

## THE QUALITY OF ADAPTATION IN CURSANTS AS A FACTOR OF STRESS RESISTANCE

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**Abstract.** The article focuses on the issue of how the formation of flexibility in students is a factor that ensures their stress resistance. At the same time, the characteristics, factors, and criteria for adapting cadets to the content of military activity are revealed. At the same time, the influence of adaptive properties on increasing stress resistance in cadets has been empirically investigated.

**Keywords:** cadet personality, military activity, motivational-necessitative, behavioral, adaptability, social adaptation, cognitive, emotional, volitional, military collective, active-positive, passive, active-negative, military-functional, adaptation to service activities, adaptation to social activities in the collective, adaptation to the living conditions of the military collective.

## СВОЙСТВА АДАПТАЦИИ У КУРСАНТОВ КАК ФАКТОР СТРЕСС-УСТОЙЧИВОСТИ

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается вопрос о том, является ли формирование адаптивных качеств у курсантов фактором, обеспечивающим их стрессоустойчивость. При этом раскрыты особенности, факторы, критерии адаптации курсантов к содержанию военной деятельности. Вместе с тем, с эмпирической точки зрения исследовано влияние свойства адаптивности на повышение устойчивости к стрессу у курсантов.

**Ключевые слова:** личность курсанта, военная деятельность, мотивационно-потребностная, поведенческая, адаптивность, социальная адаптация, когнитивная, эмоциональная, волевая, военный коллектив, активно-положительный, пассивный, активно-отрицательный, военно-функциональный, адаптация к служебной деятельности, адаптация к социальной деятельности в коллективе, адаптация к условиям жизни военного коллектива.

We consider the adaptation of cadets to military activity, in turn, as a complex dynamic, multi-level, and multifaceted process of restructuring the needs-motivational sphere, the set of existing skills, abilities, and habits, in accordance with new tasks, goals, prospects, and the conditions for their implementation. The external (behavioral, adaptive) adaptability of an individual is characterized by the absence of internal





(content) restructuring and the preservation of oneself and one's independence. Instrumental adaptation of the personality occurs. In this case, cadets may adhere to the accepted norms, but in the absence of control, they return to their usual behavior.

The mixed adaptability of an individual is manifested partly through internal restructuring and adaptation to the environment, its values, and norms, and partly through instrumental adaptation, the preservation of one's "Self," independence, and identity [5]. Of course, in the Armed Forces, full internal adaptation of the individual is the most preferred.

In general, it should be noted that the adaptation process includes three stages: - tentative or primary (at this stage, cadets have a certain idealized vision of the future life, as a rule, they express a desire to fulfill the commanders' demands, demonstrate diligence and efficiency). At the same time, they evaluate the personal qualities of commanders and members of the military team, developing methods of interaction with them; - critical (a revision of norms and requirements occurs). At this stage, conflicts often arise within military units. A heavy psychological and emotional load, a new lifestyle, a new team, military service obligations, combat training—a literal system of rules falls upon a young man. The result is rejection, indifference, laziness, psychosomatic, negative attitude, or rejection of the rules and procedures of this system.

The adaptation of cadets consists of two relatively independent processes of their consistent entry first into the teams of training units (primary social adaptation) and then into the teams of combat units (secondary social adaptation), each of which has its own characteristics.

In the process of adaptation, the socio-psychological structure of the newcomer and, above all, the cognitive, emotional, and volitional components and psychology of the military collective interact. These include collective opinion, traditions, customs, the moral and psychological environment, leadership styles, and others.

The process of primary and secondary social adaptation has a certain dynamics and includes a number of sequential stages: approximate; critical; final. It also distinguishes three areas: establishing relationships within the "subordinate-chief" system; establishing relationships within the system of service and personal communication between colleagues; and establishing relationships between the warrior's personality and the military collective.

The initial adaptation of cadets has a number of specific features, which are determined by:

- sharp detachment from the usual socio-psychological environment (family, school, educational or production collective, circle of friends and acquaintances). This causes feelings of loneliness, longing, etc., in young people, especially in first-time couples;

- a new environment, new, unusual demands, a large number of new people (after 1-2 weeks in the barracks together, some people, especially closed and silent people, have a desire to be alone, to be alone, which contributes to the emergence of confusion,





mental tension, stress reactions in many people. The impossibility of satisfying this need leads to even greater stress);

- an authoritarian method of making demands that causes internal resistance and unwillingness to submit, which in mentally unstable individuals sometimes turns into open forms of dissatisfaction, quarrels, and conflicts. The main cause of such conflicts is the contradiction between previously formed attitudes, skills, and habits of behavior and communication, and the requirements imposed on them by commanders in accordance with statutory norms. Sometimes conflicts arise due to incompetent management of young cadets and a lack of knowledge of the psychological characteristics of adaptation.

- relative ease of establishing friendly ties between young cadets who have an equal position in the team and the same status as a young fighter.

- an educational unit is a formative community in its own right and cannot achieve a high level of development in a short time. Therefore, young cadets do not have time to gain experience in interacting with a real military team.

The most important area of cadet adaptation is their adaptability to commander requirements. Acceptance or non-acceptance of these requirements is the main effect of an individual's adaptation to military service, the transformation of a young man from a citizen into a military person. Indeed, the main characteristic of a cadet's executive activity is the necessity of quickly and accurately fulfilling statutory requirements, orders, and orders.

At the orientation stage, young cadets demonstrate a desire to fulfill commanders' requirements, diligence, and execution. The primary mechanism for the social adaptation of cadets is the imitation of commanders. Simultaneously, an assessment of the personality of each commander is conducted. Its typical features, strengths, and weaknesses are noted. Much here depends on the first impression that a particular commander leaves on the cadets. Later, it will be difficult to change this impression.

Under the new conditions, looking closely at the commander, the young cadet begins to develop and test a specific method of interacting with him. It's not easy for some young cadets. As a result, conflicts may arise, especially in relationships with cadets who differ little in age from their subordinates.

This stage of initial social adaptation is critical, as a series of trials and errors develops the basic direction of the cadet's behavior. During this period, the cadets' call-up self-assessment and expected grade tend to approximate the commander's grade, but are not yet adequate to it.

At the final stage of adaptation, the direction of the cadets' personal behavior is strengthened and becomes stable. According to the attitude toward fulfilling the requirements for military service, cadets are divided into three main groups: a) active-positive; b) passive; c) active-negative.

Secondary social adaptation of cadets begins with their arrival in combat units. It has the following characteristics:







- the entry of conscripted cadets into service is carried out in teams of various levels of development. This determines the characteristics of an individual's adaptive behavior;

- the decisive area of social adaptation is the area of establishing relationships between the individual and the military collective, and adaptation in other areas depends on it;

- the military community of a formal type is perceived as a strong stress factor that disrupts the process of secondary social adaptation of young soldiers or leads to disorder regarding military service.

In psychological literature, great attention is paid to the classification of types of adaptation on various grounds. Sources distinguish its biological, physiological, psychophysiological, psychological, socio-psychological, social, bio-social, and other types.

Depending on the types of activity of cadets, the following can be identified as the main types of their adaptation: adaptation to educational activities (didactic), military-functional (professional-combat), adaptation to service activities (official-functional), adaptation to social activities in the collective (public), and adaptation to the living conditions of the military collective (everyday-domestic).

Some researchers of the phenomenon of adaptation distinguish a number of sequential stages, phases, and periods in this process on one basis or another. The periodization approach to this phenomenon, implemented by M.I. Dyachenko and L.A. Kandibovich, is effective and interesting; they distinguish the following stages within it: cognitive, learning new behaviors and behavioral methods, psychological reorientation, habit development, and internal acceptance of new tasks and conditions of activity [1].

There are other approaches. In particular, V.P. Kondratova distinguishes three phases of adaptation: the initial phase, as the body's psychological response to new conditions (which lasts for different periods in different individuals); the second phase—the stage of reconstructing adaptation mechanisms, dynamic stereotypes, and psychological processes; and the third phase—the beginning of a stable adaptation period, during which the formation of dynamic stereotypes and adaptation reactions has largely been completed or completed [4].

L.G. Egorova analyzes it somewhat differently. It distinguishes 5 levels of adaptation:

- first, very low (negative);

- the second, low (passive) level is characterized by an indifferent attitude;

- the third, middle (active) level is characterized by a positive attitude;

- fourth, high (active-productive) characterized by a positive and active attitude;

- fifth, characterized by a very high (creative) creative attitude... [2].

At the same time, attempts to lay too broad a foundation for the periodization of stages lead to the identification of unrealistically prolonged stages of adaptation.

From the stage of personality adaptation to the stage of adaptation, a transition occurs from quantitative changes (expansion of knowledge, mastery of new methods





and techniques of action, consistent growth of self-confidence in one's actions, an internal positive attitude toward new tasks and conditions of activity and behavior) to qualitative changes in the personality that allow for the successful implementation of new types of activities.

In general and military psychological literature, a number of attempts have been made to identify the degree of an individual's adaptation to new conditions of activity and behavior.

These are the following indicators: the level of an individual's awareness of the conditions of future activity; social motives, the level of development of individual and collective relationships; the ability to manage one's own behavior, the level of activity in a new social environment; self-esteem in one's attitude toward service, the level of satisfaction with the new lifestyle and the nature of relationships with the team and commander, the assessment of one's social position and readiness to fulfill a new role; physical condition, frequency of seeking medical assistance, calm and steady mood, weight gain, success in physical and combat training, high discipline; performance, breadth of social connections; experienced mental states, etc.

The wide range of indicators presented in the literature indicates, on the one hand, the effectiveness of the research conducted, and on the other hand, their insufficient systematization, as specific aspects of the adaptation problem are primarily being developed. All these indicators of adaptation are interconnected, as they reflect the content and dynamics of a unified process of restructuring the behavior and activity of a young cadet in accordance with the new conditions of their life activity.

In the socio-psychological approach, the adaptation of cadets to military service can be defined as the process of a person's gradual entry into specific conditions of military activity and the assimilation of the psychology of a new microenvironment (military collective).

In this work, the adaptation of cadets is considered as their adaptation to living conditions in army conditions based on changes occurring in their psyche. Their main characteristics are: the need for strict compliance with the requirements of military regulations, discipline and subordination, a strict daily routine, living in the barracks, performing garrison, guard, and internal service, not being able to see relatives and loved ones often, and a large volume of service knowledge, skills, and abilities that a young cadet must master within a limited period of time.

It is well known that the physiological mechanism for the implementation of habitual human actions and behavior is a dynamic stereotype. Reconstructing habitual forms of life activity is always associated with breaking an existing stereotype and establishing a new one[2]. Therefore, the primary physiological mechanism of cadet adaptation is the establishment of a new behavioral stereotype.

According to E.P. Utlik, the adaptation process is represented approximately as follows: during the first 2 months, the cadet experiences a state of excitement, their interest in the service increases, they strive to become performers, and they become very impressionable. During this time, he maintains active contact with the household and corresponds with them at many (up to 20) addresses. The period from the 2nd to





the 6th month is the most psychologically difficult: the cadet integrates into the team, establishes new connections, and shrinks old ones (including correspondence with 2-3 recipients). It occurs when you experience feelings such as loss of home, loneliness, insecurity, dependence on others. Usually, after six months, the cadet is on his/her feet professionally, morally and psychologically" [6].

Thus, the adaptation of a young cadet consists of restructuring the functional systems of their body and psyche at the level of mental processes and states in accordance with new conditions of activity and behavior, allowing for their convenient implementation.

Based on the changes occurring in the cadets' psyche, adaptation to the living conditions of the army occurs.

The main factors contributing to adaptation are: the need for strict adherence to the requirements of military regulations, discipline and subordination, the army's daily routine, living in barracks, performing garrison, guard, and internal service, the inability to see relatives and loved ones frequently, and a large volume of service knowledge, skills, and abilities that a young cadet must master within a limited period of time.

Cadets must adapt to the influence of specific factors that vary in intensity and duration. The success of this process and the possibility of rapid integration into the military community depend both on the individual themselves and on the commander's assistance.

Factors that make adaptation difficult include a whole range of deviations from home upbringing. Various biological causes: frequent and prolonged treatment in medical institutions, etc. Therefore, the effective performance of duties by cadets is possible only if they possess health, which is defined as a state of physical, mental, and social well-being.

It should be remembered that the difficulty of the adaptation process does not necessarily lead to an uncomfortable subsequent service. A sensitive attitude toward cadets, familiarization with their life history and individual abilities, and the proper conduct of psychoprophylaxis in close contact with psychologists and medical staff will help them overcome difficulties in the adaptation process and subsequently successfully perform their official duties.

In the set of psychological characteristics and aspects of a cadet's personality, the level of mental tension is of particular importance, which can range from complete balance and emotional stability to nervous mental disorders with a sharp affective coloring.

The emergence of anxious and depressive states negatively affects the sequence, concentration, and purposefulness of the adaptation process. In particular, these conditions significantly affect the effectiveness of activities in extreme situations under the influence of negative psychogenic, sociogenic, and stress-inducing factors.

Currently, in the context of military service, negative social and psychogenic factors have significantly intensified. The probability of developing neuropsychiatric







disorders and deviant behavior increased significantly during the cadets' adaptation process.

Practice shows that individuals with adaptation difficulties may include perfectly healthy individuals. Under the influence of unfavorable factors, threshold and prohibited physical and psychological loads, especially during the adaptation period, they fall into a depressed or anxious state due to psychological discomfort caused by the unfavorable moral and psychological environment in the unit (their extreme manifestations are considered precursors of a neuropsychiatric disorder or mental disorder).

Nerve-psychological instability has a specific impact on the process of cadets' adaptation to the call. It is not equivalent to mental illness, but is a temporary, recurrent phenomenon. Throughout a person's life, the level of resistance to mental exertion changes, just as the level of resistance to physical exertion changes.

Psycho-traumatic factors, including difficulties in adapting to military service conditions, can also reduce the "reserve of strength" of the psyche and thereby cause a tendency toward nervous disorders.

Under favorable conditions of the adaptation process, such states of neuropsychiatric instability disappear when commanders, psychologists, medical service officers, and educational structures provide appropriate attention and assistance, naturally possessing knowledge about the essence and characteristics of the cadets' adaptation process.

The effectiveness of adaptation largely depends on how real a person is themselves and their social connections, their ability to accurately measure their needs against available opportunities, and their awareness of the motives behind their actions. An incorrect or insufficiently developed self-concept leads to a disruption of adaptation. This can be accompanied by increased conflicts, disruption of relationships, decreased work capacity, and changes in health status.

Cases of profound adaptation disorders can lead to the development of military discipline, gross violations of law and order, suicide attempts (actions), professional dysfunction, and diseases [3].

It is well known that the personality of each cadet is distinguished by a combination of features and traits unique to them that constitute their individuality. The stages of psychological adaptation, which are common to all cadets, depend on the personal qualities of each of them in terms of their successful course. Even at the stage of readaptation, success is associated with a specific set of personal qualities and characteristics. This is the primary condition determining the development of the adaptation process along one of two possible paths.

In turn, each person's individual capabilities for successful adaptation vary, ranging from a very high ability to quickly and successfully realize their adaptive potential to an inability to adapt to this environment (potential susceptibility to maladaptive states).

Based on this, the primary link and initial stage of psychological adaptation work for cadets is the diagnosis or assessment of the adaptive abilities of the personnel. It is





based on studying the individual characteristics of each cadet, their level of motivation for military service, biographical data, pre-service social environment, etc.

Adaptation to military service involves a complete restructuring of one's lifestyle and is usually accompanied by intense emotional strain. New factors affecting cadets include: a different rhythm of life, a strict statutory agenda, requirements for military discipline, adherence to subordination, heavy physical and psychological workloads, the need to acquire special military knowledge and skills, mastering a new range of tasks, certain domestic inconveniences, sometimes changes in the time zone, unusual climatic conditions, geographical location, etc. Thus, the process of adaptation to military service is a load that tests the adaptive and compensatory capabilities of the cadet's body and the reliability of their mental activity.

It is known that it is important to study the influence of adaptation on the formation of stress resistance in cadets. For this purpose, the methodologies "Perceptual assessment of the type of stress resistance" and "Individual diagnosis of the manifestation of adaptive characteristics in cadets of military higher educational institutions" were used in the group of cadets selected for the study. The data obtained according to this methodology were reflected in tables for the purpose of visual representation.

**Table 1**

**Correlation between adaptive characteristics and stress resistance in cadets**

| Moslashuvchanlik xususiyati                                         | Stressga barqarorlik |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Yangi kelgan kishining jamoaga munosabatini baholash                | 0,40**               |
| Ta'limdan qoniqish darajasi va xarakteri                            | 0,21                 |
| Rasmiy va norasmiy munosabatlar tizimida o'z mavqeini o'zi baholash | 0,53**               |

According to the results of Table 1, it was established that the assessment of a newcomer's attitude toward the team has a high correlation with stress resistance ( $r=0.40$ ;  $p \leq 0.01$ ). High level - cadets in this group are distinguished by a positive attitude toward service activities and studies, correctly perceive requirements, easily master the educational program, are diligent, disciplined, willingly and conscientiously follow orders, and have a favorable position in the team.

According to the results of the methodology, it was noted that self-assessment of one's position in the system of formal and informal relations has a high degree of correlation with stress resistance ( $r=0.53$ ;  $p \leq 0.01$ ). This group of cadets is characterized by a positive attitude toward service activities and training; there are no negative emotions; the commander explains the assigned task in detail and visually, and they understand it; they generally master the training program; they are attentive and attentive when executing orders, making them supporters of the commander; they concentrate when busy with something interesting to them, and they befriend many comrades.







Based on the analysis of empirical data, it was established that the level and nature of learning satisfaction are independent components without significant correlations with stress resistance. Thus, the essence of the methodology for assessing students' adaptation to the conditions of the educational process of a higher military educational institution lies in studying the psychological characteristics of cadets that contribute to their adaptation to the educational process based on the study of the educational process of higher military educational institutions.

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