



Psychological readiness of future officers as a factor of professional training effectiveness in the system of higher military education of Ukraine

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◆ **Abstract.** The purpose of the study was to theoretically substantiate the structure of psychological readiness of future officers and systematise psychological and pedagogical approaches to its development in the conditions of contemporary security challenges and transformation of higher military education in Ukraine. Analysis, synthesis, comparison, systematisation, and generalisation of scientific sources, content analysis, structural and functional, and system analysis were used to determine current approaches to the development of psychological readiness of future officers. The paper considered psychological and pedagogical approaches to the development of psychological readiness of future officers as an important component of their professional training in the system of higher military education of Ukraine. The necessity of updating the content of military education was substantiated based on contemporary security challenges and standards of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the current needs of the security and defence sector of Ukraine. Special attention was paid to the development of leadership competencies, psychological stability, organisational identity, professional motivation, and the use of digital technologies, simulation, and interactive training, virtual and augmented reality tools. It was established that the complex use of these tools contributes to the development of the ability to effectively perform service and combat tasks, make managerial decisions in conditions of uncertainty, demonstrate emotional self-regulation, adaptability, professional responsibility, and team interaction. It was proved that the development of psychological readiness should be based on the integration of contemporary psychological and pedagogical technologies, digital teaching tools, practice-oriented training, and systematic psychological support. The practical significance of the research lies in the possibility of using its results to improve educational programmes, educational and methodological support, and the system of advanced training of scientific and pedagogical workers of higher military educational institutions. The proposed approaches create a scientific and methodological basis for the development of military education, improving the quality of professional training of officers, developing their general and professional

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competencies, soft skills and hard skills, and ensuring readiness for professional activity in the contemporary security environment

♦ **Keywords:** innovative technologies; digitalisation; competence approach; self-regulation; leadership; cadets

♦ Introduction

The transformation of the higher military education system is conditioned by changes in the nature of military threats, digitalisation of professional activities, and increased requirements for the psychological and professional readiness of officers. Under these conditions, the professional training of the future officer should ensure not only the assimilation of military-special knowledge, but also the development of leadership, psychological stability, self-regulation, digital competence, and the ability to make decisions in conditions of uncertainty. A.V. Lytvyn & L.A. Rudenko (2024) considered psychological training of future officers as a systemic component of professional military education. The researchers substantiated the need to diversify the forms and technologies of psychological readiness development and emphasised the expediency of using the experience of training military specialists of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states in the Ukrainian educational environment. R. Zueger *et al.* (2023) in a study of 81 cadet officers focused on developing the emotional and volitional resilience of future security and defence sector officers. The results of the above-mentioned study actualised the need for purposeful development of cadets' ability to emotional self-regulation and maintain professional effectiveness in conditions of increased psychoemotional loads. R. Zueger *et al.* found that specialised resilience training contributed to a more positive perception of a stressful situation, higher motivation and positive affect, and faster recovery after an intense military load, which justified the integration of resilience development programmes into the basic and leadership training of future officers. A separate area of modernisation is the development of digital competence of military specialists. O. Sova *et al.* (2025), according to the results of the pedagogical experiment, recorded positive changes in the cognitive, operational and activity-based, and value and motivational components of military leaders' digital competence, demonstrating the need for the systematic integration of digital tools into professional military education rather than their use merely as auxiliary instruments.

Further development of this area is associated with the use of artificial intelligence (AI). R. Zueger *et al.* (2023) drew attention not only to the educational potential of AI, but also to the risks of its implementation in the training of cadets, in particular, related to the digitalisation of pedagogical technologies and the possibility of excessive algorithmisation of decision-making. In addition, digital modernisation requires a combination of technological training with the development of critical thinking and professional autonomy of the future officer. The simulation component of training also remains promising. O. Sova *et al.* (2025) substantiated the organisational and methodological

foundations for the use of combat simulation tools in professional military education. Such technologies ensure that training tasks are brought closer to professional situations and create conditions for practical development of decision-making and team interaction. At the international level, the modernisation of professional military education is increasingly associated with the development of resilience, innovation, and technologically supported training. In the materials of NATO (2022), resiliency is considered as a competence that should be purposefully formed in the system of professional military education; among the promising means of its development, war-gaming and game-based learning are also distinguished. That is why contemporary research identified interrelated areas of modernisation of military education: psychological training, development of resilience and leadership, digital competence, the use of AI and simulation and scenario technologies. A holistic system of integration of these approaches into the professional training of future officers of Ukraine requires further theoretical substantiation, which determines the problem field of this research.

The study by V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024) showed that the effectiveness of professional training of future officers directly depends on the level of their psychological readiness, psychological stability, leadership qualities, organisational identity, and the ability to act effectively in conditions of uncertainty and high psychoemotional load. A. Kucheriavyi *et al.* (2023) confirmed that long-term professional stress, intense service and combat loads, and extreme conditions for performing tasks negatively affect the mental health, adaptive capabilities, and effectiveness of professional activities of military personnel, which actualises the need to improve the system of professional training based on contemporary psychological and pedagogical technologies, the development of psychological stability, emotional self-regulation, leadership competencies, and psychological support of the educational process.

The integration of digital technologies, virtual and augmented reality tools into the professional training of officers is particularly relevant, which contributes to the modelling of real service and combat situations, the development of operational decision-making skills, team interaction, and the development of readiness to perform professional tasks in high-risk conditions. Despite a significant number of studies devoted to the development of military education, some issues of comprehensive modernisation of the educational process in higher military educational institutions based on the integration of digital technologies, competence approach, simulation training, and pedagogical innovations as a factor in improving the quality of professional training of officers require further

scientific substantiation, which determines the relevance of this study. The purpose of the study was to determine the main components of psychological readiness of future officers and generalise the psychological and pedagogical foundations of its development considering contemporary security conditions and changes in the system of higher military education in Ukraine. The objectives of the study were: to determine the main psychological and pedagogical factors for the development of psychological readiness of future officers; to substantiate contemporary approaches to its development; to systematise methodological tools for its assessment and generalise current trends in psychological training in the system of higher military education of Ukraine.

◆ Materials and Methods

The research was conducted in the format of a systematic integrative review using systematic, competence-based and comparative approaches, and elements of secondary analysis of the results of previous empirical studies. The object of the study was the professional training of future officers in the system of higher military education, the subject was innovative pedagogical approaches, psychological and pedagogical factors, and means of improving the quality of their professional training in the context of digital transformation and integration of NATO standards. The search for Ukrainian and English-language sources was carried out in Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science by keywords related to military education, psychological readiness, leadership, stress tolerance, professional training of officers, digital technologies, and NATO standards. The source base consisted of peer-reviewed scientific publications, methodological studies, regulatory and doctrinal documents of Ukraine, and NATO materials, in particular the DEEP programme. The inclusion criteria were thematic relevance, coverage of psychological readiness, leadership, stress tolerance, digital and practice-oriented training technologies, mainly publication in 2018-2026, and availability of the full text. Duplicates, irrelevant, and methodologically insufficiently substantiated materials were excluded. The selection procedure provided for initial screening of sources by names and abstracts, followed by a full-text assessment of their compliance with the purpose and criteria of the study. As a result of the search and screening, 25 sources were included in the final analysis,

including peer-reviewed papers, methodological manuals by O.M. Kokun *et al.* (2022), V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024) and V. Anishchenko (2024). The regulatory and doctrinal basis of the analysis was Law of Ukraine No. 2469-VIII (2018), and NATO documents and materials (2021; 2022).

To implement the goals and objectives of the study, analysis, synthesis, systematisation, and generalisation were applied to determine the essence and components of psychological readiness; content analysis – to work out the normative and doctrinal requirements for military education; comparative analysis – to contrast the Ukrainian and foreign experience of professional training of officers; system and structural and functional analysis – to systematise methodological tools and substantiate the components of psychological readiness of future officers. Information about the sample, design, methods used, and statistical indicators were extracted from primary empirical studies, considering the characteristics of participants and the conditions of the study. The data obtained were systematised into the following categories: psychological readiness, stress tolerance, adaptability, leadership competencies, soft skills and hard skills. Descriptive synthesis was performed without averaging the results obtained on different scales, and without calculating new integral indices; p-levels and correlation coefficients were given only in the framework of the corresponding primary studies. The results were summarised according to the principles of relevance, comparability, evidential validity, and reproducibility of results across independent sources.

◆ Results

The analysis showed that the psychological readiness of future officers is an integrative personal and professional education, which covers leadership competencies, psychological stability, organisational identity, and involvement in educational and professional activities. Its assessment requires a comprehensive application of psychodiagnostic, pedagogical, and psychological methods considering contemporary security challenges, digital transformation of military education, and integration of NATO standards. The assessment of the quality of professional training of officers should cover not only psychological, but also professional, technological, and practical components. The main approaches, relevant indicators and methodological tools for their assessment are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Methodological tools for assessing the quality of professional training of officers

Approach	Content of the approach	Indicators of improving the quality of psychological readiness	Methodological tools	Authors
Competence-based	Development of integrated professional, managerial and digital competencies of an officer	◆ level of competence development ◆ learning outcomes ◆ psychological readiness	◆ competence-based assessment ◆ expert assessment ◆ professional knowledge testing ◆ performance of complex practical tasks ◆ final qualification tests	A. Zelnytskyi & O. Zabolotnyi (2020)
Innovative and technological	Use of digital technologies, simulators, learning management systems, virtual and augmented reality, digital platforms	◆ efficiency of material assimilation ◆ decision-making speed ◆ digital competence	◆ assessment of work in simulators ◆ analysis of digital event logs in the Moodle learning management system ◆ VR simulators ◆ scenario testing	V. Anishchenko (2024)

Table 1. Continued

Approach	Content of the approach	Indicators of improving the quality of psychological readiness	Methodological tools	Authors
Practice-oriented	Training based on real combat scenarios and cases	♦ willingness to act in professional situations ♦ quality of tactical solutions ♦ team interaction	♦ situational tasks ♦ tactical decision games (TDG) ♦ command and staff exercises ♦ field exercises ♦ expert evaluation of practical exercises	O.S. Kapinus (2019), A. Kucheriavyi et al. (2023)
Psychologically directed	Development of psychological readiness, stress tolerance, adaptability, leadership	♦ level of stress tolerance ♦ mental health adaptability ♦ leadership qualities	♦ Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) ♦ Hardiness Survey (Maddi) ♦ Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) ♦ State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) ♦ Brief COPE ♦ Military Hardiness Scale ♦ expert assessment of leadership competencies	S. Shykovets & T. Karamushka (2024), O. Kokun et al. (2018; 2022), V. Osyodlo et al. (2024), I.M. Okhrimenko et al. (2023)

Source: compiled by the authors

Summary of the data in Table 1 showed that the main trends in the development of psychological readiness of future officers consist in the integration of psychological and pedagogical approaches into the system of professional training, the development of leadership competencies, psychological stability, organisational identity, motivational involvement in educational and professional activities, and the widespread use of digital educational technologies, simulation training, and psychological support of the educational process. The combination of these trends ensures the development of psychological readiness of future officers, increases the effectiveness of their professional training, promotes the development of adaptability, emotional self-regulation, team interaction, and the ability to act effectively in the face of security challenges, digital transformation of military education, and integration of NATO standards (Grydchyna, 2024). The development

of psychological readiness of future officers is one of the priority areas for the development of the higher military education system of Ukraine in the context of a full-scale war, integration into the Euro-Atlantic security space, and the implementation of NATO standards (2021; 2022). Professional training of officers should ensure not only the acquisition of military-professional knowledge and special competencies, but also the development of psychological stability, leadership qualities, organisational identity, emotional self-regulation, adaptability, digital literacy, and the ability to act effectively in conditions of high uncertainty and significant psychoemotional load. It is psychological readiness that acts as an integrative characteristic of the future officer's personality, which ensures the effective performance of service and combat tasks, making managerial decisions, and maintaining professional efficiency in the security environment (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Main areas of psychological readiness development in future officers

Source: compiled by the authors based on A. Zelnytskyi & O. Zabolotnyi (2020), O.M. Kokun et al. (2022), I.M. Okhrimenko et al. (2023), A. Kucheriavyi et al. (2023), S. Shykovets & T. Karamushka (2024), V. Osyodlo et al. (2024), V. Anishchenko (2024)

One of the leading areas of development of psychological readiness of future officers is the implementation of competence and psychological and pedagogical approaches that orient the educational process to the development of integral professional and psychological

competencies of the individual. According to A. Zelnytskyi & O. Zabolotnyi (2020), quality assurance of higher military education is possible provided that the transition from a predominantly knowledge-based training model to a competence-based one that integrates professional

knowledge, practical skills, leadership qualities, psychological stability, responsibility, and readiness to make managerial decisions in accordance with contemporary requirements of the security and defence sector. Important components of this approach are the continuous updating of the content of military education, integration of international training standards, development of psychological readiness, leadership potential, and orientation of the educational process to achieve training results that ensure effective professional activity of future officers. The effectiveness of psychological readiness of officers largely depends on the integrity of the pedagogical system of a military educational institution. A. Zelnytskyi & O. Zabolotnyi identified the interrelationship among learning objectives, the content of educational programmes, innovative pedagogical technologies, staffing, material and technical resources, and mechanisms for assessing learning outcomes as system-forming factors of contemporary military education. This approach ensures the flexibility of the educational process, its adaptation to rapid changes in the operational environment, and continuous improvement of the quality of training of future officers. One of the leading areas of development of military education is the introduction of innovative digital technologies and pedagogical tools. Technologisation of the educational process provides integration of electronic educational resources, information and communication technologies, automated training systems and digital platforms, which significantly increases the efficiency of learning material and allows modelling the professional activities of military specialists in conditions as close as possible to real ones.

An important area of modernisation of military education is its adaptation to the principles and standards of NATO. The experience of the Alliance's member states, in particular the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Poland, and the Baltic states, testifies to the effectiveness of the competence approach, the development of military leadership, practice-oriented training, the use of simulation training, and digital educational technologies (Smith *et al.*, 2025). A significant role in this process is played by the Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) NATO (2021), which provides for the renewal of educational programmes, the introduction of innovative teaching methods, the development of systems for ensuring the quality of education and professional development of scientific and pedagogical workers. According to O.S. Kapinus (2019), an officer must possess a high level of professional mobility, critical thinking, leadership competencies, and the ability to act in accordance with NATO procedures in a multinational environment. The implementation of these approaches in the higher military education system of Ukraine will contribute to the development of psychological readiness, improvement of practical training and increase the compatibility of Ukrainian officers with the Armed Forces of NATO (2021) member states. For comparison, the systems of training officers of the United States, Great Britain, and Poland are identified according to the

criteria of psychological readiness and resilience, military leadership, team interaction, scenario-simulation training, and digitalisation. In the US, the priority is the development of leadership, resilience, self-regulation, and decision-making in difficult conditions; in the UK – leadership responsibility, psychological stability, and practice-oriented training; in Poland – competence approach, digitalisation, and compatibility of training with NATO standards. The Ukrainian system combines these areas with practical experience in training officers in war conditions (Grydchyna, 2024). Common features include leadership orientation, psychological resilience, team interaction, and practical readiness, while differences relate to the level of implementation of simulation and digital technologies and standardised assessment. For Ukraine, it is advisable to adapt resilience trainings, scenario and simulation training, digital simulators, and competence assessment of leadership, in particular within the framework of NATO (2021).

One of the key trends in contemporary military education is the transition to a practice-oriented training model. A. Kucheriavyi *et al.* (2023) noted that the use of problem-based training, situational analysis, case method, tactical exercises, command and staff training, and simulation of combat situations allows cadets to develop decision-making skills in conditions of time scarcity, uncertainty, and high level of risk. The use of international experience ensures more effective development of professional competencies of future officers. A promising area for the development of psychological readiness as an integral characteristic of a future officer is the use of virtual and augmented reality technologies. Based on the results of the study by V. Anishchenko (2024), the use of virtual and augmented reality helps to repeatedly practice professional actions in a safe environment, simulate complex combat situations, develop tactical thinking, team interaction, and professional readiness without significant material costs. Such technologies significantly increase the effectiveness of practical training of future officers. In the conditions of contemporary warfare, the psychological component of professional training is of particular importance. S. Shykovets & T. Karamushka (2024) proved that the mental health of military personnel is one of the key factors for successful performance of combat tasks, and the development of psychological readiness should be integrated into all stages of military education.

The need for systematic psychological training was emphasised by O.M. Kokun *et al.* (2018), who substantiated the importance of developing future officers' knowledge about mental disorders, methods of psychological assistance, self-regulation, and psychological support of personnel. The researchers paid special attention to the development of psychological resistance of military personnel to the effects of combat stress, which is an integral component of professional training. An important area of modernisation of military education is the development of psychological readiness of future officers to perform service and combat tasks. V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024)

emphasised that a military leader must combine a high level of professional competence with developed leadership qualities, emotional stability, communication skills, and the ability to effectively manage subordinates in accordance with the principles of leadership adopted in NATO countries. The analysis showed that the professional training of an officer should ensure the development of social adaptability, stable behavioural strategies, and psychological mechanisms for overcoming the consequences of war. Such trends create the basis for the effective functioning of a serviceman in conditions of prolonged combat operations and high psychoemotional load. The findings of I.M. Okhrimenko *et al.* (2023) confirmed the negative impact of occupational stress on the mental health of representatives of the security sector, which makes it necessary to integrate programmes for the development of stress tolerance, psychological support, and prevention of professional burn-out into the training system of future officers. That is why modernisation of the educational process in higher military educational institutions should be carried out using a competence-based approach, digitalisation, technologisation of training, integration of NATO (2021), practice-oriented training, the use of virtual and augmented reality technologies, the development of psychological stability, the development of leadership competencies, and the strengthening of psychological support for the educational process.

Comprehensive implementation of these approaches ensures improving the quality of professional training of officers and forming their readiness to effectively perform service and combat tasks in the security environment.

Psychological readiness of future officers has been proposed to be understood as an integrative personal and professional construct formed in the course of professional training within the system of higher military education, combining psychological resilience, leadership qualities, organisational identity, motivational engagement in educational and professional activities, emotional self-regulation, adaptability, and the ability to make effective managerial decisions under conditions of uncertainty. The development of psychological readiness is ensured through the integration of competence-based, psychological and pedagogical, practice-oriented, digital, and innovative and technological approaches; the use of innovative teaching and psychological support tools; and the alignment of professional training with NATO (2021) standards, which contributes to the successful performance of service and combat tasks and the professional activities of future officers in the contemporary security environment. The need to transform the military education system is conditioned by a complex of interrelated factors that determine requirements for the professional training of officers. The analysis identified nine key factors for modernising the educational process (Table 2).

Table 2. Key factors in the development of future officers' psychological readiness in the system of higher military education of Ukraine

Factors	Characteristics
Security and defence of Ukraine	Full-scale war, a change in the nature of armed struggle, the emergence of new threats and hybrid forms of warfare require the training of officers who can act effectively in conditions of uncertainty, high risk, and rapid changes in the operational situation
Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine	Integration of Ukraine into the European educational space and the implementation of NATO standards require the harmonisation of educational programmes, the development of leadership, competence approach, compatibility of training systems, and the application of innovative teaching methods
Pedagogical factor	Transition from the conventional knowledge model to a competence-oriented system of professional training makes it necessary to update the content of education, teaching methods, and mechanisms for evaluating learning outcomes
Technological factor	Rapid development of digital technologies, AI, simulation training, distance education systems, and virtual and augmented reality technologies opens up new opportunities for improving the effectiveness of professional training of future officers
Practical and operational factor	Contemporary military education should be as close as possible to the real conditions of professional activity through the extensive use of scenario training, tactical modelling, case technologies, command and staff training, and complex simulations
Psychological factor	Significant psychoemotional load during the performance of service and combat tasks actualises the development of psychological readiness, stress tolerance, adaptability, self-regulation skills, and psychological support as integral components of an officer's professional competence
Leadership factor	Change the model of military management requires the development of a leading officer who can effectively manage personnel, make responsible decisions, ensure team interaction, and maintain a high moral and psychological state of subordinates
Organisational and system factor	Improvement of the quality of military education requires a comprehensive modernisation of the pedagogical system of higher military educational institutions, improvement of the educational environment, personnel support, resources and facilities, and the internal system of ensuring the quality of education
Professional and competence factor	Contemporary officer should combine a high level of military and professional, managerial, digital, communicative, and psychological competence that ensures readiness to perform service and combat tasks in a dynamic security environment

Source: compiled by the authors based on O.M. Kokun *et al.* (2022), I.M. Okhrimenko *et al.* (2023), A. Kucheriavyyi *et al.* (2023), V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024)

Thus, certain factors form the conceptual basis for modernising the educational process in higher military educational institutions and determine strategic areas for improving the system of professional training of officers. Their comprehensive consideration ensures the transition to a model of military education, combining

competence-based, innovative and technological, practice-oriented, and psychologically-oriented approaches, contributing to improving the quality of professional training and the development of readiness of future officers to perform service and combat tasks in a dynamic security environment. The development of psychological

readiness of future officers is one of the priority areas for the development of the higher military education system in Ukraine. Current trends provide for the integration of competence-based, psychological and pedagogical, practice-oriented, and digital approaches aimed at developing psychological stability, leadership potential, organisational identity, emotional self-regulation, and readiness for professional activity in conditions of uncertainty. The implementation of these approaches corresponds to the strategic objectives of reforming military education, security challenges, and integration of Ukraine into the military education system of NATO countries. The most dynamic area of development of military education is its digital transformation. Within the framework of the DEEP NATO (2021) programme, military education is being modernised by introducing digital educational technologies, developing distance learning, updating educational programmes in accordance with NATO standards, and improving education quality assurance systems. As a result of the programme implementation, 542 international educational events were held in 2024 with the participation of 1,513 experts and more than 3,148 teachers and instructors from 15 partner countries (Tokarczyk, 2025).

An important trend is the harmonisation of professional military education with NATO (2021) standards. In particular, in Ukraine, within the framework of the DEEP programme, more than 200 educational programs of professional military education were synchronised, and more than 1,000 training events, internships, and advanced training programmes have been implemented. In 2024

alone, the number of Ukrainian participants in such events increased by 450%, exceeding 15,000 military personnel and teachers, which indicates a significant strengthening of international cooperation and professional development of personnel (Ukraine will apply to certify..., 2024). Another characteristic trend is the expansion of the use of innovative digital technologies, in particular modelling systems, simulation training, virtual and augmented reality technologies. Research by V. Anishchenko (2024) substantiated the expediency of using virtual and augmented reality as a means of forming professional competence and readiness of officers to perform complex service and combat tasks in a safe training environment, which allows repeatedly working out critical scenarios without additional material costs. Along with technological modernisation, there is an increase in the competence and practice-oriented course of the educational process, which is manifested in the transition to training based on the analysis of combat experience, scenario modelling, command and staff training, the development of critical thinking, decision-making, and military leadership, which corresponds to the current concept of professional military education of NATO. The role of psychological training as a component of an officer's professional competence is increasing significantly. Research by O.M. Kokun *et al.* (2022) and V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024) proved that psychological readiness, stress tolerance, adaptability, leadership qualities, and psychological self-regulation skills are key factors for effective professional activity of military personnel in contemporary warfare (Table 3).

Table 3. Systematisation of the results of primary studies of the components of officers' psychological readiness

Component of psychological readiness	Primary study and sample characteristics	Methodology	Main result of the primary study	Interpretation of the result for officer training
Professional and psychological readiness	S. Shykovets & T. Karamushka (2024), n = 120, military personnel; quasi-experimental design (EG-CG)	Psychological testing, peer review, stress scales	After psychological training, the change in the stress index was 4.3 points compared to 6.2 points in CG; stress tolerance – 2.6 vs. 3.9 points ($p \leq 0.05-0.01$)	Indicates the importance of purposeful psychological training for maintaining readiness for activities with a high psychoemotional load
Stress tolerance	O.M. Kokun <i>et al.</i> (2022), n = 312, military personnel; comparative study	CD-RISC, Military Hardiness Scale	Negative changes in indicators were 2.9 points compared to 5.1 points ($p \leq 0.01$)	Stress tolerance is considered as a resource component of readiness associated with maintaining functional efficiency under the influence of combat stressors
Psychological self-regulation	O.M. Kokun <i>et al.</i> (2022), n = 312, military personnel; quasi-experimental study	SAN, STAI, Brief COPE	Changes in indicators of well-being, activity and mood were 0.4-0.5 points	Emphasises the role of emotional self-regulation and coping strategies in maintaining psychological readiness
Professional adaptability	V. Osyodlo <i>et al.</i> (2024), n = 286, officers; cross-sectional study	Adaptation questionnaires, expert assessment	Statistically significant differences in mental health indicators were found depending on the length of service ($p < 0.05-0.001$)	Substantiates the need to consider adaptive resources and the duration of professional load during psychological training
Emotional resilience	S. Puhach <i>et al.</i> (2024), n = 354, military personnel; correlation study	STAI, PSS-10	As the length of service increased, the indicators of anxiety and emotional exhaustion also increased	Indicates the need to develop emotional stability and prevent the accumulation of occupational stress
Leadership and team readiness	O.M. Kokun <i>et al.</i> (2022), n = 312, cadets, trainees, and officers; correlation study	Expert assessment, TDG, command and staff exercises	Psychophysiological regulation is positively associated with professionally important qualities	Supports the inclusion of self-regulation, decision-making, and team interaction in the activity-leadership readiness component
Health-saving component	I.M. Okhrimenko <i>et al.</i> (2023), n = 450: 276 cadets, 71 trainees, 103 officers; comparative study	Mental health questionnaires, statistical analysis	In the group with sufficient motor activity, mental health indicators were statistically significantly better ($p \leq 0.01-0.001$)	Emphasises the importance of maintaining mental health and functional resources for professional readiness

Table 3. Continued

Component of psychological readiness	Primary study and sample characteristics	Methodology	Main result of the primary study	Interpretation of the result for officer training
Professional efficiency	V. Osyodlo <i>et al.</i> (2024), n = 286; officers/ military personnel; correlation studies	Psychodiagnostic testing	Increase in professional stress was accompanied by a decrease in motivation and performance ($p < 0.05-0.001$)	Indicates the connection of the psychoemotional state with the maintenance of professional performance and efficiency

Note: EG – experimental group; CG – control group

Source: compiled by the authors

Empirical studies confirm the effectiveness of targeted psychological training. In particular, after the introduction of psychocorrective influence in cadets, the indicators of psychological stress worsened by only 4.3 points compared to 6.2 points in the group without appropriate training, and the indicators of stress resistance changed by 2.6 and 3.9 points, respectively, which indicates a positive effect of psychological training on the ability to act in conditions of combat stress ($p \leq 0.05-0.01$). In addition, it was found that in military personnel with high stress resistance, three months after returning from the combat area, the number of people with normal indicators of anxiety and depression reached 100%, while among military personnel with a lower level of stress resistance, the number of cases of clinically expressed anxiety decreased by 5.2 times, and depression – by 7 times, which confirms the determining role of psychological stability in the professional activities of military personnel. The study by I.M. Okhrimenko *et al.* (2023) showed that with an increase in professional experience, indicators of anxiety, aggressiveness, motivation, emotional exhaustion, and professional effectiveness worsen statistically significantly ($p < 0.05-0.001$), which actualises the need for systematic psychological training and support throughout the officer's professional career.

The results summarised in Table 3 indicate that the priority competencies of applicants for higher military education are professional and psychological readiness, stress tolerance, psychological self-regulation, professional adaptability, emotional stability, leadership qualities, health-saving competence, and the ability to maintain high professional efficiency under martial law. Analysis of the results of previous empirical studies showed that the introduction of psychological training programmes is associated with statistically significant positive changes in the indicators of stress resistance, psychoemotional state, psychological readiness, and professional effectiveness of military personnel. In particular, quasi-experimental and comparative studies using control and experimental groups, psychodiagnostic methods CD-RISC, STAI, PSS-10, Military Hardness Scale, Brief COPE, expert assessment of leadership competencies, and the results of TDG, command and staff, and field exercises established statistically significant differences between the groups ($p < 0.05$; $p < 0.01$; $p < 0.001$) (Kokun *et al.*, 2022; Shykovets & Karamushka, 2024; Osyodlo *et al.*, 2024). The results obtained confirmed the expediency of including psychological training in the system of professional training of future officers as

one of the factors for the development of psychological readiness and improving the effectiveness of professional activities. The analysis of contemporary research identified priority competencies, the development of which should be focused on the modernisation of the educational process in higher military educational institutions (Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Key components of psychological readiness of future officers in the system of higher military education of Ukraine

Source: compiled by the authors based on O.M. Kokun *et al.* (2022), S. Shykovets & T. Karamushka (2024), V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024)

Common competencies include self-regulation, adaptability, critical thinking, team interaction, responsible decision-making, and health preservation. Professional competencies cover professional and psychological readiness to perform service and combat tasks, stress tolerance, leadership, personnel management, psychological self-regulation, the ability to act in conditions of uncertainty, and ensure high professional efficiency when performing tasks as intended. It is the development of these competencies that is one of the key goals of modernisation of military education in accordance with NATO standards (2021; 2022) and current security challenges. The general competencies of applicants for higher military education include the ability to act in conditions of uncertainty and high psychoemotional load, adapt to changes in the operational environment, exercise self-regulation and self-control, work in a team, communicate effectively, make responsible decisions, maintain physical and mental health, and carry out

professional self-development and continuous improvement of their own activities. The development of these competencies ensures the readiness of the future officer to perform professional tasks in difficult and extreme conditions of military service. Professional competencies cover the ability to maintain professional and psychological readiness to perform service and combat tasks, maintain stress tolerance and professional effectiveness under the influence of combat stressors, apply methods of psychological self-regulation, and prevention of professional burnout, quickly adapt to changes in the combat situation, exercise leadership influence and organise team interaction, make informed management decisions in conditions of risk and lack of information, use innovative technologies of psychological training and ensure psychological stability of personnel. The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that purposeful psychological training statistically significantly ($p \leq 0.05-0.001$) contributes to an increase in the level of professional and psychological readiness, stress tolerance and adaptability, and the effectiveness of performing service and combat tasks. The obtained data confirm the expediency of systematic integration of the psychological component into the professional training of future officers.

The study by S. Puhach *et al.* (2024) proved that the effectiveness of professional activity of military personnel is determined by a complex of psychological mechanisms of social adaptation, among which the leading place is occupied by psychological stability, adaptability, behavioural strategies for overcoming stress, and social interaction. The development of these characteristics is a necessary condition for successful professional activity in war conditions, which should begin at the stage of professional training in higher military educational institutions. Such trends confirm the expediency of integrating the psychological component into the system of training officers and using a comprehensive assessment of their professional and psychological readiness. Analysis of the results of previous empirical studies indicates the predominance of a high level of development of certain psychological characteristics (sociability, courage, expressiveness, dominance, emotional stability, etc.) in a significant part of the samples under study. Some studies have revealed the prevalence of manifestations of suspicion, aggressiveness, authoritarianism, and conflict, which negatively affect interpersonal interaction and cohesion of military collectives. Based on the results of the reviewed studies, including O. Kokun *et al.* (2022), S. Shykovets & T. Karamushka (2024) and V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024), after the introduction of psychological training programmes, there was a tendency to reduce the severity of destructive behavioural manifestations and an increase in the proportion of respondents with constructive interaction models.

The results of previous empirical studies specify the relationship of individual components of psychological readiness with professional adaptation and effectiveness of military personnel. The study by S. Shykovets & T. Karamushka (2024) on a sample of 120 military

personnel by quasi-experimental design (EG-CG) found that after psychological training, the deterioration of stress indicators was 4.3 points against 6.2 points in the control group, and stress resistance – 2.6 against 3.9 points ($p \leq 0.05-0.01$). According to the data by O.M. Kokun *et al.* (2022), obtained on a sample of 312 military personnel using CD-RISC, Military Hardness Scale, SAN, STAI and Brief COPE, negative changes in stress tolerance indicators were 2.9 points against 5.1 points ($p \leq 0.01$), and changes in well-being, activity, and mood – only 0.4-0.5 points. The adaptive component of psychological readiness is represented by the results of V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024): in a sample of 286 officers, statistically significant differences in mental health indicators were found depending on the length of service ($p < 0.05-0.001$). Thus, the results presented are interpreted as empirical characteristics of individual interrelated components of psychological readiness, including stress resilience, self-regulation, adaptability, emotional stability, leadership and team interaction, and the ability to maintain professional effectiveness, rather than as a single integrated measure of psychological readiness. Their inclusion in the analysis is substantiated by the functional role of these characteristics in ensuring the officer's readiness to perform professional tasks in conditions of high psychoemotional load). Comparison of the results obtained with A. Kucheriavyi *et al.* (2023) showed that the identified manifestations of aggressiveness, suspicion, and authoritarianism are partially different from works that emphasise mainly a high level of cohesion of military collectives. The results of the study expand ideas about the socio-psychological adaptation of military personnel, confirming the decisive role of psychological defence mechanisms in the formation of adaptive behaviour models and outlining the prospects for further research on the development of psychological support, emotional intelligence, and team interaction in the conditions of military service.

The results obtained and their comparison with scientific research confirm that the development of psychological stability, adaptability, team interaction, and constructive behaviour models is a necessary prerequisite for effective professional activity of military personnel. In the context of innovative approaches to the modernisation of the educational process in higher military educational institutions, this necessitates the reorientation of the professional training of officers to a competence-based training model that combines the development of professional knowledge, practical skills, and psychological readiness to perform service and combat tasks in the context of contemporary security challenges. That is why one of the key results of the modernisation of military education is the purposeful development of two interrelated competence groups among applicants for higher military education – soft skills and hard skills, which ensure the improvement of the quality of professional training of future officers.

One of the key results of the modernisation of the educational process in higher military educational institutions is the purposeful development of a complex of soft skills

that ensure effective professional activity of future officers. The level of development of these competencies is determined using the competence-oriented assessment, CD-RISC, Hardness Survey (Maddi), PSS-10, STAI, Brief COPE, Military Hardness Scale, and expert assessment of leadership competencies and results of TDG, command and staff, and field exercises. Based on the results of generalisation of previous empirical studies, it was established (Fig. 3) that the

closest statistical relationships with indicators of professional adaptation are observed for self-regulation and adaptability ($r = 0.922$), communication skills ($r = 0.924$), responsible management decision-making and leadership qualities ($r = 0.916$), and stress tolerance ($r = 0.910$). High values of correlation coefficients indicate a close statistical relationship between these soft skills and indicators of professional activity, but do not confirm the causal effect (Fig. 3).

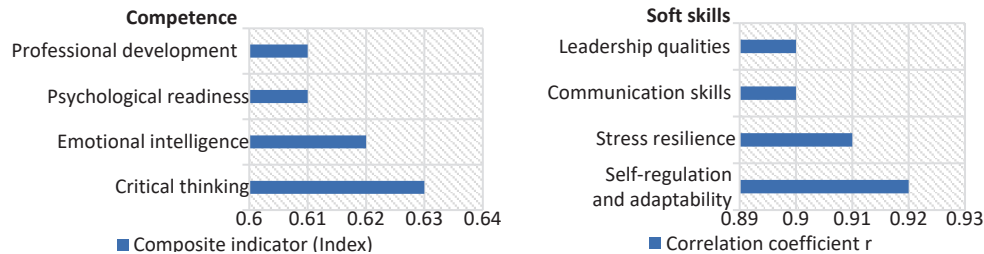


Figure 3. Coefficients of correlation of socio-psychological competencies with indicators of professional training of future officers based on the results of previous studies

Note: correlation coefficients (0.61-0.63) summarise the results of individual studies on the level of competence development; values $r = 0.90$ - 0.92 are correlation coefficients that characterise the strength of the statistical relationship between individual soft skills and indicators of professional activity

Source: compiled by the authors based on O.M. Kokun et al. (2022), V. Osyodlo et al. (2024), I.M. Okhrimenko et al. (2023)

The analysis of the results of previous empirical studies showed statistical connections of individual socio-psychological competencies with indicators of professional training of future officers (Fig. 3): critical thinking ($r = 0.63$), emotional intelligence ($r = 0.62$), psychological readiness for activity in conditions of uncertainty ($r = 0.61$), and the ability for continuous professional development ($r = 0.61$). For each indicator, the results of the corresponding primary study were considered; their generalisation was carried out descriptively, without normalisation, averaging, weighting, or calculation of the integral index. Therefore, these coefficients characterise the strength of statistical communication, and not the level of development of the corresponding competence. The synthesis of the results demonstrates the significance of psychological readiness, stress resilience, self-regulation, adaptability, emotional stability, and leadership and team interaction in officers' professional training. Hard skills reflect the professionally specialised competences required to perform service and combat tasks, including the ability to apply methods of psychological training and self-regulation, provide psychological support for unit activities, assess the psycho-emotional state of service personnel, manage personnel in crisis situations, make managerial decisions under conditions of risk, use innovative digital technologies, simulation systems, and training equipment, apply NATO standards (2021; 2022) in professional activities, organise the professional training of subordinates, and ensure the psychological resilience of military personnel. Thus, the proposed psychological and pedagogical approaches form an integral conceptual basis for the development of psychological readiness of future officers in the system of higher military education in Ukraine. Their

integrated implementation will contribute to the development of leadership competencies, psychological stability, organisational identity, motivational involvement in educational and professional activities, emotional self-regulation, adaptability, and other components of psychological readiness that ensure the effectiveness of professional training of future officers. Such trends create prerequisites for improving the quality of military education, developing professionally significant soft skills and hard skills, and forming the readiness of graduates to make managerial decisions, effective team interaction, and perform service and combat tasks in the context of contemporary security challenges and the implementation of NATO standards.

◆ Discussion

The results of the generalisation showed that the modernisation of professional training of future officers requires a comprehensive combination of psychological training, leadership development, practice-oriented training, and digital technologies. In particular, J. Garcia Estrada et al. (2024) proved the potential of augmented reality technologies for organising immersive and experiential training in military education. The findings of M. Ocaña et al. (2023) also demonstrated the prospects of virtual and augmented reality technologies for modelling professional situations and practising the actions of military specialists. These provisions complement the results obtained on the feasibility of strengthening the practice-oriented and digital components of professional training of future officers. In the broader European context, F.J. Callado-Muñoz & N. Utrero-González (2019) focused on the integration of military education into the European higher education area, which provides for the coordination of academic and

professional training and improving the compatibility of educational systems. Such trends correspond to the need defined in the paper to combine the national experience of military education with modern international approaches.

The leadership component of psychological readiness becomes particularly important. M.C. Navas-Jiménez *et al.* (2024) found that Secure Base Leadership is associated with organisational identification and military resilience through professional engagement. According to this, leadership, resilience, organisational identity, and engagement is considered as interrelated characteristics of the professional development of a future officer. Thus, independent comparison with international studies supports the areas of modernisation of military education defined in the study: psychological training, development of leadership and resilience, practice-oriented training, and integration of digital and simulation technologies. The study by M.C. Navas-Jiménez *et al.* (2024) found that the application of Secure Base Leadership principles in military training is associated with increased organisational identity, involvement in professional activities, resilience, and psychological readiness of future officers. The presented research showed that the development of psychological readiness of future officers should be carried out based on a comprehensive integration of competence, psychological and pedagogical, practice-oriented, digital, and personality-oriented approaches.

The results obtained are consistent with conclusions of A. Zelnytskyi & O. Zabolotnyi (2020), who substantiated the need for a competence model of professional training of officers, development of leadership qualities, practical orientation of the educational process, and its compliance with contemporary requirements of the security and defence sector. The results of the study expand existing scientific ideas, proving that psychological readiness is an integrative characteristic of the future officer's personality, which is formed due to the development of psychological stability, organisational identity, leadership competencies, motivational involvement, and the ability to work effectively in conditions of uncertainty and high psychoemotional load. The development of psychological readiness of future officers is inextricably linked with the development of moral values, responsibility, self-regulation, and leadership qualities that ensure the effective performance of professional duties and decision-making in the context of contemporary security challenges (Pomytkin, 2024).

Conclusions on the effectiveness of practice-oriented learning are consistent with the results of research A. Kucheriaviy *et al.* (2023), which proved the advantages of scenario training, command and staff exercises, and modelling of real combat situations in the professional training of cadets. In addition, the proposed approaches are consistent with the findings of V. Anishchenko (2024), who substantiated the expediency of using virtual and augmented reality technologies to improve the effectiveness of professional training of officers in the security and defence sector of Ukraine. In general, the results of the study

confirmed the current trends in the development of military education, which consist in a combination of digitalisation, competence training, practical training, and psychological support, ensuring the improvement of the quality of professional training of officers in the conditions of contemporary security challenges. I.M. Okhrimenko *et al.* (2023) proved that occupational stress significantly affects the mental health of security sector workers, justifying the need to develop psychological stability even at the stage of professional training.

V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024) emphasised the importance of developing the psychological readiness of military leaders considering NATO standards, which corresponds to the results of a study on the feasibility of integrating competence-based, practice-oriented, and psychologically oriented approaches in officer training. The results obtained are consistent with a number of contemporary studies devoted to the development of psychological readiness of future officers and the development of military psychology. In particular, A. Zelnytskyi & O. Zabolotnyi (2020) substantiated the need to implement a competence-based approach in the professional training of officers, which creates the basis for the development of professionally significant psychological competencies and ensuring readiness to perform service and combat tasks. V. Osyodlo *et al.* (2024) focused on the development of psychological readiness, leadership qualities, and psychological resilience of future military leaders based on NATO standards. These trends are consistent with the findings of this study, which confirm that the effective development of future officers' psychological readiness requires the comprehensive development of leadership competencies, psychological resilience, organisational identity, motivational engagement in educational and professional activities, and the use of innovative psychological and pedagogical technologies in the higher military education system.

◆ Conclusions

As a result of the study, the psychological readiness of future officers was theoretically substantiated as a complex characteristic that determines their ability to effectively perform professional and service-combat tasks in conditions of increased psychoemotional load, uncertainty, and dynamic security challenges. It was established that its development is associated with the improvement of psychological stability, emotional self-regulation, professional adaptability, motivational involvement, leadership and communication competencies, and the ability to work effectively in a team. The expediency of integrated application of competence-based, psychological and pedagogical, personality-oriented, practice-oriented, and digital approaches in the system of higher military education was shown. Scenario and simulation training, modelling of professional situations, trainings of psychological stability and self-regulation, and the use of digital technologies were identified as promising means of developing psychological readiness. Systematisation of scientific sources allowed

summarising the methodological tools for a comprehensive assessment of the psychological readiness of future officers.

The CD-RISC and the Military Hardiness Scale are appropriate for assessing psychological resilience and adaptive resources; the PSS-10 and the STAI – for assessing perceived stress and anxiety; and the Brief COPE – for assessing coping strategies. Leadership and command competencies can be assessed by expert methods, and the ability to make decisions, interact in a team, and realise psychological readiness in simulated and practical professional situations – through TDG, command and staff, and field exercises. The combination of these methods helps to encompass the resource and resilience, emotional and regulatory, coping and behavioural, leadership and communication, and operational and practical components of psychological readiness. The obtained theoretical generalisations form the basis for further empirical verification

of certain factors of psychological readiness and experimental assessment of the effectiveness of its development programmes. Promising areas of further research are the testing of digital and simulation training tools, in particular virtual and augmented reality technologies, and determining their impact on psychological stability, self-regulation, professional adaptability, and readiness of future officers to perform professional tasks.

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None.

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Психологічна готовність майбутніх офіцерів як чинник ефективності професійної підготовки у системі вищої військової освіти України

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♦ **Анотація.** Метою статті було теоретичне обґрунтування структури психологічної готовності майбутніх офіцерів та систематизація психолого-педагогічних підходів до її формування в умовах сучасних безпекових викликів і трансформації вищої військової освіти України. Використано аналіз, синтез, порівняння, систематизацію й узагальнення наукових джерел, контент-аналіз, а також структурно-функціональний і системний аналіз для визначення сучасних підходів до формування психологічної готовності майбутніх офіцерів. У статті розглянуто сучасні психолого-педагогічні підходи до формування психологічної готовності майбутніх офіцерів як важливої складової їх професійної підготовки у системі вищої військової освіти України. Обґрунтовано необхідність оновлення змісту військової освіти з урахуванням сучасних безпекових викликів, стандартів Організації Північноатлантичного договору (НАТО) та актуальних потреб сектору безпеки і оборони України. Особливу увагу приділено розвитку лідерських компетентностей, психологічної стійкості, організаційної ідентичності та професійної мотивації, а також використанню цифрових технологій, симуляційного й інтерактивного навчання, засобів віртуальної та доповненої реальності. Встановлено, що комплексне використання зазначених засобів сприяє розвитку здатності ефективно виконувати службово-бойові завдання, приймати управлінські рішення в умовах невизначеності, демонструвати емоційну саморегуляцію, адаптивність, професійну відповідальність і командну взаємодію. Доведено, що формування психологічної готовності має ґрунтуватися на інтеграції сучасних психолого-педагогічних технологій, цифрових засобів навчання, практикоорієнтованої підготовки та системного психологічного супроводу. Практична цінність дослідження полягає у можливості використання його результатів для вдосконалення освітніх програм, навчально-методичного забезпечення та системи підвищення кваліфікації науково-педагогічних працівників вищих військових навчальних закладів. Запропоновані підходи створюють науково-методичне підґрунтя для розвитку військової освіти, підвищення якості професійної підготовки офіцерів, розвитку їхніх загальних і фахових компетентностей, soft skills і hard skills, а також забезпечення готовності до професійної діяльності в сучасному безпековому середовищі

♦ **Ключові слова:** інноваційні технології; цифровізація; компетентнісний підхід; саморегуляція; лідерство; курсанти