concerned, in non-public HEIs the present culture is adhocracy. Both the staff and students are encouraged to demonstrate creativity and ingenuity. There is no punishment or negative consequences for mistakes made. In turn, the students of public HEIs perceive the school as an organization that is a personal meeting place (clan culture), reminiscent of a big family, where people are strongly involved in the tasks at hand (e.g. university teachers do their best to make classes more interesting). Interestingly, both the non-public and public HEI students in this dimension expect clan culture with a mix of adhocracy culture – Figure 1B.

Organizational leadership was the second dimension in the OCAI questionnaire. The results are shown in Figures 2A and 2B. In the opinion of the students of non-public HEIs, clan culture is the dominant type here; it received an average score of 31.9. This means that leadership is commonly identified with providing advice and assistance and spreading care (e.g. academics are keen to provide answers and engage with students). The students of public HEIs, on the other hand, pointed at hierarchy culture (30.2 points). It seems, therefore, that in public HEIs leadership is commonly identified with coordinating (ensuring that the activities of the various departments are consistent), organizing efficiently, and creating harmonious conditions for satisfactory performance. As can be seen from Figure 2B, the students from both types of schools also demonstrated agreement on their future organizational culture. Again, in this dimension, they expect clan culture to dominate.

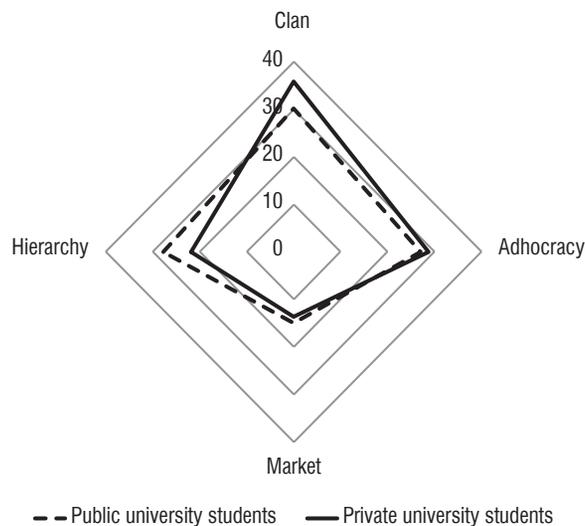**Figure 2A. Organizational leadership: current situation**

Source: own research.
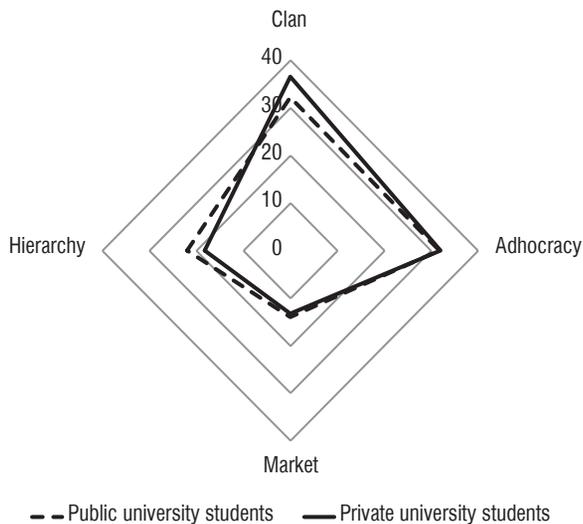
Figure 2B. Organizational leadership: future situation

Clan

40

30

20

10

0

Hierarchy

Adhocracy

Market

‒ ‒ Public university students ——— Private university students

Regarding the third dimension, i.e. the management of employees, a majority of the respondents (from both non-public and public HEIs) chose clan culture as the current one. (Figure 3A). This option focuses on teamwork, consensus, and participation. It is noteworthy that the students from both public and non-public HEIs once again showed consensus and identified clan culture also as the one desired for the future (Figure 3B).

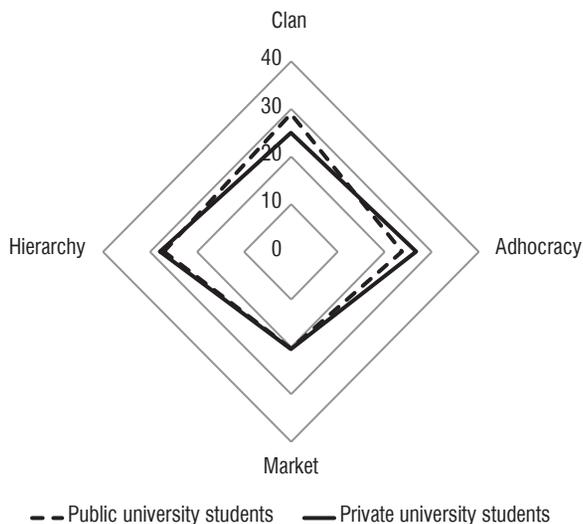**Figure 3A. Management of employees: current situation**

Clan

40

30

20

10

0

Hierarchy

Adhocracy

Market

‒ ‒ Public university students ——— Private university students

Figure 3B. Management of employees: future situation

Clan

Hierarchy

Adhocracy

Market

– – Public university students   —— Private university students

Source: own research

Figure 4A. Organizational glue: current situation

Clan

Hierarchy

Adhocracy

Market

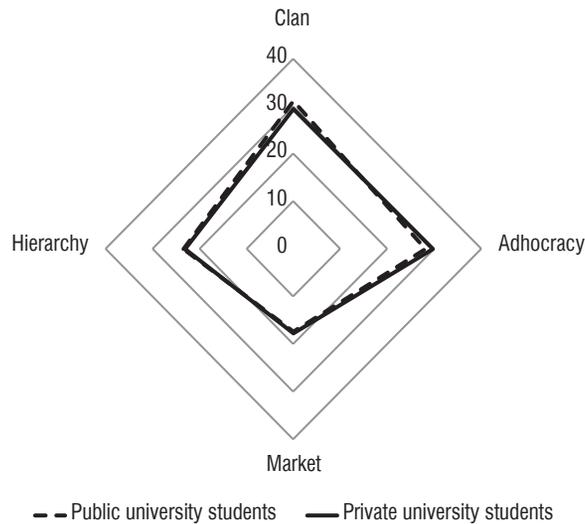– – Public university students   —— Private university students

Source: own e research.

Figure 4 presents the fourth examined area: organizational glue. It represents what consolidates an organization. In the group of students of non-public HEIs hierarchy culture prevails. Under this option, the cohesion of the institution is ensured by formal rules and regulations (e.g. regarding the organization of courses, ways of verifying learning outcomes). The most important thing is smooth functioning (e.g. quick resolution of emerging problems in the teaching process). Interestingly, for the students of public HEIs, clan culture scored the highest number of points (on average: 29.0). This means that, in their opinion, the cohesion of the
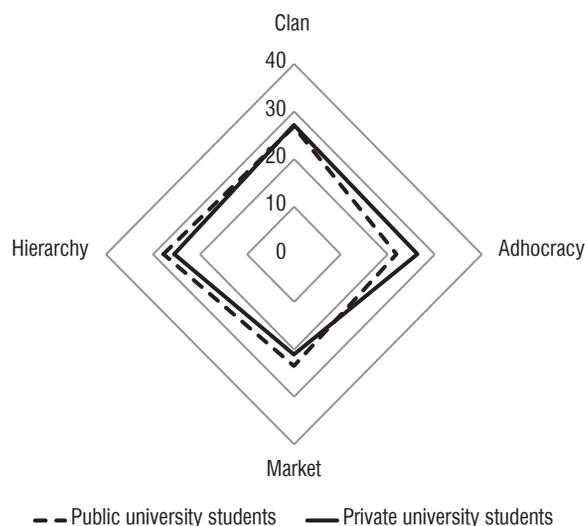
school is ensured by the loyalty and mutual trust of the members of the academic community. The clan culture values commitment to the HEI (e.g. membership in study clubs in the case of students or co-organizing notable events in the case of academics). As far as the desired future type of culture is concerned, the students of public HEIs once again indicated the clan culture. Quite interestingly, this time among the non-public HEIs students, both clan culture and adhocracy culture received the most points (Figure 4B).

Figure 4B. Organizational glue: future situation
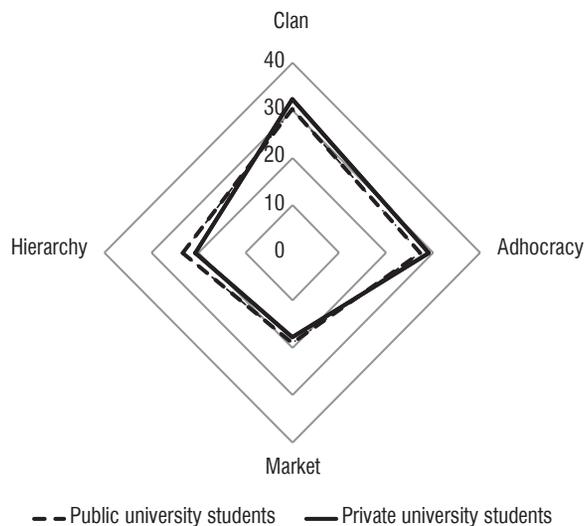

Source: own research.

Figure 5A. Strategic emphases: current situation

Source: own research.

As for the fifth dimension, i.e. strategic emphases, it is worth noting that the students of non-public HEIs once again chose clan culture as the present organizational culture (Figure 5A). They perceive their HEIs as organizations that emphasize human resource development (e.g. rewarding the best academic teachers). A high degree of mutual trust, openness, participation in tasks are important. Quite on the contrary, in the group of students of public HEIs, hierarchy culture prevails, which emphasizes stability and enterprise functioning. Performance, control, and operating flexibility are the crucial factors for the achievement of strategic goals. Once again, most students from both types of schools identified clan culture as the target culture in the dimension described (Figure 5B).

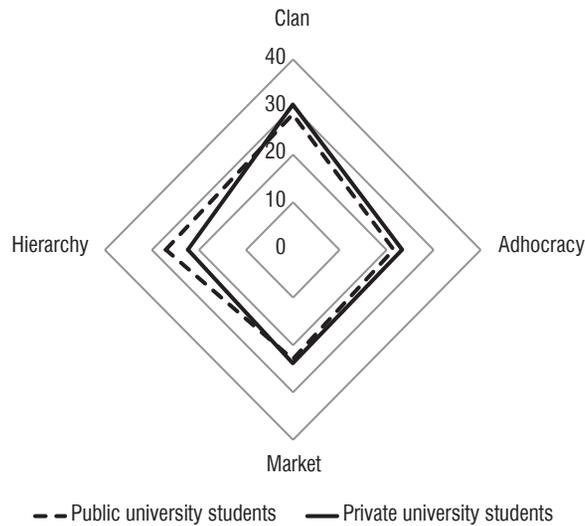**Figure 5B. Strategic emphases: future situation**

Source: own research.

Success criteria were the last area of interest to be analyzed. The results are given in Figure 6. As far as the current situation is concerned, for the students of both non-public and public HEIs, the option that dominated is clan culture (Figure 6A). They identify the success of a HEI with the development of human resources (including academic and administrative staff), teamwork, staff engagement and caring for people. Interestingly, according to the respondents from non-public and public HEIs alike, the target culture in this dimension should once again be clan culture (Figure 6B).

The overall results of the survey conducted with the use of the OCAI instrument on a sample of 402 students from public and non-public HEIs in Poland, calculated by adding points from all the six dimensions presented in the previous section (Tables 1 and 2) showed that, in the opinion of the students from both types of schools, it was clan culture that received the highest scores in both current and future culture dimensions. This means that from the perspective of the students of both public and non-public HEIs, the working environment in their schools is and should remain friendly. Members of the academic community have a lot

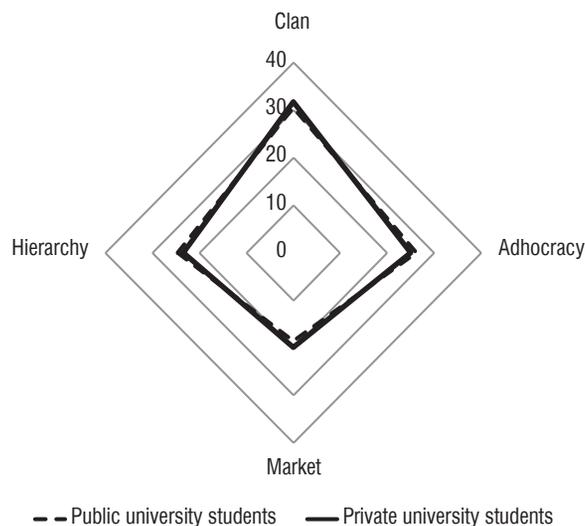in common. Academic teachers are seen as mentors and even father figures. HEIs are held together by loyalty and tradition. There is a great involvement in the school's life. Long-term human resource development is highly valued. Briefly, HEIs resemble big, caring families.

Figure 6A. Success criteria: current situation

Source: own research.

Figure 6B. Success criteria: future situation

Source: own research.

Discussion

**Table 1. Form of organizational culture at public and non-public HEIs in Poland:
current situation.**

Ranking position	Public HEI students	Average number of points in a cross section of six dimensions	Non-public HEI students	Average number of points in a cross section of six dimensions
1	Clan culture	28.14	Clan culture	29.76
2	Hierarchy culture	27.61	Adhocracy culture	26.00
3	Adhocracy culture	23.33	Hierarchy culture	23.30
4	Market culture	20.93	Market culture	20.94

Source: own research.

**Table 2. Form of organizational culture at public and non-public HEIs in Poland:
future situation**

Ranking position	Public HEI students	Average number of points in a cross section of six dimensions	Non-public HEI students	Average number of points in a cross section of six dimensions
1	Clan culture	31.99	Clan culture	33.08
2	Adhocracy culture	27.91	Adhocracy culture	28.64
3	Hierarchy culture	22.81	Hierarchy culture	21.10
4	Market culture	17.29	Market culture	17.18

Source: own research.

Quite interestingly, the market culture scored the lowest number of points in both analyses. One can, therefore, draw a conclusion that in general, students in Poland, regardless of the source of funding for their studies, do not and would not welcome a profit-oriented culture focused on competition and profit-seeking. When we compare these findings to the results of our previous research conducted in the academic environment in Poland, we can observe that, as far as the perception of the current state of the organizational culture is concerned, the opinions of students in non-public HEIs differ more from the opinions of employees of the same institutions than in the case of students and staff from public HEIs. Namely, from the perspective of staff, the present organizational culture is hierarchy culture in public HEIs, and market culture (or hierarchy culture as seen by the group of administrative workers) in non-public ones. And, as it has been already mentioned, students from both types of schools perceive clan culture as the dominant one. It should be noted, however, that students of public HEIs also see signs of the existence of hierarchy culture in their academic environment, whereas students at non-public schools do not seem to observe many of them; they note some features typical of creativity-awarding adhocracy culture instead. One may assume, then, that if there are some challenges resulting from the existence of a conservative, seniority-based

hierarchical work relationships or financial issues among the staff in HEIs, they are much more visible to students in public schools than in their non-public counterparts.

Nevertheless, contrary to expectations, this study did not find significant differences in the perception of the present working environment between students of public and non-public HEIs. Therefore, we can conclude that hypothesis one, which assumed the existence of a significant difference between students from public and non-public HEIs in Poland concerning the current state of the organizational culture in their schools should be rejected.

As far as the desired organizational culture in HEIs concerned, we can draw a clear conclusion from both the analysis presented in this paper and from our previous studies that academic community stakeholders, students, and staff alike, despite the type of institution they work or study in, are in favour of clan culture. These results are consistent with the findings of the literature review, which showed, in general, that it is clan culture that is perceived most positively in HEIs worldwide. Thus, we can conclude that hypothesis two, which stated that clan culture was the desired type of the organizational culture for students from both public and non-public HEIs in Poland, was verified positively. Interestingly, the type of preferred culture that also scored high and obtained the second place in the ranking (again, for both groups of the respondents) was adhocracy culture, which promotes entrepreneurship and creativity. An important question that remains open concerns the way to reconcile two different requirements for HEIs presented by the students: a demand to equip future graduates with competencies that will enable them to succeed in the real, competition-based market economy and the need to study in a safe, family like working environment.

Study limitations and implications for practice and future research

The results of this research contribute to a growing body of evidence suggesting that the academic community highly values a friendly, safe, family-like working environment.

There are, however, at least three potential limitations concerning the results of this study. The first limitation concerns the size of the sample as it was limited to four HEIs and about four hundred respondents in one country. The second potential limitation is that our research did not take into consideration differences between HEIs, or organizational units that specialize in different areas of science. As it has been mentioned, a culture type works best in the activities domain that aligns with its values. And since one of the most important goals of HEIs is to prepare students for their professional careers, it may mean that the effectiveness of types of cultures may vary in different faculties, as, e.g. the values of a military academy, training future soldiers may be different from the values of an academy of fine arts. And the third limitation concerns the quality of the instrument used in the study, i.e. the OCAI survey, which does not allow respondents to formulate their opinions and suggestions in their own way, thus limiting the amount of knowledge to be acquired.

Despite these limitations, the present study has enhanced our understanding of the way in which HEIs do and should function. We hope that the current research will stimulate further investigation of this key area.

In terms of future research, it would be useful to extend the current findings by examining the attitudes concerning the current and future organizational culture in a larger number of schools, which would focus on distinguishing between types of fields of study.

Finally, an important research questions that could be also asked include a correlation between the present organizational culture of a HEI and its effectiveness, as perceived by another key group of academic stakeholders, i.e. employers.

Summary

The purpose of this study conducted with the OCAI instrument on a sample of 402 respondents in Poland was to gain a better understanding of the present and desired organizational culture in HEIs from the perspective of one of the most important groups of academic stakeholders, i.e. students. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that in Poland students from both public and non-public HEIs perceive the existing organizational culture in their schools as clan culture. What is even more important, clan culture (though with adhocracy culture not lagging far behind) is also the desired culture for both groups of respondents. The findings of this investigation complement those of earlier studies. The previous research conducted by the authors of the article, which focused on the attitudes of HEIs' staff as well as the literature review on organizational culture in HEIs worldwide show, in general, that clan culture is the one most welcome in the academic environment. Taken together, these results suggest that academic researchers and teachers, administrative workers, and students alike, regardless of the source of financing of their HEI would like to work and study in an extended family-like working environment that highly values commitment, teamwork, and long-lasting relationships. They are not keen on working in the conditions of either aggressive profit-seeking and competition market culture or conservative, formalized hierarchy culture. The study contributes to our understanding of the ways HEI do and should function in order to be efficient and positive workplaces.

The challenge now is to find out ways how to organize the system of higher education, quite conservative in its nature, so that it would become a truly extended family-like working environment for students, academic staff, and administrative workers alike, and at the same time would fulfil the requirements of the contemporary labour market. This would be a fruitful area for further work.

References

1. Becher, T. (1981). Towards a definition of disciplinary cultures. *Studies in Higher Education*, 6(2), pp. 109–122, https://doi.org/10.1080/03075078112331379362

2. Berkemeyer, N. et al. (2015). Organizational cultures in education: Theory-based use of an instrument foridentifying school culture. *Journal for Educational Research Online*, 7(3), pp. 86–102.

3. Berrio, A.A. (2003). An Organizational Culture Assessment Using the Competing Values Framework: A Profile of Ohio State University. *Journal of Extension*, 41(2), pp. 3–10.

4. Birnbaum, R. (1989). The cybernetic institution: Toward an integration of governance theories *Higher Education*, 18(2), pp. 239–253, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00139183

5. Caliskan, A., Zhu, C. (2019). Organizational Culture Type in Turkish Universities using OCAI: Perceptions of Students. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 10(2), pp. 270–292, https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs20192.270.292

6. Cieciora, M. (2017). University stakeholders in Poland – analysis of three perspectives on student vocational training. *Organization & Management Scientific Quartely*, 2017(38), pp. 5–25, https://doi.org/10.29119/1899–6116.2017.38.1

7. Cieciora, M. et al. (2021). Differences in the Perception of Organizational Culture in Non-Public Universities in Poland by Academic and Administrative Staff – A Study Based on Cameron and Quinn's Model. *Foundations of Management*, 13(1), pp. 131–144, https://doi.org/10.2478/fman-2021–0010

8. Cieciora, M., Pietrzak, P., Gago, P. (2021). University graduates' skills-and-employability evaluation in Poland – a case study of a faculty of management in Warsaw. *International Journal of Innovation and Learning*, 30(1), p. 1, https://doi.org/10.1504/IJIL.2021.116565

9. Clark, B.R. (1972). The Organizational Saga in Higher Education. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(2), p. 178, https://doi.org/10.2307/2393952

10. Cohen, M.D., March, J.G., Olsen, J.P. (1972). A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(1), p. 1, https://doi.org/10.2307/2392088

11. Cokley, K. et al. (2023). Student-Faculty Interactions, University Environment, and Academic Attitudes Among Black College Students: The Role of School Racial Composition. *The Journal of Higher Education*, pp. 1–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2023.2203628

12. Cruz Junior, A.C.D.O., Profeta, R.A., Hanai-Yoshida, V.M. (2022). Relação entre cultura organizacional e inovação empresarial em micro e pequenas empresas. *International Journal of Innovation*, 10(4), pp. 579–609, https://doi.org/10.5585/iji.v10i4.21166

13. Curtis, N.A., Anderson, R.D. (2021). Moving toward student-faculty partnership in systems-level assessment: A qualitative analysis. *International Journal for Students as Partners*, 5(1), pp. 57–75, https://doi.org/10.15173/ijsap.v5i1.4204

14. Davie, J.S., Hare, A.P. (1956). Button-Down Collar Culture – A Study of Undergraduate Life at a Men's College. *Human Organization. The Society for Applied Anthropology*.

15. Dębski, M. et al. (2020). Organizational culture in public and non-public higher education institutions in Poland: A study based on Cameron and Quinn's model. *Human Systems Management*, 39(3), pp. 345–355, https://doi.org/10.3233/HSM-190831

16. Dzimińska, M., Fijałkowska, J., Sułkowski, Ł. (2018) Trust-Based Quality Culture Conceptual Model for Higher Education Institutions. *Sustainability*, 10(8), p. 2599, https://doi.org/10.3390/su10082599

17. Elnagar, A. et al. (2022). The Effect of Organizational Culture on Financial Performance: Based on Cameron and Quinn Model (CVF). *Management & Economics Research Journal*, 4(1), pp. 38–53, https://doi.org/10.48100/merj.2022.181

18. Ferreira, A.I., Hill, M.M. (2008). 'Organisational cultures in public and private Portuguese Universities: a case study. *Higher Education*, 55(6), pp. 637–650, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-007-9080–6

19. Fjortoft, N., Smart, J.C. (1994). Enhancing organizational effectiveness: The importance of culture type and mission agreement. *Higher Education*, 27(4), pp. 429–447, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01384903

20. Gaff, J.G., Wilson, R.C. (1971). Faculty Cultures and Interdisciplinary Studies. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 42(3), p. 186, https://doi.org/10.2307/1980354

21. Gaus, N., Tang, M., Akil, M. (2019). Organisational culture in higher education: mapping the way to understanding cultural research. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 43(6), pp. 848–860, https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2017.1410530

22. Hartman, D.E., Schmidt, S.L. (1995). Understanding student/alumni satisfaction from a consumer's perspective: The effects of institutional performance and program outcomes. *Research in Higher Education*, 36(2), pp. 197–217, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02207788

23. Huang, C.F. (2022). Positioning students as consumers and entrepreneurs: student service materials on a Hong Kong university campus. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 19(6), pp. 667–686, https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2021.1945471

24. Maria, U., Istvan, K.A., Julia, H. (2017). Students' Perception of Organization Culture at a Faculty of Science and Technology. *Studia Universitatis „Vasile Goldis" Arad – Economics Series*, 27(1), pp. 41–54, https://doi.org/10.1515/sues-2017–0004

25. Mierzwa, D., Materac, J. (2022). Organizational culture as a key element shaping the image of the Polish Army – research report. *Journal of Modern Science*, 49(2), pp. 369–387, https://doi.org/10.13166/jms/156245

26. Mierzwa, Danuta, Mierzwa, Dominika (2020). Organisational culture of higher education institutions in the process of implementing changes – case study. *Journal of Decision Systems*, 29 (sup1), pp. 190–203, https://doi.org/10.1080/12460125.2020.1848377

27. Moskovich, Y. (2020). Lessons Learned from Cultural Features in Kibbutz Industries. *Comparative Sociology*, 19(1), pp. 88–121, https://doi.org/10.1163/15691330-BJA10003

28. Nguyen, L.A. et al. (2022). The influence of organisational culture on corporate accountants' ethical judgement and ethical intention in Vietnam. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 35(2), pp. 325–354, https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-05-2020-4573

29. Omerzel, D.G., Biloslavo, R., Trnavčevič, A. (2011). Knowledge management and organisational culture in higher education institutions. *JEEMS Journal of East European Management Studies*, 16(2), pp. 111–139, https://doi.org/10.5771/0949–6181-2011-2-111

30. Petrová, K., Konecna, Z., Hornungova, J. (2023). The impact of Covid-19 on organization: A case study from the IT area on changing culture perceptions in organization. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research (JEECAR)*, 10(2), pp. 152–163, https://doi.org/10.15549/jeecar.v10i2.1140

31. Pietrzak, M., Pietrzak, P., Baran, J. (2016). Efficiency assessment of public higher education with the application of data envelopment analysis: The evidence from Poland. *Online Journal of Applied Knowledge Management*, 4(2), pp. 59–73, https://doi.org/10.36965/OJAKM.2016

32. Pomyalova, V.O., Volkova, N.V., Kalinina, O.V. (2020). Effect of the University organizational culture perception on students' commitment: the role of organizational identification. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 940(1), p. 012099, https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/940/1/012099

33. Sporn, B. (1996). Managing university culture: an analysis of the relationship between institutional culture and management approaches. *Higher Education*, 32(1), pp. 41–61, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00139217

34. Tierney, W.G. (1988). Organizational Culture in Higher Education: Defining the Essentials. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), p. 2, https://doi.org/10.2307/1981868

35. Vlaicu, F.L. et al. (2019). The Organizational Culture of a Major Social Work Institution in Romania: A Sociological Analysis. *Sustainability*, 11(13), p. 3587, https://doi.org/10.3390/su11133587

36. Weick, K.E. (1976). Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21(1), p. 1, https://doi.org/10.2307/2391875

37. Wroczyńska, A. (2013). Oczekiwania współczesnych studentów wobec uczelni wyższych – prezentacja wyników prowadzonych badań. Polish student's expectation on the higher education in the light of surveys. Studia BAS, 3(35), pp. 249–272.

Online sources:

1. Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument online (2022). *https://www.ocai-online.com/*, https://www.ocai-online.com/about-the-Organizational-Culture-Assessment-Instrument-OCAI [accessed: 30.11.2023].

2. Statistics Poland (2013). *Wybory ścieżki kształcenia a sytuacja zawodowa Polaków. Educational choices and occupational status of Poles.* stat.gov.pl, https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/wybory-sciezki-ksztalcenia-a-sytuacja-zawodowa-polakow,7,1.html [accessed: 30.11.2023].

3. Statistics Poland (2021). *Szkolnictwo wyższe i jego finanse w 2020 roku. Higher education and its finances in 2020.* stat.gov.pl, https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/edukacja/edukacja/szkolnictwo-wyzsze-i-jego-finanse-w-2020-roku,2,17.html [accessed: 30.11.2023].