Development of social skills of professional soldiers in management and command functions aimed at positively influencing subordinate soldiers

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Abstract: The issue of developing the social skills of professional soldiers in management and command functions, with a focus on positively influencing subordinate soldiers, is an integral part of the perfect performance of military duties. The basic theoretical starting points regarding the commander's personality, his key competencies, priority issues of the commander's social skills and the techniques of their own development represent an important success factor in the management and command of subordinate professional soldiers. The developed analytical program for the development of social skills, which represent the basic set of competencies necessary for the management and command function, is part of the fulfillment of the mission and mission of the commander.

Keywords: Social skills, professional soldier, commander, leadership

1. Introduction

The issue of the so-called "soft elements of management" has been the necessary professional equipment of every manager in recent years. Working with people requires a great degree of empathy from the commander, the ability to motivate his subordinates to perform better, to be able to foresee and prevent possible interpersonal conflicts and tension in the workplace. A "good commander" should have not only military skills, but also a human approach. Despite rapid changes in the world, in society and in the armed forces, new ways of leading subordinates are implemented very slowly in the practice of military command. The military environment is based on a fixed organizational and command structure, on a strict hierarchy, rules and issued orders. The way of management and leadership of subordinate professional soldiers is determined by the commanders themselves at different levels of command. Which way they choose and which one they prefer depends not only on the culture and social maturity of the organization itself, but also on the social skills they possess, which are so necessary for successful management and command. Precisely because of the considerable influence of professional soldiers in management and command functions on the level of management and command, as well as the fact that in the education of future and current commanders and their professional training during the performance of service, social skills and their importance are not given sufficient space and deserved attention is the focus of this analytical study. Being excellently prepared for battle has always been not only an honor for every soldier, but especially a necessity for his survival. In the past, this mainly meant perfect control of weapons, fighting techniques and also excellent physical condition. This is definitely still true today and probably won't change in the future. Changes in the requirements for the education of the rank officer corps have changed over time, especially his character, willpower and mental qualities. Practically until the First World War, the rank-and-file officer was only a link in the chain of formations that made up the combat formation. The fight was highly centralized and any initiative was undesirable[1]. The changes came only after unpleasant experiences from the battlefields of the First World War, where it became clear that victory can only be achieved with greater agility and dynamism in conducting combat activities. The characteristics of the newly introduced modern weapon systems and communication equipment intended for the command of the troops also contributed to the need for changes in the conduct of combat activities.

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For this reason, the requirements for the training and education of soldiers, especially the rank-and-file corps of officers, increased considerably. Experience has confirmed that only an army that has well-trained soldiers, an educated officer corps, modern weapons and capable officers can win. It turned out that the management of combat activity is an art and that the use of more modern and sophisticated weapon systems, which have an impact on the tactics of conducting combat activity, creates higher demands on the rank and file of officers.

2. Analytical education of professional soldiers in management and command functions

Commanding troops is generally considered a military art. Successful command in battle places high demands on the skills and personality of the officer, as a decisive person making decisions, primarily on:
- the determination to seize the opportunity and make bold decisions,
- the ability to thoroughly analyze risks and manage them,
- readiness to take advantage of opportunities or to create them,
- ability to continuously plan, effectively use forces, space, time and information,
- the courage to prioritize a risk-aware approach over a risk-afraid approach,
- the ability to think creatively and innovatively in order to find solutions to problems,
- motivate subordinates, organize the use of forces and means so that the task is fulfilled,
- his high professionalism,
- high moral credit and compliance with ethical standards,
- control of tactical and operational principles,
- flexibility and creativity,
- imagination and intuition,
- mental and physical resistance,
- the ability to bear a high load and make decisions in these conditions,
- the ability to make decisions even in conditions of high uncertainty and uncertainty,
- the ability to overcome setbacks and perform unexpected tasks, to react correctly in unexpected situations.

In order to motivate his subordinates, an officer must have inherent authority based on his subordinates' belief in his moral qualities, expertise, and professionalism. Subordinates will trust him and actively promote his decisions even if they have experience that his decisions are always competent, aimed at achieving the set goal (task) [2]. The current state of career education depends on the established qualification prerequisites and requirements for the performance of the civil service. A qualifying condition for the performance of civil service is education for a military rank determined by the level of education.

The personality of the commander is the integrity of the entire set of biological, psychological and social characteristics of a person [3]. The structure and dynamics of the personality determine and predetermine the commander, how he will experience, react, and how he will behave towards his work environment. Each commander is evaluated and judged by his superiors as well as professional soldiers who are under his command. On the scale of evaluation by subordinates, it is a simple verbal evaluation of "good commander" or "bad commander", while these phrases represent the whole spectrum of motivational, temperamental, character and performance qualities that the evaluated commander possesses. Competence can be defined as the capability expressing the commander's readiness for the required performance. The key competences are intended to serve the commander in achieving the set goals in the proper management of the unit [4]. We can divide them into three basic areas: On the scale of evaluation by subordinates, it is a simple verbal evaluation of "good commander" or "bad commander", while these phrases represent the whole spectrum of motivational,

temperamental, character and performance qualities that the evaluated commander possesses. Competence can be defined as the capability expressing the commander's readiness for the required performance. The key competences are intended to serve the commander in achieving the set goals in the proper management of the unit [4]. We can divide them into three basic areas: On the scale of evaluation by subordinates, it is a simple verbal evaluation of "good commander" or "bad commander", while these phrases represent the whole spectrum of motivational, temperamental, character and performance qualities that the evaluated commander possesses. Competence can be defined as the capability expressing the commander's readiness for the required performance. The key competences are intended to serve the commander in achieving the set goals in the proper management of the unit [4]. We can divide them into three basic areas: Competence can be defined as the capability expressing the commander's readiness for the required performance. The key competences are intended to serve the commander in achieving the set goals in the proper management of the unit [4]. We can divide them into three basic areas: Competence can be defined as the capability expressing the commander's readiness for the required performance.

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a) professional competences – resulting from education and experience in the given field, skills, habits, abilities, physical fitness, mental readiness,
b) managing and commanding managerial competencies - these are divided into: the ability to know, the ability to plan, the ability to organize and implement, the ability to diagnose and evaluate, self-evaluation,
c) moral competences – honesty, loyalty, courage, openness, tact, objectivity.

The quality of command depends on the personality of the commander and his disposition to command, his influence on subordinates, as well as on the psychological aspects of the coexistence of unit members, their cohesion, the content of the tasks performed and the specifics of command in various performed activities. The commander must be able to flexibly change his style of command depending on the situation. In the key competencies of the commander, other competencies, abilities, and skills also play an important role:

a) communicative – the ability to communicate constructively with subordinates and superiors, to be able to verbally express one's thoughts as precisely as possible, to clearly formulate tasks and requirements for their fulfillment...),
b) motivational – to be able to recruit soldiers to perform tasks in peace and in combat, to know their way of thinking, their value system,
c) creative and critical problem solving - being able to find the optimal solution under the given conditions and be able to implement it and be responsible for the result, the complexity of the view on solving tasks at the given command level [5].

The commander should be able to recognize and understand the emotions of his subordinates, but also know his own and be able to control them, not only in front of subordinate professional soldiers, but also in communication with superior officials. A commander who does not control his emotions loses not only his natural, informal authority, but also the respect of his subordinates for the very function he holds. It restricts and prevents good cooperation with his subordinates, on whom his success and recognition depend. Subordinates do not come to a "mood" commander of their own free will, with creative ideas, but also with problems that bother them, because the outcome of the meeting depends on his good or bad mood. The organization, staff, unit, unit cannot function well and progress under such leadership. The most effective leaders, according to international surveys, there are people who managed to create a balance between personal talent, professional education and professional management skills. A leader possesses a whole range of abilities and qualities, thanks to which he is perceived as a leader. People with leadership skills know how to arouse enthusiasm in others for a common goal or vision, they actively manage the activities of others, while they themselves lead by example.

There are principles that a good leader should follow:

a) leadership assumes a certain degree of dominance,
b) subordinates must know that he cares about them, that he stands behind them and shares all risks with them,
c) requirements for subordinates must be clearly defined, they must know the task and the way to fulfill it,
d) the leader must be able to evaluate the situation and know when and how to act, he must be able to make a decision,
e) the leader must know how to motivate and reward (motivation and reward are a powerful tool of the commander in managing subordinates),

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f) a leader must have charisma,
g) the leader must be able to criticize correctly (not to criticize the result that has just been completed, if the error could have been avoided with proper instruction or control),
h) knowing when to speak and when to be silent and listen (the art of listening will often provide more information than a "command monologue"),
i) the leader should be empathetic enough, which is definitely not a weakness, but on the contrary, a very strong point of a good leader,
j) the leader must know when, to whom and how to delegate tasks (some commanders cannot rely on their subordinates, they get into a state of burnout due to their own overwork [6].

The requirements for a leader in a specific military environment are set as follows:
a) know and be able to lead subordinates,
b) master your military expertise and military expertise specialization at a high level in terms of theory and practice,
c) to make the right decisions in stressful situations and in a time crunch,
d) have the maximum level of moral awareness and morality,
k) have knowledge in the field of geopolitics and international relations appropriate to the function performed [6].

The specificity of the military environment places specific demands on commanders, from the ability to lead subordinates, expertise in the performance of assigned tasks, handling stressful situations and the ability to make decisions in them, to a high level of moral qualities. As we have already stated in the work, it is not only the commander's work with his subordinates that he must manage, he must also know how to work with his superiors. A condition for success is his lifelong education in the skills he needs to perform his job.

Many current research points to a list of so-called universal leadership attributes, both positive and negative.

Table 1: universal leadership attributes

Positive leadership attributes		
Trustworthy	Fair	Honest
Anticipatory	He plans ahead	Encouraging
Positive	Dynamic	Motivator
It builds trust	Motivating	Reliable
Intelligent	Decisive	A true businessman
Win-win problem solving	Communicative	Informed
Administratively skilled	Coordinator	Team builder
Oriented to excellence		

Negative leadership attributes		
A loner	Antisocial	Uncooperative
Irritable	Ambiguous	Egocentric
Reckless	Dictatorial	

Today, the requirements for leaders are different from those we know from the past. Leadership represents dominance, i.e. the ability to lead other people, make decisions and take responsibility

The social competence of the commander basically represents the ability to influence his subordinates. The area of influencing people and teamwork mainly represents flexibility in dealing with people and the ability to achieve desirable reactions from subordinate staff. Competencies in the field of interpersonal relations include the following:

1. Area of Empathy:
   a) Understanding and understanding others - estimating the feelings of others and being able to consider them.
   b) The ability to stimulate others - to sense when it is necessary to support the development of the abilities of others.
   c) Orientation to the subordinate - to anticipate, recognize and satisfy his needs.
   d) Use of diversity - to achieve the desired direction with the help of the use of people's differences.
   e) Feeling for the "politics" of the organization - to follow trends, to orientate in people's opinions.

2. Area of influencing people and teamwork:
   a) The ability to influence others - choosing the right tactics to gain approval.
   b) The art of communication - sending clear and convincing signals.
   c) Ability to manage conflicts - dexterity in negotiation and settlement of disputes.
   d) Leadership skills - the ability to inspire others to achieve a goal.
   e) Willingness to change - to stimulate and organize beneficial changes in the workplace.

3. Teamwork:
   a) The ability to develop lasting ties and relationships - to cultivate useful connections with the environment.
   b) The ability to cooperate and support each other - to move towards the goal together with others.

   The ability to consolidate a team - lead a team, cultivate a team, deepen team cooperation [3].

Given that our goal was to highlight the development of those social competencies that will help the commander to properly influence the behavior and actions of his subordinates, we focused attention on these specific social skills:
   a) self-awareness and self-regulation (the ability to know oneself, as a necessary prerequisite to know others...),
   b) motivation of subordinates (ability to motivate, influence and excite others to achieve a common goal...),
   c) communication skills (ability to communicate effectively - assignment of tasks, ability to manage conflicts, ability to conduct work meetings...)
   d) the ability to lead subordinates with an emphasis on team building and cooperation (leading a team, deepening team cooperation, developing good superior-subordinate, subordinate-superior, subordinate-subordinate relationships).

In connection with the topics of self-awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation, it is necessary to mention that these three areas represent abilities related to one's own person, more specifically:

1. Area of self-awareness
   a) Self-awareness – recognizing the influence of our own feelings on our actions.
   b) Self-evaluation - own pluses and minuses, knowing one's own limits.
   c) Self-confidence - self-assurance, awareness of one's own worth, possibilities and abilities.

2. The area of self-regulation
   a) Self-control - "Keeping in check" negative emotions and subconscious impulses.
   b) Reliability, trustworthiness - the ability to follow the rules, a sense of fair play.
   c) Conscientiousness – the ability to take responsibility for one's behavior and work performance.
   d) Adaptability - adaptability, ability to adapt to changes.
   e) Innovation - the ability to accept or offer new ideas, information, procedures.

3. Area of motivation for higher goals:
   a) Healthy ambition – striving to improve one's own work.
   b) Loyalty - identification with the intentions and goals of the organization or work group.
   c) Initiative - the ability to readily seize opportunities.
   d) Optimism – persistence, willingness to overcome obstacles, postpone satisfaction of own needs [3]

3. Analytical study of the commander's social skills and development program

3.1 There are several possibilities and methods of developing any professional competence, the decisive role in its selection is played by the environment of the organization itself, spatial and temporal factors, the education and ability of the lecturer himself, as well as the profile of the participants of the planned education.

Developing intervention programs are based on social learning theory and group strategies and forms of work. They represent a modern approach in education, support humanistic perspectives of education and support of a healthy lifestyle. In a narrower sense, they are aimed at the development of social-personal competence, as an immanent part of a wider complex of educational activities [7].

Training represents a specific form of education and personality development, which began to be applied here in the sixties. According to some authors, training is about help in acquiring specific skills, while the emphasis is on the acquisition and strengthening of specific competencies of the individual. Despite the emphasis on abilities and competences, the training should also include an effort to change attitudes, as well as the acquisition of certain cognitive knowledge. It is a planned process leading to a change in attitude, knowledge or behavior through a learning experience in order to achieve effective performance in some activity. This is a type of social discovery of knowledge and experiential acquisition of practical skills, which usually takes place in direct contact with the learner and assumes his activity in discovering and acquiring new experiences and skills [8]. It is one of the easiest ways to acquire one or more social skills and represents a closed model of education. Social competence training stimulates the development of the overall ability to act in contact with people, to react appropriately, to be able to flexibly use acquired skills in several situations and to understand the potential of social skills. Since it is about the development of social competence, the participant of social competence training can use the acquired skills both in the work sphere and in private life. Social competence training stimulates the development of the overall ability to act in contact with people, to react appropriately, to be able to flexibly use acquired skills in several situations and to understand the potential of social skills. Since it is about the development of social competence, the participant of social competence training can use the acquired skills both in the work sphere and in private life.

An important and frequently used method of active social learning in practice is social-psychological training, which most often focuses on social perception, social communication - verbal, non-verbal, including active listening, social interaction, empathy, handling interpersonal conflicts, assertive behavior, handling stressful situations, developing creativity and psychohygiene. It is one of the forms of developing programs, which we perceive as a practical activity that purposefully supports the process of social learning based on personal interpersonal experience and accompanying emotional experience. It helps develop social skills, increase social competence, which clearly strengthens professional skills as well.

3.2 The goal of the "Social Skills Development Program" (hereinafter referred to as the "program") is to focus on developing those selected social skills that, from our point of view, are necessary for the professional performance of command and control functions.

The content of the program consists of five modules of education in selected social skills, while the first module consists of the issue of self-awareness and self-regulation of the training participants, which is desirable not only as a "warm-up" introductory part of the program, but also as a very important factor influencing the development of those social skills that are subject of our interest and form the content of the program. The last module is the completion and evaluation of the social-psychological training itself. The content of the program consists of the following five modules:

1. Self-awareness and self-regulation - gaining self-confidence and self-awareness using special techniques leading to better self-knowledge and awareness of one's real abilities, skills and qualities, understanding and control of one's emotions.
2. Motivating subordinates – acquiring the ability to motivate subordinates to perform at work, increasing commanders' awareness of motivational strategies and sources of motivation for work performance.
3. Communication skills – improving communication and expression skills, understanding the principles of effective and optimal communication, the ability to resolve conflicts, mastering effective ways of managing conflicts, the art of leading and managing a meeting.
4. The ability to lead subordinates with an emphasis on team building - to know and control effective management styles, to know the principles of establishing authority, to understand the importance of a team and teamwork, to know the factors that influence effective teamwork, to be aware of the importance of time management in the work of a commander, as well as to properly use (not abuse) command powers (control, evaluation of subordinates).

Completion and evaluation of the program - practical summary of "own gains" from participating in the program, development of your own "task sheet" in personal growth (what to improve about yourself in the near future), evaluation of the program.

Conclusion

Basic values, moral qualities and professionalism in humanity are rising more and more in price in the world market. An excess of material things coupled with increasing pressure on workers is the result of dissatisfied, tired, overworked and under-motivated people. Among the most common reasons for visiting a psychologist are dysfunctional interpersonal relationships, which result in even greater conflicts at the workplace. Another relatively frequent reason for intervention by a psychologist is a problematic superior-subordinate relationship, resulting from unprofessional management, lack of interest in the life and problems of subordinate professional soldiers, related to the ever-increasing demands on their work performance.

The absence of a human approach, (lack of) mastery of social skills in working with subordinate staff was the main reason why we decided to pay attention to this area in our final work. The aim of this contribution was not only to point out the importance of mastering social competences, but especially to elaborate a model (pilot) program for the development of social skills of professional soldiers in management and command functions, which would be applicable in practice. It is more than desirable to include the mentioned program in the theoretical and practical psychological training of commanders precisely at the lower levels of command, because they begin the first and real work with subordinates. It is likely that as they master their commanding skills in the beginning, they will also professionally "command" in their future working careers at higher commanding positions.

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