

Leadership qualities at the stage of professionalization of an officer of the Airborne Assault Troops

V. Karpenko

National Defence University of Ukraine named after Ivan Cherniakhovskyi
Corresponding author. E-mail: Vskarpenko88@gmail.com

Paper received 06.01.22; Accepted for publication 22.01.22.

<https://doi.org/10.31174/SEND-PP2022-263X102-05>

Abstract. The article highlights the leadership qualities of an Airborne Assault Troops officer on the basis of previous research of leadership in military. Taking into account the peculiarities, conditions of military service and analysis of the surveyed representative samples among the servicemen of the Airborne Assault Troops of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, there were formed, generalized and described 12 main leadership qualities of an officer. Considering the specific features of the military environment and the requirements for the activities of Airborne Assault Forces, it is proposed to consider the selected leadership qualities as the main at the stage of professionalization of Airborne Assault officers in postgraduate education.

Keywords: *military leader, Airborne Assault Troops, leadership qualities, leadership, officer-leader.*

Introduction. The formation of leadership qualities in future officers and the development of successful leaders in the military sphere today has become one of the urgent tasks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Training of officers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine has been started in higher military educational institutions of Ukraine that developing skills necessary for a successful leader. [1]. At the present stage of development of officers-leaders, qualities the military must possess, considering their service and combat experience, are becoming more essential.

The current situation in military education indicates the transition to new standards of military training. The combination of the ideas of classical pragmatism, humanism and the concept of continuing education determines the basis of the methodology for preparing Airborne Assault Troops officers to be ready to perform various specific tasks.

The development of leadership competence of Airborne Assault Troops officers aims to ensure the development of the personality of the UAF officer, which involves the development of all potential opportunities inherent in it. The decisive role in this developing belongs to the professional activities of the military. Only after ensuring compliance, adequacy of potential opportunities and capabilities from the officer may be expected high levels of leadership competence, and the most importantly - personal satisfaction.

Analysis of recent research and publications shows that considerable attention in pedagogical science is paid to the high level of professional training of personnel, as the main factor in the development of leadership in the Armed Forces. The importance of the problem of training military leaders is indicated by the experience covered in the works of domestic (N. Agayev, O. Boyko, A. Vitchenko, O. Krasnytska, L. Lebedyk, V. Lukhanin, O. Makovskyi, V. Osyodlo, B. Ratych, O. Romanovskyi, E. Sarafanyuk, L. Snigur, V. Stasiuk, V. Strelnikov, P. Tkachuk and others) and foreign scientists (D. Adair, R. Jinnat, G. Carfi, T. Colditz, D. Crandall, D. Malone, M. Murphy, E. Purayer, W. Rosenbach, P.J. Sviney, R. Taylor, R. Hughes and others).

In previous research and dissertation works, the modern theory and practice of officer training in the world's leading armies and universities of Ukraine was considered and analyzed. Conceptual bases of military leadership

according to NATO standards are revealed, innovative approaches to formation of leadership position of officers in the world's leading armies are traced [3]. The main differences in the training of the military leader are revealed, the best practices of the development of the military leadership of the future officers of the Airborne Assault Troops are summarized [4].

Formation and development of leadership competence of military specialists is an urgent task. However, today there are a number of deterrents to this process, which are primarily related to absence of the concept of "military leader" in domestic law [5]. That raises issues such as the common understanding and implementation of military leadershipness and the combination of formal, non-formal and informal military education within a single military education system that focuses on the professionalization and training of leadership officers.

Training of military professionals in leadership style, defining of common views and approaches to military leadership development, moving to common approaches and understandings of military leadership by servicemen and implementing NATO standards, realizing of the training of military leaders in accordance with the world's leading armies experience is a priority task for professionalization of officers-leaders [2, c. 20].

The goal of the article is to reveal the main leadership qualities of an officer of the Airborne Assault Troops at the stage of professionalization in the system of postgraduate education.

Own studies. The following research methods were used in the article: questionnaire, pedagogical experiment, statistical processing of results, systematization and generalization.

The success of the professionalization of a modern officer depends on the availability of a scientifically sound system of career growth, educational and professional training of military specialists with higher education throughout life. Transition to NATO standards, principles and approaches to ensuring the quality of higher education determine the urgency of designing such a professional profile of a military leader, which will promote proper integration of Ukrainian higher military school into Euro-educational and Euro-Atlantic structures, create favorable conditions for improving management training for the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

During 2020-2021 there were carried out the ascertaining and formative stages of the pedagogical experiment. At the ascertaining stage of the research there were examined scientific investigations of the problem of military leadership, analysis of educational programs of the National Defense University of Ukraine named after Ivan Cherniakhovskiy and the Military Academy (Odessa) for studying and determination the level of leadership competence of Airborne Assault Troops officers.

In order to clarify the attitude of officers of the Airborne Assault Troops to military leadership, the urgency of forming a modern officer-leader at the stage of professionalization there was a survey of cadets graduates of the Assault Troops Military Academy and representative sample of officers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The representative sample included officers serving in the units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter - the Armed Forces) not less than two years in officer positions - holding positions from commander of the assault platoon (parachute landing platoon) to the deputy commander of the Assault Troops, having a tactical and operational level of military education, participated in hostilities and peacekeeping operations.

In total, 150 Assault Troops officers and 24 graduate cadets took part in the survey (table 1).

Table 1. Composition of respondents who took part in the survey

Categories of respondents	the total number of	%
Officers of the Assault Troops Command	17	9,8
Tactical level officers	118	67,8
Graduate cadets	24	13,8
Experts	15	8,6
Total	174	100

The questionnaire method was used to conduct the ascertaining stage of the pedagogical experiment. Questionnaires were developed separately for graduate cadets and two categories of officers (tactical and operational level), considering their service and combat experience.

Table 2. Qualitative composition of experts

No	Experts	the total number of	%
1.	Experience of military service in officer positions		
	from 15 to 20 years	4	26,7
	from 20 to 25 years	7	46,6
	over 25 years	4	26,7
2.	Participated in hostilities		
	participated	15	100
3.	Participated in peacekeeping operations		
	participated	4	26,7
	did not participate	11	73,3
4.	Last position in the combat unit Assault Troops		
	Company Commander (Deputy Company Commander)	2	13,3
	Battalion Commander (Deputy Battalion Commander)	5	33,3
	Deputy Brigade Commander (head of service)	7	46,7
	Brigade Commander	1	6,7

The expert group (15 people) included officers of the Command of the Armed Forces having served in army for at least 15 years, having had experience in combat operations, participation in peacekeeping operations, having

passed a platoon-company-battalion-brigade command (Assault Troops) and have an operational level of military education. The group of quality experts had the characteristics shown in table 2.

Based on the developed questionnaire "Expert assessment of the development of leadership competence of Assault Troops officers", we investigated the current state of development of leadership competence of Assault Troops officers in the system of postgraduate education. The survey revealed that most respondents see the essence of leadership competence of officers as a generalization of personal qualities that allow their example and experience to take a formal leadership position and their readiness to organize and ensure the unit to successfully and efficiently perform assigned tasks.

After analyzing the questionnaires, we came to the conclusion that the requirements for the officer-leader of the Assault Troops differ according to the stages of the officer's career and the availability of different categories of servicemen under his command.

The question "How do you think the officer's leadership position manifests itself?" found a general opinion: the leadership position is manifested by establishing the identity of the officer in the unit through the ability to lead. In turn, the specific qualities of the officer-leader of the Assault Troops, which distinguishes him from officers of other types of troops, respondents included: resistance to stressful and critical conditions, courage, professionalism, awareness, motivation, devotion, demanding, confidence, determination, discipline, endurance and creativity.

To the question "What personal qualities of an officer-leader did you show during your service in the Assault Troops?" there is a fairly wide range of opinions, which indicates the lack of a clearly formed professional model of the officer-leader of the Assault Troops in the educational process of higher education. A large number of respondents pointed to discipline as a leading feature of a military commander-leader, which seems rather questionable from the standpoint of modern theories of leadership.

The cadets taken part in the survey, the main professional qualities of the officer-leader of Assault Troops highlight experience (military service, including combat), foresight (which is manifested in the training of subordinates what will be required of them in the future), initiative (which will be substantiated, reasonable and positive in relation to the unit and in the realization of joint tasks), mutual trust (to subordinates and commanders/superiors).

Officers of the platoon commander - company commander distinguish the main professional qualities of a modern officer-leader such as education (acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities in professional activities), courage and bravery in combat missions and tasks that require stress and confidence in their actions and making decision), endurance (physical), communicativeness (ability to communicate with different categories of servicemen and persuade subordinates).

The officers of the deputy commander of battalion have a different vision of the modern officer-leader. Their main professional qualities are prognosticability (anticipation of changes and readiness for future challenges), education (acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities in professional activities, taking into account the introduction of new forms and methods of Assault Troops), disci-

pline (fast and timely execution of commands of commanders/superiors), demanding of subordinates in order to timely perform tasks (commands).

Officers of the Assault Troops Command distinguish the main professional qualities of the Assault Troops officer: education, experience, communication, delegation of authority, stress-resistance, critical thinking.

In order to objectively determine the importance of the leadership qualities of the Assault Troops officer, the respondents were offered the most common qualities inherent in leaders. Using the results of the survey by the method of expert assessments, there were determined 12 main leadership qualities, that should be possessed by a modern officer-leader of the Armed Forces (Table 3). The main ones are those according to the results of the survey of a representative sample have a weight index above 50%.

Table 3. The main leadership qualities of the Assault Troops officer

№ з/п	Quality	%
1.	Experience	83,2
2.	Authority	82,0
3.	Self-education	78,7
4.	Initiative	75,3
5.	Communicativeness	74,5
6.	Prognosticability	72,1
7.	Trust	71,6
8.	Delegation of powers	70,4
9.	Responsibility	66,1
10.	Mentoring	63,3
11.	Critical thinking	59,5
12.	Stress resistance (coldness of character)	53,8

On the basis of the conducted research and considering the requirements for military service in the Assault Troops, 12 leadership qualities were identified, which are inherent in the modern officer-leader of the Assault Troops Armed Forces at the stage of professionalization (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Leadership qualities of the officer of the Assault Troops of the Armed Forces at the stage of professionalization

1. Experience acquired during military service, as well as gotten in training, exercises, international exchange and in combat.
2. Authority, manifested in the military team, among

subordinates, comrades, senior commanders (superiors), including the personal experience of the officer, the ability to perform tasks of various kinds in conditions of uncertainty and ephemerality.

3. Self-education, which is manifested in the acquisition of new knowledge (formally, non-formally, informally), and not only in military affairs.

4. Initiative to the new, including personal experience and the requirements of today.

5. Communicativeness with subordinates, colleagues and senior management adhering to the rules of communication and the ability to persuade the interlocutor.

6. Prognosticability which is manifested by personal anticipation of changes in different situations, considering personal experience, acquired knowledge, skills, abilities and analysis of similar situations.

7. Trust to subordinates and colleagues, which is manifested through mutual trust.

8. Delegation of powers between subordinates and colleagues, which involves responsibility for making decisions.

9. Responsibility for decision-making and results of the unit in various service and combat situations.

10. Mentoring, which is manifested by the transfer of professional knowledge and knowledge of military affairs, personal experience in order to educate leaders-followers.

11. Critical thinking in combat and non-combat situations (conditions), which is manifested by careful consideration and analysis of information to solve extraordinary problems in conditions of uncertainty.

12. Stress resistance (coldness of character) regardless of the conditions of everyday or combat situations, which is manifested by restraint, critical thinking and willingness to resist situations.

Results and discussion. The leadership qualities of the Airborne Assault Troops officer are manifested under certain conditions that contribute to the realization of operational tasks in everyday and combat management, ensure the successful development of servicemen and their coordination in the unit, increase the efficiency of the military team to achieve common goals. Thoughtful implementation of the following objective and subjective factors will help strengthen the authority of the officer-leader, increase the effectiveness of orders (assignments), stimulate the growth of leadership, the choice of effective ways to manage a military unit:

1. Favorable psychological microclimate in the military team (mutual respect, mutual assistance).
2. Common leadership position of leaders at all levels, unity of views and approaches to its practical implementation in the military.
3. Mutual trust, constructive relations between managers and subordinates.
4. Motivation and stimulation of development (improvement) of the leadership position of the officer.
5. Activity, determination, independence and personal responsibility of the officer for his own decisions, actions and deeds.
6. Constant support of the competitive environment in the military team, competition between officers for the status of military leader.

In a broad sense, the professional competence of a mil-

itary specialist is his professional theoretical and practical training, as well as the ability to perform official duties, solve various tasks, which in some cases involve acting in stressful situations, and sometimes even in situations that arise associated with risk to their lives and others. In our understanding, this is the ability of military professionals to show in practice the desire and willingness to realize their potential (knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, personal qualities, etc.) for successful activities in both professional and social activities.

Conclusion: Examining the leadership of Airborne Assault Troops officers in the system of postgraduate education, came to the conclusion that the leadership competence of officers should be developed at different stages of an officer's military career. This is due to the conditions of military service; of hierarchical subordination; the presence of subordinates of different categories and with different experience of military service; ability to make decisions that involve risk to life; the presence of situations of uncertainty, especially in combat. The multi-level training of Airborne Assault Troops leadership officers should include basic, tactical, operational and strategic leadership courses. The introduction of multilevel

training of officers-leaders will ensure the development and improvement of officers' professional leadership competence in the military education system. In turn, multi-level training of leaders will ensure that officers achieve the appropriate status not only in the military, but also in military-civilian cooperation.

The purpose of the system of postgraduate education of officers should be to establish the necessary conditions for creating continuity, unity and succession of education. Acquisition of the highest level of qualification and new knowledge by the officers of the Airborne Assault Troops that will increase their professionalism is a necessary condition for the development of their leadership competence.

The development of officers' leadership competence involves the introduction of new approaches and requirements for the training of leadership officers in the system of postgraduate education. Training officers in the style of military leadership according to certain basic leadership qualities will allow to eliminate the problematic issue of superficial representation of the essence of leadership and increase awareness, relevance and practical implementation of leadership in military activities.

REFERENCES

1. Leadership courses for tactical (L2), operational (L3) and strategic (L4) officers have been launched at the National Defense University of Ukraine (2020). Available at: [https://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2020/01/11/v-nuou-rozpochato-kursi-liderstva-dlya-oficzeriv-taktichnogo-\(l2\)-operativnogo-\(l3\)-ta-strategichnogo-rivnya-\(l4\)](https://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2020/01/11/v-nuou-rozpochato-kursi-liderstva-dlya-oficzeriv-taktichnogo-(l2)-operativnogo-(l3)-ta-strategichnogo-rivnya-(l4)).
2. Doctrine of development of military leadership in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. 2020. 30 p.
3. Karpenko V. Innovative approaches to the training of officer-leader. Kyiv. Military Education, 2020. 1(41). Pp. 173-180.
4. Karpenko V. Training of officers-leaders of Airborne Assault Troops: US experience for Ukraine. Kyiv. Military Education, 2020. 2(42). Pp. 144-153.
5. Karpenko V. The concept of leadership in military research. Kyiv. Military Education, 2021. 2(44). Pp. 91-99.