

Professional Vocation Development in the Future Border Guard Officers' Activity

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Abstract: The issues of professional vocation of future border guard officers is vital and topical for their further operational and service activity. The purpose of this article is to determine and substantiate pedagogical conditions for development of professional vocation as the key to success in the activity of future border guard officers. To achieve the purpose and set tasks a triangulation of research methods was used: theoretical – analysis, generalization, systematization in order to clarify the status of elaboration of the research problem in educational theory and practice, definition of the professional vocation characteristics of the future border guard officers; empirical – observation, questionnaires, study of the positive experience of interdependence of professional vocation and success in operational and service activity of border guards, self-assessment – to diagnose motivation for learning and a level of development of cadets' professional vocation. Study involved 299 cadets, 89 persons of the managerial, scientific and pedagogical personnel. According to the results of the study and taking into account the specifics of the operational and service activity of the border guard officers, often involving cooperation with foreign counterparts, the pedagogical conditions of the professional vocation development have been determined and substantiated.

Keywords: *future border guard officers; operational and service activity; pedagogical conditions determination; professional vocation.*

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Introduction

The choice of any profession is undoubtedly influenced by its prestige. In the twenty-first century professions related to business, entrepreneurship, banking, economic and legal regulation of activity have become prestigious. Although, reorientation of the modern society to a dialogue “between an individual and the state” requires changes in approaches to the choice of activity that necessitated new understanding of the essence of professional activity of a soldier, a police officer, a person who “performs service for the benefit of the state”, “serves the people” as indicated in the text of the Military Oath.

With the advent of new threats to both national and international security, particularly the military aggression of the Russian Federation, (occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, inciting armed conflict in the Eastern regions of Ukraine), accompanied by the measures aimed at destabilization of the political and economic situation in the Eastern Europe, intensification of terrorism and the threat of its spreading throughout the EU an urgent need for the development of the border guard agency appeared. The operational and service activity of the border guards should facilitate: creation of a new system of protection of the state border with the Russian Federation and other neighboring states as a guarantee of sovereignty and national security; effectiveness of implementation of the state policy in the sphere of the state border security; introduction of European standards of integrated border management; creating conditions for realization of the rights and freedoms of a person, development of cross-border cooperation.

Among the main objectives of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGSU) development, a special place belongs to improving the personnel training system. Modern conditions require highly qualified professionals. The personnel of SBGSU comprise both soldiers and civilian employees. A significant part of the military personnel are border guard officers. Their training is conducted at the agency’s higher military education establishment – the National Academy of State Border Guard Service of Ukraine named after Bohdan Khmelnytskyi (NASBGSU) in accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On higher education”. Modern educational technologies, interactive teaching methods are broadly used in the educational process of the NASBGSU. Nevertheless, as the practice shows, without motivation to learn, without conscious choice and creating a positive attitude to the selected activity it is impossible to achieve successful

results in it. Therefore, in order to succeed in the operational and service activity, the issue of professional vocation of the future border guard officers is considered as topical.

The problem of formation and development of professional vocation has been covered considerably in the scientific literature. The works of (Akhmedzianova, 1996) dealing with formation of professional vocation of pedagogical universities students, (Tomšik & Gatial 2018) – revealing significant role in influencing motivation for choosing a perspective profession are of great interest for the purposes of our research. Various aspects of personnel practical training for the Border Guard agencies of Ukraine and the USA have been studied by I. Bloshchynskiy (Bloshchynskiy, 2017a; 2017b; 2017c). Formation of professionalism and professional education of future border guard officers and development of professional orientation is revealed in works of O. Romanyshyna (Romanyshyna, 2014). Pedagogical conditions for achieving professional success were determined by I. Tkachuk (Tkachuk, 2015).

Thus, L. Akhmedzianova is convinced that “vocation is a manifestation of the individual’s attitude to a certain activity that, like any other attitude, it develops and is formed, instead of being predefined fatally”. In this case development is understood by the author as the highest type of the individual’s mental structure motion, its qualitative, progressive transformation. This is a complex process in which there are different stages, steps, phases, levels, and trends and it is carried out in diverse relations, social relations of the individual, in which he is involved through his activity. According to L. Akhmedzianova, “the students’ motives to choose the teaching profession do not determine the dynamics of the attitude and the level of pedagogical vocation development...”. The author believes that the factor of motive can be considered as a conditional one, and the vocation formation does not depend on it (Akhmedzianova, 1996). We share this vision, when it comes to the motives of the profession choice. When we refer to motives of study at a military academy, they may vary during the learning process and influence the attitude to future professional (operational and service) activity. The issues of selecting and training Romanian law-enforcement agents were scrutinized in the works of Răzvan Roșca (Roșca, 2014).

Scientific provisions, conclusions and recommendations contained in these works are of great value to our study. As evidenced by the literature review and dissertation research, the issues of pedagogical vocation of students of pedagogical universities, teachers in schools have been widely publicized, while the matters of military-professional vocation, ways and

pedagogical conditions of its formation and development have not been sufficiently investigated.

The purpose of this article is to define and substantiate pedagogical conditions for the development of professional vocation as the key to success in the operational and service activity of the future border guard officers.

Methodology of Research

General Background of Research

The scientific literature, generally, distinguishes between the methods of theoretical, experimental and empirical level of research. The first group includes the methods of theoretical analysis and synthesis, abstraction and idealization, induction and deduction, etc. The second group covers the methods of observation, interview, testing, rating, pedagogical experiment. A special place is occupied by the methods of literature study and teaching experience, as well as by the methods of processing the research results.

To achieve the goals and tasks we used a triangulation of both theoretical and practical research methods: theoretical – analysis (comparative, definitive), generalization, systematization were used to clarify the status of elaboration of the research problem in the educational theory and practice, definition of characteristics of the professional vocation of the future border guard officers; empirical – observation, questionnaires, study of the positive experience of the interdependence of professional vocation and success in the operational and service activity of border guards, self-assessment – to diagnose the motivation for learning and the level of development of cadets' professional vocation.

Data Analysis

With the aim of identifying those pedagogical conditions, a study was conducted. Altogether, 299 cadets, 89 persons of the managerial, scientific and pedagogical personnel were involved in different types of studies. In the beginning of the experiment organized on the basis of the NASBGSU, the study of the value orientations and motivational attitudes of cadets as an important indicator of their moral-psychological readiness for future service in general, as well as formation of their professional vocation in particular was conducted. Cadets' average age was 19,5; their background distribution was the following: 27,5% were from military families (9% - from the families of border guards), 77,6% entered the higher military educational establishment immediately after school, 1.4% before entering the Academy

studied at the vocational schools, 2.6% – at other higher educational establishment, 8.3%- in military lyceums, 8.4% served in the armed forces of Ukraine, 2.0% worked in commercial companies, 2.7% – worked at governmental organizations, 18,3% of cadets had previously lived in regional centers, 43.2% in district and other towns, and 38.5% in rural areas. Consequently, some cadets before entering the higher military educational establishment had certain ideas about the specifics and conditions of the operational and service activity of border guards as a kind of military service. As can be seen from these figures, nearly one-third of the cadets continued the military family tradition. This positive factor contributes to the development of motivation to service and professional vocation of future border guard officers, correspondingly.

Results of Research

Any activity sets specific requirements to every professional. These requirements are conditioned by their place and role in society, as well as by the nature of tasks and conditions of their service. Profession of a border guard is primarily connected with the concept of integrity and loyalty to the Homeland.

The essence of the military vocation is determined by the needs of society, individual psycho-physiological peculiarities, abilities and needs of an individual, their aspiration to military activity based on the belief that military profession would provide the opportunity for complete realization of spiritual and physical forces and potentials, self-fulfillment and self-assertion in society based on the ethics of serving the Homeland as the foundation of one's life position. As practice shows, military vocation formation process is determined by a multi-layered system, which covers a wide range of factors and qualities of a personality.

Professional vocation of a border guard officer performs the function of inclusion into the public life in the defined way, namely, by devoting oneself to protection of the state sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It also plays the role of a determinant of an individual's activity, lifestyle, focusing on the meaning and effectiveness. In the process of the future border guard officers' identity and inner world formation, their personal attitude to the professional activity is produced, which also influences its results and success.

As highlighted in pedagogical and psychological studies, the system of leading motives that determine the attitude of a person to reality, is the purposefulness of his or her activity, which is expressed in the needs,

interests, ideals, beliefs, outlook (Tkachuk, 2015). Combination of external factors and inner conditions of personality development contributes to formation of purposefulness, which is one of the core characteristics of any individual, playing important part in mastering certain activity (Romanyshyna, 2014).

The results of the feedback analysis related to the places of service of the NASBGSU graduates indicate that some typical drawbacks were identified in the operational and service activity of a considerable part of graduates (28.6%): a superficial level of professional knowledge, lack of interest in professional activity, irresponsible attitude to performing service duties, certain military discipline violations. This is mostly caused by underestimating the need for the development of professional vocation of the future border guard officers during their training at the higher military educational establishment and the lack of strong motivation of cadets for professional self-improvement.

Motivation, that is the totality of motives, that encourage a person to achieve the goal, is a leading internal factor regulating the individual's performance in major activity types. According to the opinion of modern researchers (Ryan & Deci, 2000), academic motivation is traditionally subdivided into intrinsic and extrinsic. The former remains an important construct, reflecting the natural propensity to learn while the latter varies considerably in its relative autonomy and thus can reflect either external control or true self-regulation.

During our research, it was found out that the cadets coming to the Academy from big cities showed lower level of professional vocation development than the rural youth. In general, 38.2% of cadets entered the higher military educational establishment having sustained interest in the military profession, 18.5% - under the influence of parents, friends, teachers, 8.8% – under the influence of popular science literature, books, movies, media, 9.7% under the influence of the socio-political situation in the country, 7.3% – in the result of the study of the reference career guidance literature for potential cadets, 11% were pushed to this decision because of the social issues, family circumstances, 6,5% – intending to avoid compulsory service in the Army. This lack of cadets' awareness of the professional activity directly affects the development of their professional vocation. Thus, among the cadets with insufficient level of professional vocation development (unstable professional motivation) 64.2% are characterized by the satisfactory progress in study, 21.8% – by unsatisfactory, 52.1% are characterized by weak professional activity. As evidenced by the results of questionings, discussions, surveys and the

analysis of cadets' activity (results of their theoretical and practical training), the idea of studying at the higher military educational establishment and realizing the importance of the military (border guard's) profession is constantly changing starting from the first days of staying in cadets' environment. Thus, 58.0% of the respondents have changed these ideas completely, while 42.0% of the respondents noted a partial changed. Given fact should be considered by the Academy commanding staff and faculty psychologists in order to create conditions for full psychological comfort during the period of adaptation, and provide the most objective information about the current status of the SBGSU (see Table 1).

Table 1. Motives and distribution (%) of cadets who entered the NASBGSU.

Motives	Cadets, %
1. Sustained interest in the military profession	38,2
2. Influence of parents, friends, teachers	18,5
3. Influence of popular science literature, books, movies, media	8,8
4. Influence of the socio-political situation in the country	9,7
5. Result of the study of the reference career guidance literature for potential cadets	7,3
6. Social issues, family circumstances	11,0
7. Intention to avoid the conscription	6,5

According to the results of the study regarding the effect of environment on the development of the professional vocation of cadets it was revealed that 41,0% of the influence on this process is provided by the environment of the educational establishment, 24,7% – by the extracurricular environment.

Discussion

The following factors are important for influencing cadets' professional vocation development are external to the educational process conditions: stabilization of the socio-economic and military-political situation in the state; restoring prestige of the military service; improvement of financial, technical, and social security of the border guard agency's servicemen etc. However, the results of the study show that the pedagogical

conditions for effective development of cadets' professional vocation can be created directly at the higher military educational establishment.

In the course of the experiment, various diagnostic methods were used: comparison of a self-assessment mark with a control rating of an instructor, verbal and practical situations, socio-metric method, method of statistical data processing. This allowed us to delineate the possible ways of the professional vocation of the future border guard officers' development. Through the integrated use of these methods, we found out the cadets' awareness about the practical professional orientation activities in which they participated.

Having analyzed the results of the research, we may state that 14.6% of the respondents gave correct and complete answers to the first question; 59,5% cadets had some difficulties regarding skills to define "professional vocation of a border guard", did not ground their opinions, which means that the cadets oversimplified the concepts; 25.9% of the respondents either lacked the definitions giving short phrases or provided no answers to the questions, which indicates a lack of the problem understanding. As for the second and the third questions, which required judgments and generalizations, 38.6% and 44.7% of the cadets gave full and correct answers (see Table 2). The majority of respondents stated that they associated vocation with the profession motivation. The results of the research showed that cadets' understanding of the concept of professional vocation is mainly unsystematic, they do not have clear understanding of the methods and forms of such activities. When answering the third question, the cadets mostly mentioned such subjects as "Basics of Border Security", "Moral and Psychological Provision of Operational and Service Activity", "Border Guard Details' Service at the Border Crossing Points", "Border Control".

Table 2. Results of cadets' responses as for awareness about their professional vocation

Questions	Correct and complete answer, cadets / %	Almost complete answer, cadets / %	Incomplete answer, cadets / %
1. How do you understand the concept of "professional vocation of a border guard"?	28 / 14,6	112 / 59,5	49 / 25,9
2. What is the function of professional vocation in the	73 / 38,6	49 / 25,9	67 / 35,5

operational and service activity of border guard officers?			
3. Which academic subjects (topics) have the largest educational potential for the future border guard officers' professional vocation development?	85 / 44,7	24 / 12,2	80 / 43,1

Since professional vocation is characterized by high professionalism of the border guard officers, their work performance, *the pedagogical conditions* of professional vocation development as the key to success in the operational and service activity of future border guard officers, in our view, are the following:

- development of cadets' motives, aimed at acquiring professional knowledge, skills and competencies in order to achieve further success in their operational and service activity. Quite an effective activity is cadets' conscious performing of certain tasks in their daily activity. It should be noted that formation of cadets' conscious attitude regarding the content of educational material and its mastering requires the educators' ability to diagnose each cadet's individual structure of learning motives. Besides, the learning attitude also plays important role in professional adaptation of cadets. In the context of the research of the professional vocation development problem the important factor is not only intra-subject connection, but the connection between the educational and pedagogical work in the border guard units;

- development of the cadets' activeness in preparation for their future professional (operational and service) activity. The main factors of cadets' activeness development, in our opinion, are specific learning goals and incentives to achieve them; positive socio-psychological climate in the military unit; objective evaluation of academic performance;

- purposeful study of the best practices of the officers who successfully perform operational and service activity, and the use of positive examples of the officers' attitude to service. Pedagogical science and practice has proved that similar is brought up by similar: all the best in a person and the team is formed on the basis of positive experience. The results of the study indicate that cadets tend to pick up behavioral models of other people, comparing themselves and their activity not only to their surrounding but also with the subject significant for them. Therefore, the way the managerial, scientific and teaching staff and unit commanders of the higher military educational establishment act, is imprinted in cadets' memory, both at conscious and subconscious levels. These circumstances set high

requirements to personal qualities and professional activity of persons responsible for cadets' teaching and upbringing;

- development of cadets' understanding of the future professional activity social values, proving that the public designation of the border guards and the function they perform in society is a very interesting and noble activity;

- intensification of cadets' professional self-improvement. It was concluded that in the process of professional self-improvement, it is appropriate to use the following systems: exercises done by oneself; self-persuasion in the form of polemics with oneself; self-compulsion, that is, the ability to make oneself do the necessary things.

Conclusions

Taking into account the results of the study, analysis of scientific literature and the specifics of the operational and service activity, the pedagogical conditions of professional vocation development were determined and substantiated as the key to success in operational and service activity of the future border guard officers: development of cadets' motives to master professional knowledge, skills and competencies in order to achieve success in the operational and service activity; development of cadets' professional performance; sharing the best practices and experience of the officers who successfully perform operational and service activity, use of positive examples of the officers' attitude to the service; development of cadets' understanding of social values of the future professional activity; intensification of professional self-improvement of future border guard officers.

Furthermore, the definition of pedagogical conditions for the development of professional vocation as the key to success in the operational and service activity of the future border officers Accomplished within the framework of this article is not final. Prospective further research directions may include defining of the forms and means of influence of potential capabilities of various disciplines on the development of future law-enforcement agents' professional vocation.

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