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THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION AND THE PROFESSIONAL STRESS

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Abstract:*The complexity of the social-military life, on its whole, induces major implications in the theoretical instruction and the specific practice of the military field. The identification of the connections which are instituded in the military groups' field, constitues a substantial contribution in the so needed scintization of the military organization in general and of its groups in particular. The preponderant role in combating the stress situations is had by the personnel selection and by ensuring of a certain personality profile meeting its case, as well as a professional and psychological adequate training. The relation between the levels of stress at the military and the psycho-social climate of the military units, is closely bounded both, of the perception of stress and also of the professional performances level. Looking for the social support is the most frequent and efficient strategy of adaptation, imposing the role of the military structures cohesion as a resistance at stress factor. The realization and the maintaining of a high level of cohesion constitutes a favourable premise to the manifestation of high spirits, of the obtaining of superior results in the process of training for the fight and of the victory in an eventual conflict.The research has demonstrated the importance of the intern place of the control in the perception and evaluation of stressing situations. The interaction manner of this variable with the anxiety, the frustration, the liberty of chioce and the social behaviour reveal the importance of introducing of this variable in the professional selection process.*

Key words: *professional stress, professional selection, cohesion, high spirits, psychological profile, anxiety, social behaviour.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The interaction between the organism and the environment appears as an esential element of life and it imposes a continuous adaptation of the organism, both on the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic lines. Stress has been and remains one of the most controversed concepts in the history of science. But, despite of criticisms and its lack of precision, stress continues to arouse the interest of specialists in diverse fields of science (physiologists, biochemists, biologists, pharmacologists, sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, anthropologists); the notion of stress offers an acceptable consensus, being relieved of deprecating moral and psychiatric connotations. The reactions of stress don't reveal the physic or mental deficiency, but they are normal reactions of the man confronted with a situation which he must manage. In the military psychology stress is a key concept and, according to the specialists in this field, for studying stress at human beings, there is no better context of the research than the military field. Of the way in which this phenomenon is conceived in the context of military type activities, it depends on a series of practical measures, connected with the application of the psychology in: military personnel selection, approaching to the training process for the armed warfare, leading

the troops during peace and war time, a.s.o. Long ago it was proposed a distinction between the sistemic stress, produced by physical, chemical and biological agents, that underlines mostly the physiological and psychobiological aspects and the psychical stress that involves firstly the psychological state of the organism.

2. PSYCHO-SOCIAL ASPECTS INVOLVED

The organism, being a bio-psycho-social unit, the sistemic stress becomes a somatopsychic stress and the psychical stress - a psychophysiological stress. But in the last period of time the accent of the research has been moved on the psychosocial aspect of stress, owing to the alert rhythm of the contemporary society evolution, which has imposed the replacement of requests of physical nature with those of superior psychical functions.

3. ELEMENTS OF THE RESEARCH

The natural frame is constituted by: the participation in military actions; situations of natural calamities; social seclusion; captivity; training (fight firing, pilots, parachutists); special socio-cultural contexts (poverty, informational deprivation); the upseting of the needs of affirmation, interaction, affiliation, affection, a.s.o.); the intervention of some life events (death, disease); professional stress; social stress; decisional stress; stress induced by the pressure of time.

Psychical stress reveals the discrepancy between wishes, expectations and what the individual obtains from the environment and it appears not only if the requests of the environment rise above the individual's capacities, but also when the resources are not requested at the optimum level by the environment. The affirmation needs, the expression possibility, may become acute

needs, so that the understimulation and undersolicitation (through the deficit of stimuluses, their repetitive and uniform features, monotony, social isolation, reduced communication and co-operation) produce effects comparable with those of stress through supersolicitation. The results of experiences of the sensorial deprivation are arguments for the affirmation that the maintaining of a normal and efficient physical and psychical activity requires an optimal extern stimulation, the level of which alters from individual to individual. It is proven, for example, that the extrovert experiences undersolicitation more than the introvert.

Stress is a key concept in the military psychology and of the way in which this phenomenon is conceived in the context of the military type activities follows a succession of practical activities bounded by the application of the psychology in: personnel selection, dealing with the training process for armed fight, troup's management while peace and war time, a.s.o. It has been studied especially the military personnel with complex functions and specialities in which there is a high degree of solicitation of aptitudes and specific skills.

3.1 Involved factors

The military profession presumes a high specialization, being involved in the management of violence. The motivations in choosing this profession are, mainly, of a pulsatory type (a significant part of military cadres chose this profession when they were fourteen; each military considers the peace situation but, mostly, the one of war – the nearer the instruction is of the real conditions, the more passionate they are, because they achieve themselves as persons).

The fact, intuitve, of being able to act after the own decision, in conditions of pronounced uncertainty, creates the feeling of fulfilment, of using the specific and special abilities.

The military organization is characterized by a hierarchical structure and it is constituted on rigorous criterions. The hierarchy of military

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functions or ranks generates a stimulative and competitive frame for individuals. Because of these hierarchies the relations between the members of the organization, compared with those in the civil life, suffer changes, so that, in the military life the aggregate of behavioural rules, in the interindividual relations, is determined strictly by the military regulations.

While being a military the conditions can generate frustration, behavioural rigidity, the shutting off of the initiative, moulding after certain patterns, so getting to stereotypy and rigidity that determine the neglecting of the content and quality of work, the rounding of individual responsibilities, self-seeking, conservatism, inertia and resistence at changes.

The bureaucratic organisations context speaks about the individual's practised incapacity of adapting himself at new situations and of the professional deformation as negative effects on the human factor.

The everyday completion of a certain routine gets to develop individual's preferences, antipathies, determiantions, which exert a constant pressure on the individual, determining a methodical, prudent and disciplined behaviour. The conformity and the fidelity reported to prescribted actions is encouraged, more than it should be necessary, ensuring a comfortable safety threshold. The adhesion to norms conceived initially as means, becomes purpose for individual, getting to a process of shifting of purposes through which an instrumental value becomes a final value. The adhesion to formal procedures leeds to behavioural formalism and even to ritualism.

Such a vision upon the career imposes the fear of risks and innovations, conscientiousness without personal engagement, conformity, impersonal behaviour and respecting all the unwritten laws. All these are the price of the comfort offered by the wish, at any cost, for permanence and the fear of new, of change. With other words, the talk is about a psychological contract between individual and organization through which, in exchange of renouncing at creativity, at personal engagement in tasks and interpersonal relations, at assuming of the responsibility, the individual receives the reducing of incertitude, organizational equilibrium and continuity. While peace, military cadres are marked by the bureaucratic criterions because, while peace time, the task of the army is abstract and with simbolic eficiency. In exchange, the obedience faced with the system and with the leaders is concrete. This situation masks both the capacity and the incapacity of militaries.

The professional activity becomes stressing when, through the nature and volume of obligations, it oversolicits the employed, it carries on in its own rhythm, that is in contradiction with the individual's natural biorhythms.

The military domain allows the affirmation of the competivity, as a masculine feature. The competition generates satisfactions and insatisfactions that, in their turn, constitute factors of remotivation.

The circle of duty and responsibility involves guilt as sanction. The plan of socio-cultural existence and the frame of interpersonal relations are ordered through the functioning of norms and values. These impregnate all human practices, from the productive to the

artistic, medical and educational ones. What is desirable is promoted by a socio-culture given by the way of examples, by positive heroes; in the microgroup this is promoted by praise and reward. What is undesirable is forbidden. Functioning externally, this socio-cultural normativity organises itself progressively and stucturing the living, atitudes and behaviours inside the psychism.

The underoptimal solicitation of individual's resources, underloading which is asociated with the repetitive work, the routine, the unstimulating work, the boredom, a.s.o., has negative effects upon the individual's health.

The persons who have in subordinate other persons, to guide them in their work, to recompense them, to punish them, to communicate with, these persons report a stronger level of stress than the persons who deal with other functions than working with people. This situation is owing to the moral and legal responsibility for the subordinates.

From the observations and discussions with the militaries who compose the pattern taken into study, it followed that the military personnel who has in subordination in term militaries report a stronger level of stress than the military cadres who deal with administrative activities, or those who lead professional militaries.

Following the observations and discussions with the militaries from the pattern taken into study, it followed that the main factor that makes the difference between in term militaries' commanders and professional militaries' commanders is the perception on the subordinates, although the activities with encreasing risk are the same: those in the first category are seen especially as disinterested and immature, while the professionals are seen as they are interested directly in the good course of activities.

3.2 Analysis and results

The analysis of the results of the study has thrown into relief the fact that the differences found in the distribution of the results of

stress, between the groups characterized by the perception of intense sources of stress, respectively through the use of active strategies of copying, are significant in the sense that the persons who perceive a more intense stress manifest a low level of satisfaction and health. The use of active strategies of adjustment (seeking of the social support and rational organizing of activities) report significant more decreased levels of stress. The place of the control acts as mediator of stress through the favouring of an adequate perception and evaluation of the sources of pressure.

The difference between what the individual hopes and what he finds in the army is significant and generating of pressures for the individual.

The perception of the interhuman relationships as a source of pressure can be put on the behalf of the individual's wish of forming a clearer conturated image about himself and of his hope that his relationships with the others (idealized) will have an important role in self-defining.

The persons characterized by self-control manifest an increased satisfaction with reference to the activity itself and to the organizational structure and climate, a superior physical health (percepted a physical energy) and a good psychic health (state of wellness).

The pressure of time contributes at the development of activities following a programme strictly framed in time. The bureaucratic system, in the pattern of which the army functions, favours the trace of loads with an unsufficient term for solving and nobody can motivate the unsolving of a problem through the exhaustion of the time of work of eight hours. These two factors, alone, can describe the way in which the lack of time practises pressures upon the militaries. But in situations of crisis, time has other dimensions: the planning of actions must be made in a time as short as possible, their development is based on the presence of a certain type of disposition

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elements, in certain places, in well specified moments. The army collocation that presumes punctuality is ubiquitous, even if not always the limits of time are traced in a fair way.

People tend to take other's opinions into account, mostly of those who they compare themselves with, or of those whose opinions they are tempted to change, which generate consequences on the constitution of social relationships and on the dynamics of the groups. So, "pressures of uniformity" appears and, if those are not followed by effects, they can make room for hostility and conflict.

Considering the pressure of interhuman relationships as an indicator for the individual's dependency upon the group, we get to the same conclusion, as it is known that decreased dependency is oriented towards the social environment of life and work, with the object of seducing and cognitive confirming of the cognitive state and in the case of strong dependency the psychological needs are overestimated (the perspective of self-knowledge or competition). The evaluation of the practised attraction is a specific feature of all persons with leading functions and the competitivity is a specific male feature which is cultivated intensely in the military environment.

Work in conditions of physical danger leads to a behaviour that involves difficulties in the maintaining of the interpersonal relationships, the tendency to nonconformism, the military trusting less to the traditional judgments and values.

The conflict of role appears when a person must perform many roles in the same situation. The

expectations concerning each and every role can be clear, but the roles themselves may be in a conflict. For example, between the military officers and second officers' multiple roles may appear such conflicts: in the situations in which military officers or second officers must report the performances obtained by soldiers in the training process to the superiors, to defend their interests and in the same time to be themselves sanctioned for the soldiers' results that contravene the superiors' expectations.

It results that the persons characterized by the intern control manifests an increased satisfaction reported to the activity itself and to the organizational structure and climate, a superior physical health (percepted a physical energy) and a good psychic health (state of wellness).

The answer at stress is manifested on three levels: physiological, psychological and behavioural. The difference occurs in the direction in which it is manifested the answer at stress. Some people react more conspicuously at the physiological level, others through feelings of a certain psychical coloratura and others react at stress through the exacerbation or inhibition of certain behaviours. So, according to individual characteristics, the behavioural answer at stress may be manifested through changes of the verbal behaviour, of the one of motorial co-ordination, or through the decreasing of the performance, absenteeism or abandonment. Intensifications of some behaviours from the unhealthy style of life are specific as reactions at stress. The frequency of smoking, of alcohol and drug consumption, is greater at persons characterized by high scores at the sensations

seeking feature and it intensifies in the periods of stress. The introvert persons smoke more in stress situations, in situations that solicit an increased level of concentration, while extrovert persons smoke more in situations that undersolicit the individual's capacities. Factors belonging to the individual's style of life are interpreted as ways of copying or as reactions in the absence of some effective alternatives of copying. At some persons the cumulative impact of stressors is experienced mostly at the level of cognitive processes, being manifested through decreasing of the concentration capacity, decreasing of the decision making capacity, decreasing of the capacity of creative and flexible thinking.

An important part of the components of the respective stereotype (which, initially, were not identified as identical with the self-image) are asimilated, the person adopting an adequate conduct. The differences in the perception and evaluation of pressure sources and in the manifestation of reactions at stress between employed militaries and military cadres, owe mainly to the feeling of belonging or not belonging, at the corps of permanent military cadres (as military officers or second officers) and to the adoption, or not, of the conduct which consists from this behaviour. The stereotype of the professional military includes also the availability of being called to the unit for the solving of varied work problems, alarms, military actions and exercises, the responsibility for persons more or less disciplined.

4. CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In a world in which changes occur nowadays with an unimaginable speed for those living half of century ago, our adaptating capacity and, implicit, our processing information capacity, are really overfulfilled; our feeling of helplessness comes from here.

Certainly all of us have a representation, at least a summary one, of the stress concept, but few of us know the efficient methods of diminishing it and so, of getting through solicitations easily, the not negligible solicitations of a life that flows, maybe, too fast.

The psychical stress accompanies any activity in which human is engaged, being a resultant of *"the conflict"* that can be generated by the action itself and by the one who performs it, but it is also owed to the increased rhythm of evolution of the society, to the volume of solicitations and to the accelerated dynamics of the social environment.

The sources of professional stress are bounded of work, a part in the organization, the development of the career, professional relationships, the organizational structure and climate.

The individual's evolution in the career, the exceeding of certain stages, determine the appearance of stress which will cause certain problems in the insividual's psychological plan.

 The middle of the career is accompanied by a suite of disappointments: the slowing down or the braking of the promotion, the restriction of opportunenesses, any of these leading to the individuals' isolation.

The end of the career and the retirement, the end of the active professional life and, so, the reconversion of the psychical energy from the working place to other activities, are other possible sources of frustration.

In conditions in which the seeking of the social support is the most frequent and efficient strategy of adaptation, the role of (vertical and horizontal) cohesion of the military structures, as a factor of resistance at stress, is imposed prominently.

The realization and the maintaining of a high level of cohesion constitute a favourable premise for the manifestation of a high morale and, in consequence, for obtaining superior

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results in the process of training for the fight and of the victory in a possible conflict.

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