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Aspects of Outlining a Post-Modern Management Necessary for the Physical Training of Military Students

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Abstract: In a postmodern world which is extremely dynamic and anchored in a communication that requires online accesses in almost all fields, the training and preparation of young generations is required to be carried out in such a way that the acquisition of practical skills should be reflected in their future activities. Along with the other forms of training, physical training is a defining part of those who are part of the military environment. There are various aspects when, in the lives of the military, physical training can influence the course of their military career. Moreover, the motivations of behavioral changes, either inner or external, can cause increased attention to this type of training.
Military physical training is a stand-alone activity in the military environment, a basic component of military training programs. We will also highlight physical training through its importance in the context of preparing the military for participation in theatres of operations, facilitating the understanding of its role in modern conflicts and the support it can offer in achieving military tasks and objectives. Moreover, an advanced level of physical training will lead to the maximization of the psycho-moral and physical components of the combative capacities, will support the improvement and maintenance of general physical and mental health and will help to develop the capacity for resistance to stress conditions such as fatigue, fear, panic, hunger etc.

Keywords: *post-modern military training; military physical training management; motor skills.*

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1. Introduction

Currently, in the post-modern world, recent operations clearly demonstrate the importance and value of soldiers who had adequate equipment and were properly trained/trained and under specific conditions. By viewing the military as a unitary system, the army ensures that soldiers, everything they learn, every action they take, everything they wear, transport or consume, work together as an integrated system, this fact ensuring, at the same time, the constant interaction with other systems and subsystems.

"In the conception of the armies of the NATO member countries, physical training aims at the general physical development of the military and their capacity of specific effort. It enhances performance and mental alertness, promotes cohesion and the degree of maintenance and development of the fighting capacity, contributing to the training of a well-trained fighter, able to withstand the pressure and stress of fighting" (Băițan, 2019, p. 8).

Currently, "the army is a complex system that evolves and adapts to the new. And like any perfectible system, the army assesses situations, draws up plans, prepares and executes actions as a result of planning, permanently improves the material component and contributes to the formation and development of its human resource "(Ciapa, 2018, p. 28).

In the process of training and specialization of the military, the level of physical and mental training is decisive. In a generalistic analysis of the situation at a global level, we can state that the current model of soldier does not imply a dehumanization of the military, but rather highlights his individual importance within the army (Larsson, Broman & Harms-Ringdahl, 2009). Thus, completing the self-defense courses forms an important baggage of knowledge, skills and abilities in which there are technical and tactical elements from the combat disciplines – Martial Arts such as: Karate, Tae-Kwon-Do, Kick-Box, Judo and Jiu Jitsu (Brazilian), whose application in the training lessons determines the formation of a physical and especially mental profile specific to the military located in the theatre of operations, which generates adaptive behaviors in borderline situations.

Considering the aspects presented above and in accordance with bringing the army to the highest standards, through transformations in conceptual, organizational and methodological level, but at the same time taking into account its traditions and values, it should also be taken into account the modernization of the concept of military physical education and sports from military training programs. This is necessary for the training of

fighters able to face postmodern challenges that valorize their knowledge, qualities, skills and practical skills, in order to obtain situations of advantage and/or victory in a potential armed confrontation (Cai, Wang & Xiang, 2018).

The physical training activities carried out by the military in the theatres of operations can be both a continuation of the training in the country and a stage of maintaining the level of motor qualities acquired in the preparation phases before the beginning of the missions. Physical training, being a representation of the level of development of the military's motor skills, is obtained after an intense training process, which aims at increasing their bio-psycho-motor potential. Physical training is a fundamental component with a particularly important role in the military training process, constituting the basis for the entire process of military training, both individually and collectively.

2. Role and importance of general physical training

The dimensions of military physical education are outlined by analyzing military actions, considering the mobilization of all physical and mental forces of the military body in order to overcome the difficulties they require. Moreover, the physical education ensures the military physical training which is considered an asset of the armies prepared in the postmodern society (Andrei, 2015, p. 9), the priority objective in the military physical education being the maximum use of the physiological and psycho-motor resources of the military in order to successfully solve the missions received. These aspects will generate the growth of their bio-psycho-motor potential through the systematic repetition of physical exercises, the level of development of the military's motor skills, achieved in the process of systematic repetition of physical exercises (Băiţan, 2017, p.29).

The deepening of the notion of physical training is conditioned by establishing its meaning, by its approach with some caution at first, so as not to be confused with other concepts specific to sports activities, this being one of the most important factors in military training, regardless of the "area" in which the military operates. Moreover, it is a complex process carried out systematically and continuously, adapting the military's body to intense physical and mental efforts, in order to obtain "psycho-physical performance" in military operations and to properly manage the challenges of today's society (Plastoi & Butu, 2019).

Most military actions, carried out in theatres of operations around the world, denotes a major importance that physical training in combat has.

The broad interest in this was complemented by various research studies on the effects of regular military participation in complex physical training programs. Thus, it was concluded that the physical resistance of the military to physical demands, in any climate or weather conditions, to the prolonged efforts that the struggle requires, is one of the basic conditions in achieving victory.

The general physical training of the military is mainly aimed at developing, but especially harmonizing, their basic motor qualities. This type of physical training is adopted mainly in the preparatory training period. The greater the physical potential of the military, the more his body can adapt to the continuous increasing of physical and mental stresses. For young (inexperienced) military, general physical training has a greater duration and importance, and for professional military, it has a narrower character, being correlated with the specific needs of military operations and with their individual traits.

The physical condition of the military can be acquired and maintained only by undergoing precise physical training programs, well-built and adapted to the military's specialization, progressive and integrated in the general military training program of the subunit to which he belongs.

Physical training, being a sum of the physical exercises used, ensures physical development and contributes to the very good health of the military and obtaining outstanding performance. This process is carried out throughout the year and lasts throughout the military life, being also an activity of training, development and increase of the functional capabilities of the body. A very good physical condition, skill in performing movements, speed with its forms of manifestation, mobility, synchronization of actions within joint missions, represents the effect of an intelligently designed and rigorously applied training.

Physical exercises, by their performing under new, unknown conditions, bring their contribution to the development of self-security, calm, self-control, concentration power, the results being largely dependent on the involvement and perseverance of the military by observing the individual and collective basic principles and rules (Dragnea et al., 2009).

3. Specific physical training in military training programs

The army, as a complex system, is constantly evolving and adapting, becoming perfectible in the postmodern world, evaluating situations and finding strategic solutions for the formation of the military (Ciapa, 2018, p. 28).

Adrian Dragnea (1996) defined physical training "*as a whole system of measures that ensures a high functional capacity of the body*", aiming at changing the morpho-functional indexes in the sense of growth, respectively of optimizing them according to the effort that a fighter must make.

The specific military physical training is highlighted by obtaining optimal values of somato-functional indexes, by developing a high level of basic and specific motor qualities, by improving motor skills and abilities and by maintaining a perfect health status (Coge & Esteves, 2019). Physical training is present in the training of all categories of military, its weight and the type of means used, being different from one military specialization to another and depending on the category of personnel.

For the armies of the NATO member countries, the specific physical training aims at a general physical development of the military that ensures and intensifies the efficiency amid a state of mental alert, shaping a well-trained fighter that can cope with the pressure and stress of the battle*"* (Băițan, 2019, p. 8). An advanced level of physical training will lead to the maximization of psycho-moral and physical components of combat capabilities, will support the improvement and maintenance of general physical and mental health and will help to develop the ability to resist stress such as fatigue, fear, panic, hunger, etc.

The specific military physical training must be regarded as a form of training integrated in the military training complex, not as an independent source without concrete goals in military actions and without applicability in different real situations. In fact, this type of specific physical training means a process of permanent and intelligent improvement of the physical qualities of the military that can provide solutions for getting out of borderline situations.

The training program of the military troops aims at *"ensuring the planned level of response of the structures intended for surveillance and early warning... intervention in military objectives, actions to terrorist crisis and in emergency situations; participation in the defense of the NATO common airspace, ensuring the capacity to carry out JOINT operations, etc." (Specifications regarding the training and exercises in the Romanian Army in 2015, p. 8).* Thus, the specific physical training programs involve the execution of training hours that can ensure the strengthening of the military's body by developing the specific motor qualities necessary for the respective military operation. Being a long-term process, physical training creates automatisms as a result of endless repetitions, of practice, in conditions as diverse as possible and close to real situations, can support the modeling of the mental qualities of the military, as support for the actions taken by them in military operations. It also implies a relatively simultaneous

development of all basic motor qualities, so as to ensure a good working capacity of the body under the conditions of an overstressing physical effort, in the process of training and specialization of the military, the level of physical and mental training being decisive.

Considering the aspects presented above and in accordance with bringing to the highest standards the systems and programs of military training through transformations in conceptual, organizational and methodological levels, but at the same time taking into account its traditions, efficiency and values, a postmodern re-evaluation of the concept of military physical education and sport must be considered. This necessary aspect will generate the training of fighters able to face challenges of any kind by valorizing knowledge, qualities, skills and practical skills, in order to achieve supremacy and victory in a possible confrontation.

Being a common denominator of all actions and activities that compose the military field, combat capability must represent the possibility of a force at any time to achieve results in the deployment of a specific mission in a specific combat environment. The military's ability to fight is determined by their physical (level of physical training), moral and intellectual capabilities to act and to carry out a received combat mission. As an important postmodern factor and with a considerable influence in the technical and tactical training of the military, one can find the introduction of sets of elements specific to sports games and contact sports in the lessons of military physical education. Having a very important role in the development of motor qualities and combative capacities, military training will be specific to the theatres of operations where, unfortunately, the victory, most often, is marked by the bitter taste of the victims, sometimes even among non-combatants (Petrache, 2013, p. 113).

The war was, is (the attacks on Ukraine, March 2022) and will remain a physical and psychological confrontation. History has always shown that, ultimately, a war situation eventually comes to the physical contact of the combatants, which leads us to believe that the most skilled and well-prepared ones will emerge victorious. Due to this fact, hand-to-hand combat has been a central element in the technical and tactical training of the military, along with technical elements specific to the use of the equipment. Hand-to-hand combat requires that the military possess skills and abilities of self-defense both for free fighting (without weapons) and for hand-to-hand combat involving weapons, equipment etc.

In a post-modern world, contact sports have started to make their mark more and more on the military's physical training by introducing the specific training of these sports branches in the military physical training

programs. The techniques of self-defense and counterattack coming from these sports branches, but also the systems of formation and development of the motor qualities specific to sports training have a considerable influence on the development of skills of deftness in the execution of self-defense techniques that physically and mentally influence the military, giving him in this case a high self-confidence, which leads to a greater force of concentration on the conflictual situation and its overcoming in optimal conditions of an adequate training (Chera-Ferrario & Plastoi, 2016).

From here, we can say that specific physical training and technical-tactic is not everything in a military confrontation, but it is a pillar on which the other forms of training in the army can be based; it is a basic form of general training of the military through which they manage to cope with future military actions, regardless of the geographical area, regardless of the type and duration of the effort they will carry out.

Managing an adequate training has a significant impact on the quantitative parameters of the technical, tactical activity and on the indicators of the physical activity in borderline physical and psychological conditions, which implies at the same time a specialization, but also a universalization of the military training. The methodology for applying the content of training in the management system of military students' activities shall be based on operational data for controlling the activity in theatres of operations and on current indicators of their physical capacity. Since always, the physical training of the military has represented a system of rules in a continuous transformation and adaptation to the given situations. In this respect, more than ever, in the post-modern world, the rapid changes, the massive technologization, the variations of certain probabilities, the uncertainty of horizons, etc. amplify the need for a restructured and reprioritized post-modern management regarding the training of military students throughout their military engagement. The basic factors (nutrition, rest, the approached training program and the way it is executed, the available sports base, the infrastructure, the level of computerization and technologization, etc.) associated with the particularities of the geographical areas, the climate, etc. directly influence the potential and the level of specific physical training of the military during the development of prolonged operations.

In the military training management program, in order to achieve a level of physical training appropriate to the requirements of combat, preparation and training must be carried out on a long-term basis and target all the components that define the fighter. Physical exercises, by their performance under new, varied, harsh and unknown conditions, have a

decisive contribution to the development of physical abilities, as well as to the acquisition of self-confidence, calm, self-control, concentration power, the results obtained forming the physical-psychical attitude required in combat theaters (Vaara et al., 2022).

4. Postmodern outline of motor quality components and their role

The application of a post-modern management in military training programs as part of the instructive-educational process involves the planning, organization, management, control and assessment of the results obtained from the development of the physical, intellectual, moral and psycho-pedagogical capacities of the military. At the basis of the elaboration of these programs, by applying an adjusted management that has been claimed by the postmodern society, the training objectives that are found in any national army, as a general system, ensure the military physical training as a representative and indispensable subsystem regardless of the type of military training in which the soldier participates (Kyrolainen, Pihlainen, Vaara, Ojanen & Santtila, 2018).

The central element in the military physical training programs is represented by the continuous development of the *motric qualities* (speed, skill, resistance, force, as well as their combined forms) which occupy a main role in the physical training of the military, these motor abilities giving the military the possibility to execute the various motor acts with precision and with an adequate reaction to the external stimuli specific to the theatre of operation (Aandstad, Hageberg, Holme & Anderssen, 2016).

As mentioned above, specific physical training is an integral part of general military training, along with specific technical-tactical training and contributes to the advanced acquisition of features of maximum capacity manifestation of motor qualities that the military needs in order to successfully cope with conflict situations.

All four motor qualities are combined and relate to each other, their development depending on the profile of the military and the mission he will have to accomplish. Of course, the type of mission may imply that specific training should insist on the differentiated development, to some extent, of these physical characteristics of the military, but it should not be forgotten that these links are in a continuous relationship of interdependence, and the profile of the management of specific physical training programs will always contain them as the main point (Qi & Zhang, 2010).

The management of physical training in the postmodern society requires the conditioning and consolidation of specific attack and defense skills, with and without weapon, the development of dominant motor

qualities by increasing the effort capacity of the body in situations of physical, mental and physiological exhaustion, leading to an advanced postmodern combative management in the event of conflicting situations.

In military training programs, the level of specific physical training is a "grade 0" priority and in this case optimal motoring capability is urgently required. With the introduction of sports (team or individual sports games) in military physical training programs, the efficiency of training programs has increased visibly, so that at present we can find in this set of sports branches and several combat disciplines with a defining role in initiating, developing and maintaining at an optimal level the military self-defense potential so necessary in "hand-to-hand" combative situations.

The practice of combat disciplines and the introduction of the physical training systems specific to these sports branches in the content of the military physical education lessons have led to the acceleration of the development process of the "optimal motor" of the military and, at the same time, to the construction of a baggage of self-defense techniques that can be a vital advantage in the possible combative situations that may occur in the theatres of operations. It is very well known that very often, in some military missions in the theatres of operations, one can reach, voluntarily or involuntarily, hand to hand combat situations, which require the military to master quite well some skills of self-defense both for free fighting and for possible attacks with weapons, from a short distance.

Also, as a postmodern social phenomenon that draws attention we can highlight a relatively common system of specific physical training, the differences being some of nuance due to the geographical area and the period in which the sports branch was born and the history it has. At the same time, it should also be mentioned that there are fighting disciplines that involve free struggle (e.g. Karate – Do = "the way of the bare hand"), but also disciplines that involve fighting with weapons (e.g. Wushu).

Due to their specific character, these combat disciplines have come over time to be an integral part of the military physical training programs and they have an important role in the development of all motor qualities, because the execution of the techniques of self-defense and attack at a high level implies both an advanced degree of skill, but also a high execution speed and strength and resistance in battle. These training systems of combat disciplines have a slightly harsh character, which also leads to the building of a strong character and psyche. In these circumstances, once an optimal physical, technical and mental level has been achieved, the military will have a high morale, and these qualities can be vital advantages in the theatres of operations.

In recent decades, national armies have shown an increasing interest in combat disciplines, a perspective that has generated the design of specific military physical training programs in close collaboration with specialists in the area of contact sports. Currently there are "schools and academies of martial arts" that study, conceive, supplement/adapt and/or continuously modernize training programs with a national defence profile with the specifics of hand-to-hand combat, with or without weapon (Graice Barra – Selfdefence/Brazilian Jiu Jitsu/MMA).

Moreover, the evolution of a national defence system determines the emergence of an increased interest in the development and improvement of all the components that define it. The complexity of the current conflicts directly influences the approach and adaptation of the training of the military according to their requirements, the training of the military in modern conflicts being conditioned by the material resources made available for the practical framework of the training activity, but also by the theoretical component that the military can access in order to carry out the practical training act. Thus, the activity of military physical training, as a result of positive influences on the physical and mental condition of the military, can determine the consolidation of the military system under the human aspect, allowing the decision makers to act objectively, favoring the success of military actions.

The objective analysis of the military physical training activity in the Romanian army, based on the main military regulations and instructions governing the military physical education and which, beyond their legal character, shows possibilities of evolution, adaptation and supplementation with up-to-date and post-modern information, which allow the finding of development solutions. The specific dynamics of the combat situations, but also the multiple situations in which the military can reach at a certain moment, determine the adaptation and configuration of the physical training according to the training needs.

The military physical training specific to the current conflict situations can be a good source of information for: advising the management staff from the perspective of a physical and mental effort, before and during the course of combat actions, which can become a priority for achieving the objectives; adapting the military physical training program and the thematic content according to the specificity of the unit.

The analysis, as well as the scientific research carried out in the post-modernist society, involves the use of *methods*, *techniques and tools* in the collection of data, materialized in a scientific analysis only by resorting to the factors that make the existence of the management of physical training

possible by applying a method, procedure and technique, analysis tool. This set of elements underpins the real and rational treatment of military physical training by taking on substantive changes in analyzing and improving military activity as a form of combat training, with medium and long-term beneficial effects on the military environment. The evaluation and improvement of the biomotric potential of the military provides valuable information on their individual physical and mental development, on the existence of possible attitudes, as well as information about the physical condition, all of which can be significantly influenced by a management of physical training programs appropriate to the postmodern society and without which the most advanced armies and the most ingenious conceptions remain ineffective on the battlefield (Flynn, 1991, p. 61).

5. Conclusions

The post-modernist society requires the rehandling of the military's physical training management, directing us towards the new tendencies of modernization and extension of the typology regarding the conflict solving, the increasing inclusion of modern technology in their initiation, implementation and completion. Moreover, armed conflicts have required combatants to have a diverse set of values, consisting of physical and mental skills, specialized knowledge and basic and applicative-utilitarian motor skills and other skills that are acquired during the instructive-educational programs.

Most military actions, carried out in theatres of operations around the world, mark the special importance of physical training in combat, the broad interest in it being reconsidered by supplementing the regular participation of the military in complex physical training programs and improving the strategic content of the applicative activities through a post-modern applicative management. Thus, it was concluded that the physical resistance of the military, in any geographical and/or climatic conditions, to the prolonged efforts that struggles require, is one of the important conditions in achieving success.

In their entirety, military actions and activities are based on the combat capacity of the military, who are prepared at a level that ensures a physical, mental, moral and intellectual manifestation capable of acting and carrying out a combat mission. Through an adequate post-modern management of the military's physical training, adjusted to the changes and challenges in the current society, the armies will be able to support the varied and demanding actions in theatres of action or on the battlefield.

The new physical fitness requirements for military personnel in order to prepare them to prevent physical overworking and to mitigate major risks during military action require a new approach through a post-modern management of physical training, with the primary aim of achieving the tasks in theatres of operations. More specifically, a new need is identified to define, evaluate and optimize motor capacity by establishing post-modern criteria and methodologies appropriate to an ever-changing world.

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