

HUMAN RESOURCES AND THEIR MOTIVATION WHEN CHOOSING A MILITARY PROFESSION

Associate Professor Galina TODOROVA, PhD

*Department of Natural Sciences and Humanities,
Air Force Academy, Dolna Mitropolia, Bulgaria*

DOI: 10.55535/RMT.2024.4.22

Human resources are a key component for any organization, including military structures, because their functioning guarantees the national security of countries!

At the present time, in the conditions of uncertainty and active wars, the choice of a military profession by young people is a difficult process and depends on their personal growth, social environment and beliefs.

The purpose of this article is to examine motivation as a process and the motivating factors of young people in Bulgaria when choosing a military profession.

The main hypothesis defended through this article is that properly motivated people will defend their country worthily and work for the peaceful resolution of regional and international conflicts.

The main instrument for data collection is a survey conducted on 50 cadets who have chosen to study in various military specializations.

The main conclusions we reach is that the motivation of human resources in choosing a military profession is complex and includes personal, economic, psychological and social factors, and armed forces that invest in motivated human resources for the future will be more effective and successful in war and in maintaining peace in a regional and global context!

Keywords: human resources; military profession; motivation; NATO; Bulgaria;

INTRODUCTION

The global security environment has a significant impact on Bulgaria in many aspects – from migration crises to cyber threats and regional instability. In this context, Bulgaria should continue to strengthen its internal security structures, actively participate in international organizations such as NATO and the EU, and work to prevent new threats through cooperation and adaptation to the changing global situation. It has to do with the management of various resources, which are a set of human, material, technological and financial elements that guarantee the country's ability to protect its security and fulfil its international commitments. It is known that Bulgaria maintains a defence policy in accordance with the basic laws of the country – the Constitution, the Plan for the Development of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria until 2026, the Programme for the Development of Defence Capabilities until 2032, constantly increasing its defence spending, which is 2% of the country's gross domestic product: "NATO includes only 16% of all countries with 32 member states. Last year, the member countries were responsible for 55% of all global military spending, with the USA accounting for more than two-thirds of that total. At the 2023 Vilnius Summit, NATO leaders approved a new Defence Investment Pledge, making an enduring commitment to investing at least 2% of GDP annually on defence. The new Defence Investment Pledge also calls for Allies to meet 20% of annual defence expenditure guideline on major new equipment, including research and development." (Funding NATO, 2024).

Graphically, these costs are shown by year and country in figure 1.

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria consist of three main types of troops that ensure the defence of the country – by land, air and sea. But one of the main problems of the Bulgarian armed forces is the shortage of personnel. Bulgaria faces challenges with attracting and retaining sufficient qualified personnel in the military, which is related to socio-economic factors and competition from other professional sectors.

From a theoretical point of view, there is a difference between the concepts of personnel and human factors. It is customary for the term "personnel" to refer to people as an organizational unit that perform specific tasks and roles, and the term "human factor" to emphasize the behaviour and interactions of people with the environment, systems and technology, with the aim of understanding

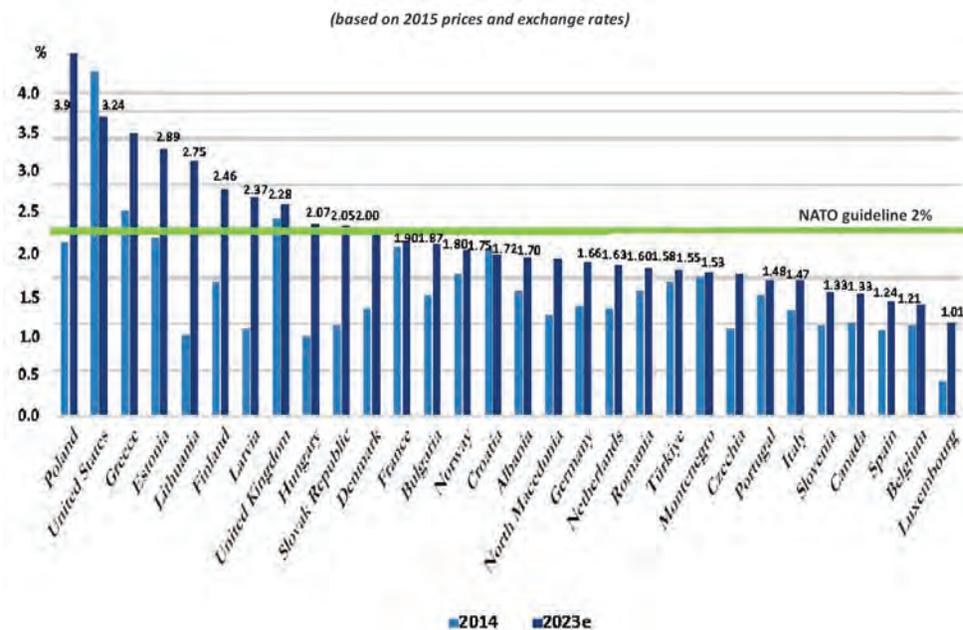


Figure 1: Defence expenditure as a share of GDP (%) (lb.)

how their actions can affect performance and safety in different directions. In the socio-economic literature, the main authors who have worked on the researched issues are: Gary Dessler, David Ulrich, John Storey, Donald Norman, James Reason, Paul Fitts, Hal Hendrick. In Bulgaria, the researchers in this field are: Veselin Dimitrov, Georgi Popov, Ivan Panchev, Rumen Manolov, Valentin Zhekov and others. In order to support the processes of recruiting quality people and specialists in the armed forces, the main goal of this study is to analyse the human factor and their motivation when choosing a military profession.

THE ESSENCE OF MOTIVATION AS A PROCESS

Motivation is a complex psychological process that explains how and why people engage in certain activities and how their efforts and behaviours are aimed at achieving certain goals. In the armed forces, the problem of people's motivation occupies an increasingly significant place in the field of human resources management, since the subject of management is precisely people – the most important and powerful factor for the development of defence activities. The emphasis is placed on military personnel and civilian employees to be motivated and stimulated to work, which, in turn, will lead to the preservation of peace and guarantee better economic results for the country. Therefore, it is necessary to pay

more and more attention to improving quality and motivation. The basic foundations of professionalism in the field of dangerous professions are (Bakhtyorovich, 2020):

- Assuming responsibility for a personal decision;
- The highest organization;
- Personal courage;
- Self-criticism;
- Sociologization of motives for actions.

In the course of the presented aspects on the essence of the concept of motivation, the main types of motivation are consistently determined, as a result of which it is unified that internal motivation in unison with external motivation contributes to the favourable impact on the individual and organizational level, which in most cases leads to motivational progress in the labour process.

Table 1: Conceptual views related to motivation (adapted from Stefanova, 2020, p. 130)

Period	Author	Views related to motivation
17 th century	Benedict Spinoza; Thomas Hobbes; Renee Descartes	Descartes speaks of "free will" and of "spontaneity of the volitional impulse". Spinoza sees "the pulls" as the main instigator of action. Hobbes chooses the instinct for self-preservation and profit.
The 20s and 30s of the 20 th century	William McDougall	Motivation is innate and coincides with the innate instincts of the person.
30s and 40s of the 20 th century	Kurt Lewin; Henry Murray; Abraham Maslow	Lewin explains behaviour based on the relationship between the individual and the specific situation. According to Murray, the variety of needs can motivate behaviour for a certain time. Maslow points out that a person has a desire to satisfy a predetermined scheme of needs, among which there is a hierarchy.

Period	Author	Views related to motivation
The 50s of the 20th century	Frederick Herzberg; Douglas McGregor	Herzberg determines that motivation is triggered by two factors: the first is the specific environment of work (working conditions, pay), and the second brings job satisfaction. McGregor's theory is based on two opposing models. The first model, which to some extent gives a negative image to the employee, is called theory X. The other positive model is named theory Y.
The 60s of the 20th century	Clayton Alderfer; Elizabeth Duffy; Stacey Adams; Victor Vroom; Lyman Porter and Edward Lawler; Jack Brehm	Alderfer, in the inciting-motivational sphere of the psyche, distinguishes two levels – “ <i>motives for need</i> ” (lower) and “ <i>motives for development</i> ” (higher). Duffy emphasizes ideas about knowledge and activation like elements intermediate motivation and action. According to Adams, it is present a directly proportional connection between equality and motivation. Vroom determines motivation like possible only when there is a clear link between the work performance and the result and when that result is perceived like means to meet some need. Porter and Lawler summarize that there are two factors on which effort on individual input in the labour depend: value on remuneration and expectations about the relationship between effort and reward. Brehm makes supposition that “ <i>given the degree to which the individual is aware of his or her needs and what is necessary to achieve them, he/she will choose behaviour that maximizes the satisfaction of the needs</i> ”.

Period	Author	Views related to motivation
The 70s of the 20th century	Clayton Alderfer, David McClelland, Gary Latham & Edwin Locke	According to Alderfer, motivation is built on the basis of a three-level hierarchy of needs and their overcoming depends on the will and capabilities of the individual. McClelland argues that all motives and needs of human without exception themselves are acquired and formed in the course of his development. According to the theory of Latham and Locke, two characteristics of the objectives are particularly important – difficulty and clarity. Up to a certain limit, the difficulty of the goal can be motivating, but when it is crossed, the goal is perceived as unattainable and the motivational charge sharply drops.

Each of these theories reveals essential characteristics of motivation as a process, but the motivating factors for each person are strictly specific and different.

THE MAIN MOTIVATING FACTORS WHEN CHOOSING A MILITARY PROFESSION

The choice of the military profession is connected to many factors. Charles Handy, in his book “*Understanding Organizations*” (1976), outlined three factors that influence motivational decisions and subsequent behaviour:

- *Needs* – which are the most significant among them?
- *Expectations* – how will we get the desired results through certain actions?
- *Results* – how will the consequences of our actions contribute to meeting our needs?

The factors are different and strictly individual for each person and the most important are:

- Moral and ethical motives of patriotic duty and/or family tradition and heritage, pride in belonging to the nation. Relatives who were military can be a role-model for military career.
- Desire for personal development of leadership skills, physical endurance, discipline, professional skills and self-improvement, as well as an international career in the joint command.

- Social security and stability – providing housing, receiving a regular salary, early retirement and other social benefits.
- From participating in international missions to completing complex tasks, the armed forces offer a dynamic environment.
- Opportunities for vocational training and advancement through language training and participation in other specialised trainings and courses that can help employees develop new skills and advance their careers.
- Group affiliation and teamwork to build strong relationships with colleagues can be motivating.
- Opportunity for social connections and new acquaintances, creation of new social connections and acquaintances with people from different backgrounds and cultures.

In relation to these factors, a survey was conducted among a 50-people target group aged 19 to 24 on “What was the main reason why you chose the military career?” The answer of respondents was: Patriotism – 30%, Financial security – 45%, Personal development – 15 %, Family traditions – 5%.

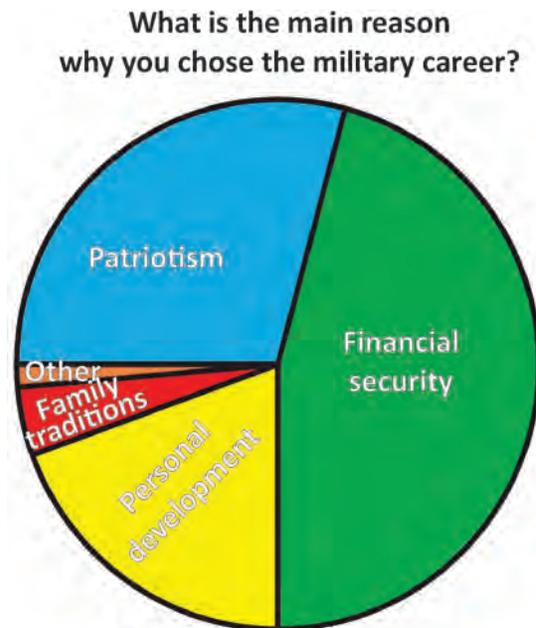


Figure 2 (author's design)

In Bulgaria, according to the National Statistical Institute, the average salary for 2023 is BGN 2,296. This tendency, I believe, is characteristic of professional armed forces. According to Jared Keller, who analysed the same aspect, “Americans join the Army for plenty of reasons: for country, family, and honour. According to a new study of enlisted soldiers, however, a core motivation is relatively simple: for money.” (Keller, 2018).

Career satisfaction is accepted as an indicator of subjective career success (Colakoglu, 2011). Because objective career success involves visible results, it is often based on a third person perspective and therefore does not reflect an employee’s own assessment of success. In this respect, subjective career success is taken into account in the evaluation of career satisfaction (Ghaleb).

For most of those who chose the military profession, the importance of this choice for personal development is considered. The results are:

- Very important – 60 %
- Important – 35 %
- Neutral – 3 %
- Somewhat important – 2 %.



Figure 3 (author's design)

The motivational factors outlined in this way also reveal the value system of the studied young people. They are fully aware of the responsibility of the profession and are ready to serve the country.

CONCLUSIONS

Choosing a profession is a complex and individual process that involves self-understanding, exploring professional options, education and practical experience, as well as career planning. The right approach to each of these aspects can help make an informed and satisfying decision about the career development of each serviceman. Serving one's homeland and preserving peace represent an act of awareness and duty for which those who have chosen military specialties as their profession are ready.

Motivation as a process and motivational factors for the individual in choosing a profession are different for each person. For a person to be successful in his/her profession, he/she needs to be motivated!

But the choice of a military profession is extremely responsible and conscious, because everyone who chooses this profession has sworn to defend the country, to work for peace and the peaceful resolution of regional and global military conflicts! That is why it is necessary for democratic societies and governments to support young people who have chosen military professions, as they bring valuable personal qualities, and the duty to the motherland is in the first place!

Therefore, the benefits of motivation in choosing a profession in a multinational context will increase the quality of human capital, and these benefits are indisputable both for each individual country and for NATO!

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Bakhtyorovich, S.U. (2020). Motivation Problem of the Military Service in *Psychology*, www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Full-Paper-MOTIVATION-PROBLEM-OF-THE-MILITARY-SERVICE-IN-PSYCHOLOGY.pdf, retrieved on 12 July 2024.
2. Funding NATO (2024), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm#direct, retrieved on 26 July 2024.
3. Ghaleb, B.D.S., *The Relationship between Career Selection and Career Satisfaction*, [The_Relationship_between_Career_Selection_and_Care.pdf](#), retrieved on 12 July 2024.
4. Keller, J. (2018). *The Top 5 Reasons Soldiers Really Join The Army, According To Junior Enlisted* (May 14, 2018), <https://taskandpurpose.com/5-reasons-soldiers-join-army>, retrieved on 15 July 2024.
5. McGregor, D. (1960). *Theory X and Theory Y. Organization Theory*, 358, p. 5.

6. Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Bulgaria, <https://www.mod.bg/en/ministry.html>, retrieved on 22 July 2024.
7. Доклад за отбрана, <https://www.mod.bg/en/ministry.html>, retrieved on 12 July 2024.
8. Stefanova, N., https://www.uni-svishtov.bg/portal/getFile/37/Avtoreferat_NS.pdf, retrieved on 12 July 2024.