DEFENCE SCIENCE REVIEW

Genesis and Development of Research on Motivational Sailence at the Vasil Levski National Military University of Bulgaria

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the article is to search and presenting methods of supporting education in the field of security and defense using the opportunities for implementing integrated educational and scientific fields, where one of these is the motivation salience area. **Method:** Survey-based on the questionnaire that included 24 points, helping achieve the scientific goals and allow testing the validity of the research hypothesis formulated and made scientific assumptions. The representative sample has been made up of 156 people. **Results:** The main part of the study was conducted in the period 2013-2017 and aims to analyze the motivational performance in the training process of four consecutive classes of learners in order to develop models for linear prognosis of trends on certain dimensions: 1) Personal effort, 2) Perceptions and attitudes towards equity 3) Achieved results and performance, 4) Positive and negative reinforcements, awards and sanctions, 5) Relation expected effort – prize probability – degree of satisfaction. **Conlusion/findings:** Protecting and promoting the development of Bulgarian education in the field of security and defense could not be achieved without stepping up cooperation in a bilateral format and without using the opportunities for implementing integrated educational and scientific projects in the EU Encouraging and motivating young people to continue their education in these areas is an important milestone in overcoming social and demographic problems through the production of security and defense specialists without neglecting the need to develop and strengthen the scientific and research activities for their training needs and the process of acquiring appropriate education.

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Introduction

Security challenges at global and regional level are heterogeneous and difficult to predict, and defense of internal and external security has a vital role to play because of increasing global uncertainty. The system of international relations faces new challenges. No country can cope with the risks and threats posed by the demand for multilateral approaches in addressing important development and security issues and reinforcing the interdependence between policies taken at national and international level. Changing geopolitical, military and economic balance, deepening opposition, strengthening the existing and emerging new risks and threats to security in the world, and the development of EU integration processes and transatlantic cooperation have an important place to regulate major international issues. (Updated National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2018)

Contemporary complex threats require common policies and targeted action as a priority to ensure peace and security in Europe and the world, and the multilateral approach to tackling the risks and threats to them, while the country's foreign policy should contribute to peace and stability in the world, for the development of good neighborliness and trust between the countries. There is a strong need for greater coherence of common foreign and security policy and partnership work through active international cooperation.

Building a common political, economic, social, defense and legal space in Europe can only be a reality through European and Euro-Atlantic integration, active bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the areas of defense, internal security and law enforcement, and others. (National Defense Strategy, 2016) The emphasis on mutual cooperation and the contribution of the Republic of Bulgaria to stabilizing inter-state relations as a guarantor of national and international security within the framework of NATO's collective defense and the EU's common foreign and security policy can be seen from the point of view of current and future educational and scientific initiatives in the EU and NATO which should be fundamental to the strengthening of international security and which appear as a natural guarantee for the maintenance of peace and stability in Europe and the world.

The state is committed to creating and ensuring the efficient functioning of specialized units in state higher education institutions and scientific organizations for training and enhancing the qualifications of national security and defense personnel. The decision of the 41st National Assembly from 2010 pursuant to Art. 86, para. 1 of the Constitutions of Bulgaria and art. 16, item 6 of the Defense and Armed Forces Act of the Republic of Bulgaria for the adoption of a White Paper on the Defense and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria as a program for the development of the Armed Forces and for determining the number of the Armed Forces, considers the elements of learning, education and science by pointing out that in the education system it

should be optimized by structures of different military colleges, changing forms and terms of training and updating training programs, full use of informational technologies based on WEB training, its enhancers, and introduction of modern technology in teaching and learning. (White Paper on Defense and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2010)

The dynamics in the unprecedented transformation of society at the beginning of the 21st century caused significant changes in the concepts of organizations, the views of their mission and the organizational culture of their management. (Marinov, 2018) The development of the knowledge has changed the basic value concept of business from traditional physical tangible assets to intellectual and emotional intangible assets. (Izadi Z.D., Javad, Sayabek Ziyadin, Maria Palazzo, Mendip Sidhu, 2020) The values that education has and transmits into the security system are one of the most important prerequisites for everyone to respond to the globally evolving world, which contains a vast array of opinions and paces of change. (Stoykov, S., 2018) Academic and military training at the university to build trainees as military leaders must provoke young people to think critically, to create, to solve problems and to be proactive. These are the skills needed to build successful entrepreneurs, business leaders and active and responsible citizens. Through practical activities they turn their ideas into reality, embedding creativity and innovation in their work, take risks and achieve their goals. (Doncheva, 2017 b)

Protecting and promoting the development of Bulgarian education in the field of security and defense could not be achieved without stepping up cooperation in a bilateral format and without using the opportunities for implementing integrated educational and scientific projects in the EU. Encouraging and motivating young people to continue their education in these areas is an important milestone in overcoming social and demographic problems through the production of security and defense specialists, without neglecting the need to develop and strengthen the scientific and research activities for their training needs and the process of acquiring appropriate education.

1. Motivational salience in human behavior

Motivational salience is a cognitive process, which is motivated action of self-engagement or involvement of individual behavior to an object, an event, or a result (Puglisi-Allegra & Ventura, 2012). The motivational salience is associated with regulation of behavioral intensity, which facilitates the achievement of the defined goal, considering the time and energy needed to achieve the goal as well as the time and energy that an individual is willing to spend to achieve a certain goal. While motivation is a theoretical construct that can also be defined as a direction to a particular behavior or it is what motivates a person to initiate, follow or repeat a particular behavior, (Elliot & Thrash,

2002) motivational salience is a practically oriented construction that is used to explain and describes the already formed human behavior and which reveals the cause of the actions of the individual or group of individuals.

The idea that human beings are rational and human behavior is guided by reasons is one of the first to reflect motivational salience. Much of western philosophy, from which political and economic theories originate, is based on the idea that people are rational actors who always act in their own interest. Modern studies on this construct however refute the idea of homo economicus or perfect rationality in favor of bounded rationality and paying attention in limits of rationality of economic agents. The statement for the presence of perfect rationality is increasingly being disputed by modern management theories about motivational salience, which view human behavior as more complex and nuanced.

Motivational salience has been investigated as a result of a thorough preliminary theoretical study of the concepts and theories directly related to it, considering:

- *Cognitive school,* according to which human cognitive activity is defined as a psychic action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through reasoning, personal experience and use of human senses.
- *Behavioral school* that focuses on what factors initiate, prevent or retain different behaviors, which variables affect the type, intensity, frequency, and duration of the observed motivational expression.
- *Socio-cognitive direction*, according to which the behavior of individuals depends on the complex interactions between the factors of the inner environment of the individual and the external environment, and the people appear to be free beings.
- *A socio-cultural direction* that emphasizes the impact of activities and actions achieved through social interaction and in the social context. Socio cultural theory expands the social aspects of the theory of cognitive assessment and recognizes that motivation is externally produced and socially distributed within the social group.
- *Direction for behavioral physiology,* according to which motivated human behavior is the result of internal physical, chemical and biological processes. Motivation in these cases is referred to as the mobilization of energy, and the source of activity is the needs that he perceives as the needs of the organism, something that at one time is missing.

During the theoretical study, motivational theories have also been studied in terms of the content of the needs and the way of the motivation process. Fundamental content and procedural motivation theories are considered as follows:

- Content Motivational Theories, incl. Henry Murray's motivational taxonomy, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation, Atkinson's theory of achievement, ERG concept by

Clayton Aderfer, David McCleland's theory of socially acquired needs, Paul Lawrence's and Noriya theory of the four impulse.
- Procedural motivational theories, incl. Adams's theory of justice and social comparison, Edwin Locke's definition theory, the theory of the task's characteristics by Heckmann and Oldham, theory of expectation by Vrum, Porter and Lawler's complex motivation theory.

2. Research of motivational salience and satisfaction with training in the field of security and defense

After exploring a lot of theories of motivational salience and motivation is composed suitable questionnaire including 24 points to help achieve the scientific goals and allow testing the validity of the research hypothesis formulated and made scientific assumptions. The questionnaire was prepared after an in-depth study by Elitsa Petrova and Dimitru Iancu and is a consequence of their many years of research in the field of motivation of the employed persons.

The complex of questions is formed based on the explored motivational theories, as well as on the results of the diagnostic phase of the academic year 2012/2013, conducted among cadets from Nicolae Balcescu Land Academy, Romania and the Vasil Levski National Military University, Bulgaria. Originally drawn up a questionnaire that considers the specifics of the military organization include 15 questions, in consequence was extended to 24 questions, taking into account the need for corrections and detail of the surveyed dimensions and the problems encountered during the initial research. The themes included are undoubtedly the most significant in terms of the needs of the learners and of the desired information, which corresponds to the aims and specifics of the military educational organizations.

The study has gone through several stages, in which is used a methodology consisting of two components:
- methodology for conducting research on the motivational salience in the learning process and its relation with satisfaction on the example of learners at the Vasil Levski National Military University and
- methodology to conduct research on motivational salience and satisfaction in security and defense training, following the example of higher education institutions in Europe.

2.1. Diagnostic stage of the study on motivational salience and satisfaction with training in the field of security and defense.

During the academic year 2012/2013, a study was conducted on the ways of using procedural motivation theories in military formations jointly by cadet Andrey Zegoichea from Nicolae Balcescu Academy, Dimitru Iancu from

Romanian side, and Elitsa Petrova from the Bulgarian side. A comparative analysis was made of the methods used to form motivation for training students at both military institutiona (Zegoicea & Petrova, 2013). Following the concept of using procedural theories for motivation in military units, a suitable questionnaire consisting of 15 points was drawn up to help achieve the goals set and test the validity of the hypotheses formulated. The representative sample is made up of 156 people. Bulgarian and Romanian alumni from the last years of education in the relevant higher education institutions were covered. The study was carried out with the help of a statistical program for social sciences - SPSS. Based on the preliminary study, the existence of organizational problems was identified in the following areas:

- Dependence between individual efforts and learning outcomes;
- Satisfaction with general and specialized military training;
- Methods of external motivation used by academic and command staff;
- Methods of motivation in forming cadets as future officers and military leaders;
- Material base, equipment, and didactic materials used.

2.2. Main stage of the study on motivational salience and satisfaction with training in security and defense.

After receiving the approval and direction from the Head of the National Military University, the study entered its main stage. The main part of the study was conducted in the period 2013-2017 and aims to analyze the motivational performance in the training process of four consecutive classes of learners to develop models for linear prognosis of trends on certain dimensions. At this main stage of the study was carried out:

- Research on motivation for training and military activities and the satisfaction using 24 questions to the main target group - alumni cadets 2013/2014, 2014 /2015 2015 /2016 and 2016/2017 - total respondents 180 people.
- Study of motivation and satisfaction of a control group for comparison using 15 questions - first year cadets 2013/2014 year - total respondents 77 persons.
- Study of motivation and satisfaction of a control group for comparison using 15 questions - first year students 2013/2014 - total respondents 88 persons.

The main dimensions, which are identified and outlining the foundation for the analysis of results of specific indicators are:

Dimension 1: Personal effort - explored through questions 5, 6, 17, 18.

Indicator 1: Personal participation of learners during seminars and academic exercises.

Indicator 2: Factors that influence learners' personal involvement during seminars and academic exercises and their activity in the learning process.

Indicator 3: Participation in the initiation of extracurricular activities to develop personal learners' qualities and skills.

Indicator 4: Factors that determine the degree of participation and initiation of activities aimed at the development of personal qualities and skills and those of their fellows.

Dimension 2: Perceptions and attitudes towards equity - explored through questions 2, 19, 21, 22, 23.

Indicator 1: Study of special subjects and topics and their relationship with the professional development of learners as future military leaders.

Indicator 2: Influence of academic and military training at the university to build trainees as military leaders.

Indicator 3: Aspects of the academic environment that reduce the motivation in the process of acquiring knowledge.

Indicator 4: Influence of external factors on training.

Indicator 5: Influence of military organizational culture on individual performance.

Dimension 3: Achieved results and performance - explored through questions 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 24.

Indicator 1: Strictness of the program in the university and its relation to the academic achievements of the trainees.

Indicator 2: Activities that would lead to easing the curriculum and at the same time increasing the academic achievement of learners.

Indicator 3: Link between the training process and the future realization of the trainees as good military commanders.

Indicator 4: Factors that prevent learners from being as good as possible in their training and realize their potential in full.

Indicator 5: Factors influencing the evaluation, the final learning outcomes and their relationship with the efforts made by the learners.

Indicator 6: Components of military organizational culture that affect individual performance.

Dimension 4: Positive and negative reinforcements, awards and sanctions - explored through questions 9, 10, 13, 14.

Indicator 1: Consent or dissent with the use of collective negative reinforcements and measures requested by the academic or command staff.

Indicator 2: Factors that determine the choice of use or non-use of collective negative reinforcements and academic or command staff's claims.

Indicator 3: Use of negative reinforcements and requests from the academic or command staff and their reflection on the behavior and motivation of learners in the training process.

Indicator 4: Use of positive motivation from academic or command staff and influence on behavior and motivation of learners in the training process.

Dimension 5: Relation expected effort - prize probability - degree of satisfaction - explored through questions 1, 11, 15, 16, 20.

Indicator 1: Satisfaction with the choice of academic specialty.

Indicator 2: Relationship and dependency between the assessments received / the obtained results and the efforts.

Indicator 3: Satisfaction with the choice of military of specialty and specialization.

Indicator 4: Satisfaction with academic hours spent on general military training and hours dedicated to specialized disciplines.

Indicator 5: Dependence between learning outcomes and intellectual effort.

When presenting the levels of satisfaction and agreement with the given statements, a two-dimensional rectangular coordinate system and column diagrams for comparing categories values are used. Their advantage is to discover in the abscissa the ability to visually reflect the levels of satisfaction and agreement in the form of poles that are easily comparable to one another. Three pillars are outlined. A general profile of satisfaction or agreement is prepared for all items studied for all the academic years studied.

At the end of the main stage of the survey, a model for prognosis of the future levels of the levels of satisfaction of training and the motivation of the learners at the National Military University, Bulgaria is being prepared. The basis of visual representation graphical model used column chart comparing satisfaction or consent in individual academic years with a set line of trend linear forecasting binding surveyed periods. At this stage, a comparison between the main groups of respondents from four consecutive classes of trainee learners and control groups of trainee learners and students in the first year of their training is made. The main objective of such a comparison is the presentation of different perspectives in addressing the diagnostic stage, their comparison and detection of differences or similarities in the motivational salience of respondents, while using control groups increases the reliability and validity of the study and expand the scope of the problem under consideration.

2.3. Final stage of conducting research on the motivational salience and satisfaction with training in the field of security and defense.

At the final stage of the survey, conducted in the period 2017-2018, a study of the organizational culture and the problems in the training and motivation of the learners at the National Military University and in foreign educational institutions in the sphere of security and defense is performed. Experts with a major academic and / or commanding experience from Bulgaria and abroad are attracted to the experts.

Experts were asked to provide feedback in six consecutive modules:
- Module One. Presentation of learners in the training process.
- Module two. Methods used to motivate learners.
- Module third. General satisfaction of the trainees in the specific institution.
- Module Fourth. Organizational culture.
- Module Five. Problems in academic practice when working with learners.
- Module Six. Opportunities for increasing the motivation and academic achievement of the learners.

Educational shifts are dynamic, diverse, and non-linear. Especially so now, as the world appears to be moving rapidly due to technological advances and increased interconnectedness between countries and cultures, given the persistence of differences in educational results within nations, and disparities in privilege. In today's age, students are focusing more on hands-on skills, or finding information themselves, in order to boost their knowledge so they can later use in their lives. Therefore, the challenge for educators is to explain the skills and switch from broad statements of intent to more detailed discussions on educational practice. (Hysa, E., & Mansi, E., 2020)

Conclusion

The emphasis on teamwork, flexibility and a fast response to changes in the environment makes it more and more that mandating power is a useful tool for the effectiveness of organizations. As the leaders do, the organization also implements the structures adequate for rewards and equitable policies to allow experimentation, initiatives, possibility of error and cooperation. (Ştefănescu, 2010) The leader is a member of the group that has a major impact on the behavior of other actors in the overall activity. (Zhekova, 2013) People mention often names like Martin Luther King, Gandhi, and John Kennedy when they think about leaders. These leaders are characterized by self-confidence and generating of powerful emotionally reactions in those who follow them. They have the capacity of transforming their followers, the organizations, the society and they

can even change the history progress. They have charisma and they have determined to change the world. (Ștefănescu, 2011) Good leaders are infectiously optimistic, even when faced with difficulties, and are happy to see employees' happiness. If success does not come immediately, they have the ability to make people patient while looking for a new solution. They are lifelong learners, looking for challenges that empower them with new skills, capacity, knowledge and innovation. (Manea Tonis Rocsana B., Cezar Braicu, Radu Bucea-Manea-Tonis, Elena Gurgu, 2020)

We believe that the strength of the will of the leadership of military education institutions and synchronized efforts of academic and command staff would contribute to enhancing the motivation to learn and to increase the effectiveness of subsequent motivational salience in the learning process by using appropriate methods for motivating learners, building leadership skills, providing the appropriate facilities for conducting training. Learners should also have the will and the conviction that their efforts are not in vain and could contribute to creating a more creative and successful organizational environment by engaging in the learning process and demonstrating impeccable behavior, respect for their own work, colleagues, academic and command staff.

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