



How to establish effective interaction in military units during the performance of their combat duties

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◆ **Abstract.** The relevance of the study is determined by the need to ensure systematically organised interaction between military personnel during the performance of combat duties as part of units, since its violation reduces the effectiveness of combat operations and increases the risk of personnel, weapons and military equipment losses, and contributes to the enemy seizing the initiative. The purpose of the study was to identify and analyse key ways to establish interaction in military units in the process of performing service and combat tasks. Based on theoretical analysis, socio-psychological factors influencing the organisation of interaction in social groups were determined. The method of information classification identified positive and negative factors influencing the behaviour of individuals in a group, systematised the stages of small group formation and indicators of their development effectiveness. Synthesis and generalisation of the findings determined the conditions for establishing effective interaction in newly created military units to successfully perform their service and combat tasks. To strengthen unit cohesion, it is proposed to develop and coordinate rules of conduct that strengthen mutual responsibility, and to form an awareness of the common goal of activity and their own role of military personnel in achieving it. For the effective operation of the group during the performance of service and combat tasks, it is recommended to organise and maintain a communication system within the unit (group). After completing the task, it is recommended to hold a briefing to clarify the results, discuss problematic aspects, encourage introspection of the actions of group members, and prevent or resolve possible conflicts. The requirements for the selection of military personnel and their appointment to positions are formulated based on their adequate perception of the tasks of the unit in which they will serve, feedback from unit commanders from the previous place of service (work), in order to better predict their behaviour and create trusting relationships in the newly formed group

◆ **Keywords:** cohesion; identity; conflict; cooperation; leadership; working team; facilitation

◆ Introduction

The effectiveness of any activity is determined not by technical means or information technologies, but by people's ability to interact, since in all spheres of life they are constantly or situationally connected with others. To satisfy their needs and solve problems, people interact with others, participating in joint activities and forming groups; in doing so, their individual psychological characteristics and life and professional experience interact with the influence of the social group, which shapes their beliefs, values and behavioural patterns. The

invasion of Russian occupation forces into Ukraine necessitated the mobilisation of conscripts into the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations, the replenishment of existing military units and formations, and the creation of new ones to perform a wide range of combat and other tasks. As a result of these events, military units now have representatives of different age and social groups in the ranks and command positions, who have different life and professional experiences, different attitudes towards military activity in general

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and the performance of combat duties, which impairs the interaction of military units in battle and leads to combat losses of personnel, weapons, equipment, interception of the initiative by the enemy, capture and destruction of important areas and objects, etc. According to their official duties, interaction during the organisation of the battle should be organised by the unit commander. However, the complexity and variety of combat tasks, the functional distribution of responsibilities in combat performed by various specialists suggest that their successful execution depends on the active participation of all military personnel in the unit, their cohesion, communication, and teamwork. In turn, the success of the actions of each lower-ranked and smaller-numbered group depends on the result of the activity of the entire division (formation, assembly).

As noted by Z. Yin *et al.* (2025), interaction occurs between people during communication, joint task completion, establishing interpersonal relationships, and exercising mutual influence. In this context, social interaction is a necessary condition for the existence of a society based on the norms of reciprocity and trust, which provide a forecast of behaviour, facilitate coordination of actions to achieve common goals. M. Hechter (2019) defined it as a process of mutually beneficial cooperation that arises based on searching, evaluating and sharing resources, differentiating status and power, and focusing on a common goal. Social interaction can be interpreted as a way of constructing reality by forming ideas, roles, and institutions that later become group, and belonging and group identity are further maintained through social processes (Turner & Roberts, 2023). R. Owunna *et al.* (2025) emphasised that it is formed in the learning process, which is implemented through observing other people's behaviour, imitating and actively modelling it. This process allows a person to integrate social norms, values, and behavioural strategies into their own practice, contributing to the development of interpersonal skills and social competence. J.A. Loughmiller-Cardinal & J.S. Cardinal (2023) considered social interaction as a social action in which behaviour is focused on other participants and is determined by group norms, expectations, beliefs, ideals, needs, an individual's emotional states, and social context. Using the example of medical workers, M.E. Meneses-La-Riva *et al.* (2025) emphasised that effective communication is closely linked to teamwork, namely: communicating corporate culture, motivating employees, and helping resolve conflicts significantly strengthen team interaction. People are encouraged to interact: a sense of identity, mutual expectations, common goals, interests, needs, based on which a system of relations, norms of behaviour is formed, statuses and roles are distributed, and joint activities are organised. Simultaneously, group activities can be effective or ineffective, constructive or destructive, solve problems or complicate them, even if they are perceived and understood by all the performers involved, as claimed by M. Holubčík *et al.* (2025). However, none of the above theories, revealing the features of group

behaviour, did not provide recommendations for organising effective interaction in groups, especially if they are constantly changing in composition and number, and their tasks are quite diverse. This problem has a particularly acute impact on the interaction of military units (combat groups), whose composition, size, and tasks may change constantly in accordance with the decisions of senior commanders (headquarters) and the current situation. The purpose of the study was to determine the methods of organising interaction in military units (groups) in the course of performing their service and combat tasks. Achieving this research goal involved completing the relevant tasks: identification of socio-psychological factors that affect the effectiveness of establishing interaction between members of the same group during joint performance of tasks; identification of ways to establish interaction between military personnel of the same unit (group) during the performance of their service and combat tasks; development of practical recommendations for commanders (managers).

◆ Materials and Methods

The study considered the success of performing service and combat tasks by military units as a function of the skills available to military personnel to establish effective interaction and was devoted to the study of techniques and ways to organise this interaction. The theoretical basis of the research was a set of sociological and social concepts:

- ◆ concept of sociology, which considers society as an autonomous system, guided by its own laws and exerts a coercive influence on individuals through control, correction of behaviour and transmission of social experience, existing only in the process of interaction of specific individuals (Durkheim, 2013);

- ◆ structural functionalism and social constructivism, which treat the social system as a set of interrelated phenomena and processes, where each structure performs the functions of adaptation, goal setting, integration, and maintaining internal stability (Pfadenhauer & Knoblauch, 2018; Gergen, 2023);

- ◆ methodological individualism, according to which social phenomena are considered as a consequence of the subjective reflection by individuals of ideas about a certain ideal social state (Weber, 2019).

The selection of concepts and sources was carried out according to the criteria of their scientific significance, compliance with the subject of research and the ability to provide a comprehensive review and systematisation of organisational processes in military units. Theoretical analysis of studies on sociology, social psychology, and management provided an opportunity to find out the patterns and interrelations of processes and phenomena occurring in social groups and highlight the features of organising interaction in military units. In particular, based on publications of P. Sztompka (1994), W.J. Scott *et al.* (2023) and A. Giddens *et al.* (2024), socio-psychological factors influencing the organisation of interaction in social groups were identified. The main provisions of the theory of

conflict and leadership were summarised based on contemporary scientific approaches presented by W. Wilczynski & S.F. Brosnan (2021), A. Driscoll & L. van Haarst (2025) and S. Page (2025). Classification of information obtained based on theoretical analysis helped to determine socio-psychological factors affecting the dynamics of social groups, stages and indicators of their development. Positive and negative factors influencing the behaviour of individuals in a group were identified, the stages of development of small groups and indicators of the effectiveness of their development were systematised. Synthesis and generalisation of the research results determined the conditions and ways of organising the most effective interaction in units and helped to formulate recommendations, compliance with which will ensure its successful establishment during the performance of service and combat tasks by newly created military units.

◆ Results and Discussion

Service and combat activity is a permanent, active, coordinated by the purpose, tasks, time, and place of the main type of activity of military formations, which is regulated by charters, laws, and other regulatory legal acts. According to the requirements of the time, it is highly professional and requires military personnel to have the appropriate competencies that ensure the combat capabilities of units, affect their purpose and combat tasks (Paparone, 2013; Scott *et al.*, 2023). Military personnel must be able not only to move quickly and overcome obstacles, destroy the enemy with fire from standard weapons, use and equip shelters to protect themselves from enemy fire, but also interact with other military personnel. This means that the decisive factor in winning a battle is not the individual level of training, but the coordinated actions of units (groups). Based on the purpose and combat capabilities of the units, the command and military management bodies carry out planning, preparation, execution, evaluation, and coordination of actions. The result of planning is an order or plan for future actions that directs, coordinates, and synchronises the actions of departments, defining ways to organise interaction during task execution (Larsen & Wade, 2019). At the level of interaction between units, commanders of different degrees are guided by the task defined by the senior chief, so they must take care of interaction with each other. At the inter-individual level, interaction is manifested in the fact that each serviceman performs a combat mission in the interests and as part of the unit, so their activities will be effective with the participation of other servicemen of the unit. The transience, sudden changes in the operational situation, and variability of combat tasks inherent in modern combined-arms combat significantly affect the effectiveness of interaction, especially if these tasks are performed by different tactical groups in number and structure, which are often equipped with military personnel from different units and are also managed by periodically changing commanders. One of the possible ways to overcome this problem is for unit commanders to master the techniques and methods of establishing interaction.

The formation of social groups and the establishment of effective interaction in them is determined by a complex of social, psychological, and organisational factors that simultaneously allow predicting the effectiveness of further activities. According to the theories of social learning, an individual's cognitive processes and behaviour are constantly interconnected with the external environment through the perception, imitation, and modelling of the behaviour of others, which provides learning, defining goals, and directing activities to achieve them, and adjustment and motivation through feedback (Watson *et al.*, 2021). According to the theory of social comparison, in difficult life situations, a person focuses on the beliefs, assessments and actions of the reference group to increase self-esteem, self-confidence, and motivation for actions (Köpeczi-Bócz, 2025). Theory of social imagination by P. Sztompka (1994) emphasises that the behaviour of individuals in a group is based on norms of reciprocity and trust, which facilitates coordination of actions and promotes effective cooperation to achieve common goals. The theory of social exchange, presented by T. Whalen (2018), emphasises that a social group is formed as a result of motivated search, evaluation and mutual exchange of resources, information or emotions, and differentiation of status and power with a focus on achieving a common goal. According to the theory of communicative actions, group decisions are made by choosing between several options, predicting consequences from the standpoint of group norms, and for the purpose of self-presentation to others or reaching agreement on solving a problem (Greifeneder *et al.*, 2017). Theories of social cognition and social imagination explain that in the process of social interaction, social representation is formed as a way to preserve categorised perceptual information that affects the judgement, decision-making, communication and regulation of behaviour of individuals in a group (Bauman & May, 2019). According to rational choice theories, group creation is considered as a process of optimising or maximising expected utility and planning to achieve a goal within existing conditions (Grundmann & Hacker, 2021). Theories of social constructivism, presented by M. Pfadenhauer & H. Knoblauch (2018) and K.J. Gergen (2023), argue that as a result of social practice, relationships, mental and linguistic representations are formed and transformed between individuals, and norms and roles are established that influence the behaviour of participants. Thus, in these theories, a necessary condition for creating a group is the presence of common interests, moods, views and feelings, the most important of which is a sense of identity, which encourages people to distribute roles and organise joint activities. Analysis of papers devoted to the study of methods of group interaction, in particular by D.R. Forsyth (2019), D. Levi & D.A. Askay (2021), provided an opportunity to identify key behaviours of group members in the interaction process:

1) cooperation (collaboration, partnership) – characterised by mutually beneficial goals, solidarity and mutual

sympathy, coordinated joint efforts, effective problem solving, and the distribution of functions, roles, and responsibilities;

2) rivalry (competition) – occurs due to mutually exclusive interests and positions of group members and involves attempts to mutually advance or defeat the opponent, which often develops into conflicts;

3) compromise – provides for mutual concessions, different interests and goals of the activity;

4) adaptation – involves neglecting own interests and conquering a stronger or more authoritative opponent;

5) avoidance – implies suspension and distancing between the parties, lack of responsibility for making joint decisions.

Thus, the mode of interaction and the leading social motive used by group members affect group cohesion, as it will be more or less attractive to most members (Durkheim, 2013). A group whose activities are based on cooperation and dominated by a spirit of collaboration has a better chance of becoming cohesive. Cooperation is a factor in group cohesion, as it helps to reduce intra-group conflicts, promotes free and open communication, and ensures mutual support. Accordingly, the group in which the activity is based on competition, and the leading motive is an individual result or benefit, has the least chance of becoming cohesive. During the performance of a combat mission, military personnel must have complete information about the existing situation in which they are located, and the tasks of other groups interacting with them. Ultimately, in a situation where a soldier or group commander lacks information about the actions of neighbouring groups in

order to make an individual decision, there is a possibility that he will not adhere to group norms or value the results of others, i.e., he will not cooperate. Competition between groups will also affect the rational use of resources if members of competing groups do not know who is interacting with them, do not have a basis of trust in them, and cannot communicate. Therefore, if there are several competing subgroups in a group, their interaction can also be productive only if the groups perform tasks that are independent of each other, and a delay in performing one will not lead to the failure of the others.

An important role in the organisation of group interaction is played by the attitude of the individual, which, according to R.F. Baumeister (2018) and S.T. Fiske (2018), reflects the nature of interaction of the individual with various aspects of reality, the driving forces of behaviour (goals, needs, motives, interests, ideals), the level of conscious regulation of behaviour, the assessment of oneself as a subject of activity, and emotions that reflect the degree of relevance of needs and the probability of their satisfaction. When distributing military personnel into groups, the unit commander needs to find out their individual characteristics, paying special attention to the attitude to other members of the group and to the performance of a combat mission, since it ensures the integrity, stability, and consistency of the individual's behaviour in the group, a sense of identity with its members. Socio-psychological factors that encourage an individual to imitate and reproduce models of group behaviour are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-psychological factors influencing the characteristics of behaviour in the group

No.	Factors of group behaviour	Influence on individual behaviour
1	Social facilitation	Improvement of the performance of group activities compared to individual ones
2	Cooperation	Improvement of group performance when solving problems together
3	Subordinate identity	Conflict reduction through conscious perception of group norms
4	Blocking or simulating performance	Resistance to innovation, blocking communication, resources, reduction of the effectiveness of teamwork
5	Interdependence of group members	Active exchange of knowledge and development of social skills through joint activities
6	Regulatory compliance	Demonstration of behaviour and expressing opinions that meet group norms and beliefs
8	Group thinking	Emergence of «illusions of invulnerability» among members of the group, an unfounded belief in the ethicality and benevolence of the group, stereotypes in assessing opponents, disregard for criticism, and pressure on dissenters
9	Conformism	Individual changes attitudes and behaviour in accordance with the norms and opinions of other members of the group against own beliefs
10	Group polarisation	Group's tendency to make the most risky, speculative, or stereotypical decisions
11	Cognitive conflict	Influence of a close-knit minority on the opinion of a larger group

Source: developed by the author based on R.B. Cialdini (2021)

Table 1 showed that socio-psychological factors of group behaviour influence individual actions both positively, contributing to productivity, cooperation, and development of social skills, as well as negatively, causing conformism, groupthink, and propensity to make risky or stereotypical decisions. This, in turn, highlights the complexity of individual-group interaction and the importance of consciously managing group processes to improve team performance. However, the definition of tasks assigned to a group is determined by the way it is

created and the specifics of development processes. According to the views of R. Brown & S. Pehrson (2019), the characteristics of the group are determined by its type: society is guided by rules, the crowd – mood, the mass arises spontaneously by a coincidence of moods, the social movement is organised for changes in social reality, the public is formed based on group decisions and public opinion, and the team is marked by coherence and productivity. An important factor is also the quantitative composition of the group: large groups include

communities united by common interests or status, while small groups (dyads, triads, quadras) are determined by the severity of group dynamics processes, in particular, alternative leadership, group pressure, duration of existence, the influence of individual differences, the level of social responsibility, anonymity of members, and conditions of group communication. In addition, groups differ in structure, within which subgroups are distinguished as close communities within a larger association, formed based on common interests, goals, and values. Structural elements also include group norms as informal rules for regulating behaviour, traditions, customs, rituals, and attributes that shape an individual's attitude to other group members, and statuses and roles that reflect a person's position in the hierarchy, level of influence, access to resources, and expected behaviours. An important characteristic of the group is cohesion, which manifests itself in a state of positive interpersonal relationships, common identity and unity of goals and determines the orientation of individual behaviour in accordance with collective interests. No less significant is the communication system, which regulates the interaction of group members, increases the level of group identity and interest in the results of joint activities, becomes a component of group culture, increases motivation and cooperation and reduces distrust, while acting as a source of stereotyping and influencing the processes of social cognition. A separate role is played by the leadership style, which determines the organisation and direction of group actions, the level of productivity and viability, staff turnover, integration strategies, coordination of joint actions, and ways to resolve conflicts. The study by R.L. Owen & J.A. Buck (2020), dedicated to the investigation of the principles of sociocracy, offers various models of self-government based on effectiveness, collegiality, evidence, equivalence, continuous development, transparency, collective responsibility and initiation of ideas, the use of flexible and dynamic methods of teamwork, activating the potential of employees in various fields, promoting cohesion. In these models, considerable attention is paid to the distribution of operational roles in work teams, with one performer voluntarily performing several of them in different processes. However, the complexity of group tasks is determined by the process of group development, in which, according to A. Giddens *et al.* (2024), within the framework of contemporary theories of group dynamics, the stages of development, conflict, normalisation, functioning, and decay are distinguished. In most models of group dynamics, there is a stage of conflict – a special type of interpersonal interaction that occurs due to contradictions in the goals, interests, opinions of group members, their views on ways to solve problems and can be constructive, contributing to a better understanding of the problem and ways to solve it, cooperation and increased motivation, or destructive, which distracts attention from understanding the causes of problems and ways to overcome them in the plane of interpersonal relationships and leads to inefficient resource consumption.

The study of conflict theories by W. Wilczynski & S.F. Brosnan (2021) and A. Driscoll & L. van Haarst (2025) provided an opportunity to conclude that conflict is an objective phenomenon caused by the contradictory nature of public life, the result of resistance to power and submission, and performed the following functions: signalling and information – identification and disclosure of problems; integration – adjustment of individual and group interests; stabilisation (preservation of the group). To organise cooperation within a group, first and foremost, there must be a leader who can coordinate its activities, approve decisions, and help the group solve problems. Analysis of the findings of S. Page (2025) showed that leadership is a dynamic phenomenon formed in the process of group activities, and the effectiveness of interaction with subordinates is largely determined by the ability of the leader to introspect, support, and communicate effectively. The leader must correct own behaviour, the behaviour of subordinates, or leave everything unchanged. If there are certain problems in the relationship, the manager will choose a leadership style that will provide an opportunity to establish effective interaction and achieve high-quality performance of duties by subordinates. The main task of the leader is to identify and realise the potential capabilities of each member of the group, to determine their roles in which they can perform most effectively. In order for group members to show a willingness to follow their instructions, the leader must have a high level of trust in them, based on both individual qualities and leadership style. Since the main purpose of the group is to perform tasks, for which it is necessary to make a decision and organise work, important factors for effective interaction are the leadership style and the degree of coordination of group work:

- 1) in an autocratic style, the group leader makes decisions alone without considering the opinions of team members, which is effective when decisions need to be approved quickly, but may cause resistance during implementation.

- 2) in a democratic style, the decision is approved by the majority of the group members, so it is executed without objections, but the lack of a sense of individual responsibility for the group decision can lead to undesirable results;

- 3) in a collective style, the leader considers the opinion of each member of the group, analyses the information received, and single-handedly approves the decision, but will be fully responsible for the final result, and group members are involved only at certain stages of its development and implementation;

- 4) in the consensus style, decisions are made collectively by all members of the group, which increases the sense of unity and creates an atmosphere of partnership.

In particular, if the complexity of the task is high and the group members are closely connected, they need to communicate more, make joint decisions, and synchronise individual efforts to succeed. In such situations, a hierarchical structure with an authoritarian management style will be useful, which can provide interaction, heuristics, and distribution of group resources, integrate individual

efforts, and establish rapid exchange and processing of information. An authoritarian work team management style is also necessary when tasks are ambiguous, for example, when members of the same team do not have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, group expectations, and how to interact, and feedback is used only to determine the degree of understanding of the content of tasks. If there are frequent conflicts in a working group (team), the influence of an authoritarian leadership style can increase tensions within it between different functional subgroups with a high level of differentiation of skills – specialised knowledge or functional responsibilities, which makes it difficult to replace team members (Berger, 1998). Negative consequences of applying an authoritarian style can also occur if they are caused by significant differences between members of the work team in statuses and opportunities (resources). For a cohesive division, a leadership style that encourages activity and initiative, group discussion of problems and decision-making for reaching consensus, and supports constant feedback is optimal. A significant factor in group conflicts is the variability of management, caused by the fact that members of the group with lower status can see more opportunities for promotion, while members with higher status tend to maintain it. Membership instability, when a group quickly forms and breaks up, a changing subordination system can also lead to rivalry that interferes with interaction.

Since newly formed groups tend to lack a well-established structure, distribution of roles and responsibilities, and previous experience of cooperation, in order for them to become productive, it is necessary to establish effective communication and create a high level of interdependence and coordination of knowledge, resources, and tasks. To effectively perform tasks as part of a newly created group, military personnel must feel involved in its activities and have all reliable information about their role in teamwork. A possible way to perform a complex task by a division is to divide it into smaller tasks and assign them to groups created on the principle of specialisation of the tasks that they perform best. In order for the group to interact effectively, it is necessary to identify a leader, an idea generator, a communicator, and task performers in each of them who will be loyal to group decisions and adhere to established norms of behaviour. This can increase the level of trust between group members and their sense of security. In addition, it will help to minimise the negative impact of anonymity on the quality of group tasks, as it can reduce the level of individual engagement and create expectations that the main burden will be placed on other members of the group. First and foremost, it is recommended that group leaders and members learn to resolve and manage conflicts rather than suppress or conceal them. After all, after the conflict is resolved, the group usually becomes more cohesive. A group in which members vary significantly in individual characteristics and skills may take a long time to come together, and some people may find themselves isolated. Therefore, the presence of an individual with

overly pronounced personality traits can significantly complicate the group interaction required to complete the task. Summarising the provisions of the theoretical framework of this study allowed identifying two key types of behaviour necessary for the successful functioning of the group: problem-oriented, which involves initiating and accepting suggestions, ideas, and information; supportive, aimed at providing emotional and social support to group members, which facilitates the achievement of common goals and contributes to greater cohesion. One of the important steps in this area is to create small targeted work teams within the group, based on trust and cooperation, which should use flexible tactics and maintain partnerships with other teams to expand the capabilities of their group and the entire division. For better mutual support within the group, it is necessary to create microgroups according to the specifics of their functional responsibilities and approximately the same level of professional knowledge and skills development. To do this, each group should select generators of ideas with different opinions, experience, and ways of thinking, performers who are specialists in specific activities, experts, communicators, and for successful resolution of conflict situations – a facilitator, whose role can be performed by the group leader, who should not be a supporter of an authoritarian style.

A group decision-making process that may seem organised as a result of the negative impact of group pressure can hinder free and open discussion. One of the likely results of group pressure on individuals may be a general reluctance to express ideas that do not correspond to the group norm, which makes it impossible to make a group decision. Ineffective decisions can be made in situations where only a few of the group members actually participate in the conversation, while others do not express any opinion because dissent is not perceived in the group. As a result, active members may think that all members of the group agree with the proposed solution. If the unit does not have a communication system in place, military personnel will feel uninformed and unprotected, because they do not understand the tasks of the activity and their role in it. To overcome this problem, it is necessary to provide a communication system, involve military personnel from combat groups in the task planning process, and develop a system of trainings (exercises) to develop the necessary interaction and communication skills. Effective communication, first of all, involves the development of skills of active listening and clarification of the position of the interlocutor, the ability to give and receive feedback. An important factor in effective communication is the ability to express thoughts concretely and concisely so that they are understandable to the interlocutor without additional clarifications. If a single communication space is formed, the opinion of each group member will reach the commanders and be considered, and they, in turn, will be able to transmit and receive feedback. Improving the communication system also requires the introduction of a self-assessment system, which contributes to the development of adequate

self-assessment by group members of their own activities and their perception of the results of the group's activities as personally significant. Thus, effective interaction in the division is ensured by the presence of a common goal, optimal structure and number, well-established communication, clear distribution of roles, compliance with group norms, cohesion, and appropriate leadership style.

Unit commanders are encouraged to focus not only on improving individual combat skills, but also on unit cohesion during combat training sessions. Socio-psychological factors that will contribute to the establishment of group interaction, improving group productivity and constructive conflict resolution will be: social facilitation, identity, interdependence, and responsibility of group members. In this case, it is necessary to consider that the establishment of an effective interactions in groups can be hindered by negative factors, namely: blocking and imitation of productivity, conformism and imitation of the behaviour of other group members, group thinking and group polarisation, and uncertainty of tasks, variability and imperfection of the group structure. To unite a division, it is necessary to develop and discuss rules that regulate individual behaviour and encourage the strengthening of mutual responsibility at the beginning of its development or after receiving replenishment. To improve cooperation within the group, constant communication within it should be ensured, which enhances group identity and strengthens mutual assistance and support. Discussion of common problems encourages people to cooperate, deepens mutual trust, provides an opportunity to realise mutual benefits, and change their attitude to the situation. Effective communication provides an opportunity for each member of the group to present their individual perception of the goals and objectives of the activity, share their individual experiences, and reveal their psychological characteristics necessary for decision-making and developing new qualities that were not previously apparent in other circumstances. On the other hand, the reduction of individual responsibility for the result of the group's activities, the lack of understanding of the importance of individual contribution to the overall result, the influence of the majority on the behaviour of an individual or a small isolated group in the opinion of the majority can lead to motivational and procedural losses, especially when performing combat tasks that involve the involvement of numerous groups without specifying individual responsibilities and ways to evaluate and control the results of activities. Therefore, at the inter-individual level, effective interaction can be established between people who have common interests and complement each other. Selfish behaviour of group members and the lack of psychological compatibility between them will hinder interaction, and conflicts will be destructive.

The most effective organisation of interaction in military units for the successful performance of service and combat tasks involves, first of all, a clear formulation of a goal of combat or actions, checking whether all members of the group are really aware of it, and understand

the necessary means to achieve it. It is also important to establish effective communication that ensures timely receipt and transmission of signals and commands within combat groups and between units, and timely notification of a threat and decisions taken to eliminate or avoid it. Conducting briefings after completing tasks, and if possible – at any stage of their implementation, helps to analyse actions, clarify tasks, discuss problems and contradictions, encourages introspection of group members, and helps to prevent or resolve conflicts. The unit commander should speak out after all members of the group have shared their views, and in case of complex or problematic issues, it is advisable to divide the large group into subgroups for detailed discussion. To resolve conflicts constructively, it is necessary to identify the sources of contradictions and eliminate them, while destructive conflicts require the settlement of relations between the parties, the establishment of rules, the conclusion of agreements or, in extreme cases, a change in the structure or size of the group. Personnel departments of military units and formations, unit commanders, personnel officers, and military psychologists are recommended to select and appoint candidates for positions not only based on the availability of the appropriate military accounting speciality, but also considering their attitude to the tasks of the unit in which they will serve. In addition, it is important to consider the feedback of previous commanders, which allows predicting the behaviour of new team members and contributes to the development of trusting relationships, increases responsibility, and ensures effective integration into the group.

The results obtained complement the provisions of contemporary theories of group dynamics, specifying the conditions and mechanisms of effective interaction in military units. V. Podorozhnyi & S. Ivanov (2024) considered cohesion in military units as a key factor determining the effectiveness of their activities, the ability to interact, perform combat tasks, and maintain the psychological stability of personnel. The synthesis of the provisions considered in the study showed that interaction occurs between people during communication, joint performance of tasks, the establishment of interpersonal relationships, and the implementation of mutual influence. The study by T.E. Khraban *et al.* (2022) was also devoted to the analysis of group cohesion of small military units (comparable in number to a platoon) in the context of civil-military relations in Ukraine. The study examined how internal factors (shared tasks, shared identities and beliefs, equal status, shared experiences of difficulties) shape cohesion in military units. M. Fors Brandebo *et al.* (2022) emphasised that cohesion plays a key role in team functioning and productivity. The study found that high levels of cohesion have a positive impact on psychological, social, and behavioural outcomes. P.M. Garrett (2018) argued that social theory is fundamental to social work, and without understanding theoretical concepts, the practice of social work loses its deep semantic basis. The results of this study correlate with the findings of M. Zupal & S. Zupal (2019). The researchers

examined the influence of economic and socio-psychological conditions on leadership style and interpersonal relationships in teams. During periods of economic instability and job shortages, subordinates depend on a specific place of work and manager, which often encourages the use of a rigid authoritarian leadership style, reducing democratic and partnership relations in the team. This leadership style creates psychological barriers, provokes internal anxiety, fear of losing job, and makes it difficult to establish equal business relationships, which can lead to conflicts. This study also confirmed that group work can be effective by actively sharing information and testing conflicting ideas during a group discussion. Group decisions can be better than individual ones only if the group members act rationally, considering all the evidence and coming to an impartial, fair, and open decision. Ultimately, the negative impact of phenomena such as blocking and imitation of productivity, conformism, the influence of the minority on the majority, group thinking, and group polarisation will negatively affect the results of the group's activities. Thus, the introduction of collective discussions with the participation of all members of the group and the delegation of decision-making functions to the trusted leader allows increasing the effectiveness of interaction in military units and ensures the successful performance of complex service and combat tasks.

◆ Conclusions

Therefore, the necessary conditions for establishing effective interaction between military personnel of the same unit were defined as follows: presence of a common specific goal; optimal size and structure of the unit; distribution and understanding of individual roles when performing joint tasks; effective communication system; conscious perception by group members of their identity and common interests; established group rules and norms; group cohesion; resistance to individual influence and ambitions; optimal leadership style. In the course of the study, it was found that the effectiveness of interaction in military units is largely determined by the level of group cohesion, the way activities are organised, and the leading social motives of team members. Groups whose activities are based on cooperation and the motive of cooperation dominates

are more likely to be united, reduce intra-group conflicts, open communication, and mutual support. In contrast, competition dominance and individual benefit orientation limit interaction productivity and increase the risk of destructive conflicts. The key factor is also the individual attitude of military personnel to tasks and the team, which ensures consistency of behaviour, identity with the group, and willingness to cooperate. The results of the analysis highlighted the role of socio-psychological factors such as social facilitation, interdependence, subordinate identity, and normative compliance that stimulate productive interaction, and negative factors such as group thinking, conformism, blocking productivity, and group polarisation. An important element of the organisation of interaction is the leadership style: a democratic or consensual style increases cohesion and motivation, while an authoritarian style can be effective in difficult or critical situations, but potentially causes tension in the group. Optimising interaction requires creating clear goals, a clear distribution of roles, a communication system, including all group members in decision-making, and delegating functions to a trusted leader. The establishment of small subgroups with clearly defined functions, the development of mutual trust and open communication contributes to improving the effectiveness of the unit's activities, cooperation and successful performance of service and combat tasks. Thus, the study confirmed that systematic management of socio-psychological and organisational factors of interaction is key to ensuring the productivity, cohesion, and stability of military groups in difficult combat conditions. The prospects for further research are experimental verification of the effectiveness of methods for establishing interaction in military units, the development of models of group intelligence and its combination with artificial intelligence.

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♦ **Анотація.** Актуальність дослідження зумовлена необхідністю забезпечення системно організованої взаємодії між військовослужбовцями під час виконання службово-бойових завдань у складі підрозділів, оскільки її порушення знижує результативність бойових дій та підвищує ризик втрат особового складу, озброєння і військової техніки, а також сприяє перехопленню ініціативи противником. Метою дослідження було виявлення та аналіз ключових способів налагодження взаємодії у військових підрозділах у процесі виконання службово-бойових завдань. На основі теоретичного аналізу визначено соціально-психологічні чинники, що впливають на організацію взаємодії в соціальних групах. Методом класифікації інформації визначено позитивні й негативні чинники, що впливають на поведінку індивідів в групі, систематизовано етапи формування малих груп та показники ефективності їхнього розвитку. Синтез та узагальнення результатів дослідження надав можливість визначити умови налагодження ефективної взаємодії у новостворених військових підрозділах з метою успішного виконання ними службово-бойових завдань. Для згуртування підрозділу запропоновано розробку й узгодження правил поведінки, що посилюють взаємну відповідальність, а також формування усвідомлення спільної мети діяльності та власної ролі військовослужбовців у її досягненні. Для ефективної діяльності групи під час виконання службово-бойових завдань рекомендовано організувати й підтримувати систему комунікації всередині підрозділу (групи). Після виконання завдання рекомендовано проведення брифінгу з метою уточнення результатів, обговорення проблемних аспектів, стимулювання самоаналізу дій членів групи та попередження або врегулювання можливих конфліктів. Сформульовано вимоги щодо добору військовослужбовців й призначення їх на посади з урахуванням адекватного сприймання ними завдань підрозділу, в якому вони будуть проходити службу, відгуків від командирів підрозділів з попереднього місця служби (роботи), з метою кращого прогнозування їхньої поведінки й формування довірчих відносин в новоствореній групі

♦ **Ключові слова:** згуртованість; ідентичність; конфлікт; кооперація; лідерство; робоча команда; фасилітація