FORMING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS OF THE BORDER GUARD-CADETS FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

The article deals with the results of the theoretical and experimental research of the features of development and forming of the border guard-cadets’ psychological readiness for social interaction in the conditions of future professional activities. The actuality and scientific-practical significance of the research has been outlined. The essence of a person's social interaction and his psychological readiness for it is analysed. The components, the indicators of person's psychological readiness for social interaction are distinguished. The psychological methods and techniques for its research are offered.

It has been established that cadets with low level of psychological readiness for social interaction can be characterized as the ones, who are inclined to dominance, who are not emotionally restrained and aggressive.

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The connection of the cadets’ psychological readiness for social interaction with their communicative qualities and properties, such as communicative tolerance; sociability and affiliation has been determined.

Based on the problem analysis connected with the development of the cadets’ indicators of this readiness, the program for its forming with a set of exercises, trainings, special classes has been offered. The main techniques, which were used during the training, were psycho-gymnastics, interactive games and techniques of self-regulation. Their testing on the experimental group of the cadets with the use of the control group for comparison and the methods of mathematical statistics, confirmed the effectiveness of the introduced program.

**Key words:** psychological readiness; social interaction; a border guard-cadet; the forming program; self-regulation.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Training of the border guard-cadets at the National Academy of the State Border Guard Service (NASBGS) of Ukraine for the professional activity on the border is one of the main tasks today. Their psychological readiness forming for such activities provides also the development of the social interaction skills. The situation in the border areas of Ukraine, not simple economic, social and political life conditions of the population on these territories, especially those ones, which on Russia, require from the border defenders to display a range of socially significant personal qualities that would facilitate the establishment of tolerant and legal relations with those ones, who cross the state border or live in the border areas.

According to the problem analysis, some young border guard-officers have difficulties with social interaction and are not quite ready for it. That is why the research of special features of the cadets’ readiness forming in the National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine is of considerable scientific and practical interest.

**Formulation of the problem.** The professional activities of military the personnel (SBGS) of Ukraine takes place in special and extreme conditions. It is often accompanied by conflicts, moral and psychological pressure from persons who cross the border. They are characterized by the interdependence of social actions and behaviour when solving meaningful service tasks. So, to prepare border guard-cadets for this social interaction and to form a
Analysis of recent research and publications. The works of such scientists as: O. Bodalov, A. Kovalenko, M. Korniev, V. Romenets, V. Tatenko, T. Tytarenko and others are devoted to the study of social interaction problems. The research of the psychological readiness of a person, mainly of students, for social interaction was carried out in the works of O. Bulhakova [2], O. Sannikova [5] and others. The aforementioned works discuss the forming of students’ readiness for social interaction in the system of their vocational training mainly. However, the problems of training the cadets at special higher educational establishments including the cadets of the NASBGSU for such interaction, remained out of the scientists’ attention.

The purpose of the article is a theoretical and experimental study of special features of forming the psychological readiness of border guard-cadets for social interaction in the conditions of their future professional activities.

The objectives of the research are: 1) to study special features of forming the border guard-cadets’ psychological readiness for social interaction in the professional activity; 2) to develop and test the program of its forming in the process of their training in the SBGS of Ukraine.

In order to study the special features of the formed border guard-cadets’ psychological readiness for social interaction in the professional activities, we have used a number of methods and techniques: observation, conversations, testing (test-questionnaires of sociability by O. Sannikova [5], social adaptability (O. Sannikova, O. Kuznietsova) [6], tolerance according to the method “Communicative tolerance” by V. Boiko,); methods of mathematical statistics (Pearson correlation analysis, Student’s t-test for revealing the significance of differences in indicators of person’s readiness for social interaction), etc. More than 200 cadets of 2–3 years of studying at the NASBGS of Ukraine participated in the experiment.

2. RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Social interaction should be represented as a system of interdependent actions, cooperation, interpersonal, business communication, in which
personal psychological characteristics are manifested in a necessary way. Depending on which feature is considered to be leading, the structuring of such interactions occurs [7]; [8].

If we consider the problem of the development of the border guard-cadets’ psychological readiness for social interaction in terms of psychological requirements, it is necessary to take into account the importance of the positive attitude of the educational process participants to each other for their functioning as a community [2].

Social interaction in the educational activities of the NASBGS of Ukraine should take into account a number of factors that influence its outcome – the psychological readiness of the cadets from the NASBGS for social interaction in their future professional activities on the border.

As the preliminary analysis of our experiment has shown, in general, the cadets of NASBGS of Ukraine tend to accept the personality of another person non-categorically; many people who do not know how to hide or smooth out unpleasant feelings when confronted with uncompromising partners, try to re-educate them and make a communication partner “comfortable”, show a moderate need and initiative in communication, prefer interpersonal relationships of an authoritarian or selfish type, do not experience acute positive or negative emotions from social interaction. In our opinion, this is due to the peculiarities of the military environment.

The study of psychological readiness for social interaction revealed that it has a positive relationship with such indicators of sociability as ease, speed of joining social contacts, tolerant attitude towards other people, positive emotions when accepting another person, etc. With regard to affiliation, a negative relationship with an indicator of psychological readiness for social interaction can be interpreted as an expectation of positive or negative reinforcement of the partner’s actions. It has been also found out that the indicator of the cadets’ psychological readiness for social interaction has a number of negative links with the indicators of communicative tolerance.

In the group of the studied cadets with a high level of psychological readiness for social interaction, social activity is significantly higher than in the group of the cadets with a low level of psychological readiness. The cadets with a low level of readiness for social interaction have a narrower circle
of communication. They are not inclined to communicate widely in a new large group, do not want to spend free time among people and have new acquaintances, have a narrow circle of friends, do not show initiative in communication. They are characterized by the rejection or misunderstanding of the person’s individuality, the inability or unwillingness to understand the individual characteristics of other people, the categorical or conservative attitude in people’s assessments, the desire to re-educate a communication partner.

According to the results of the research and the analysis of various aspects of the educational activities of the cadets at the NASBGS of Ukraine, we concluded that it was necessary to develop and approve the program for forming their ability for social interaction, and, ultimately, to solve professional problems on the State border of Ukraine.

One of the means how to train the cadets for social interaction can be a social design, which aims at: a) cadets’ development (psychophysical, moral, intellectual); b) promoting the inclusion of graduates into the professional activities and the corresponding system of moral values; c) forming and gratifying activity and cognitive needs; d) creation of conditions for self-determination, creative self-expression and continuous education.

The need for a purposeful work with future border guard-officers, which is aimed at forming desirable for social interaction personality traits, is conditioned by the results of the study of cadets with a low level of ability for such interaction. It is necessary to take into account the importance of creating an optimal social and psychological climate in the group, the time which cadets spend in the group, the number of educational and communicative contacts, intergroup interaction, etc. [1].

The interaction of lecturers and cadets contributes to the professional development of future specialists under the following conditions: a) the forming of future border guard-officers’ need to communicate with the lecturer; b) the creation of a system of common professional values; c) providing positive self-esteem by lecturers and cadets in the process of their interaction; d) the possibility of promoting their own professional pursuits in a real and simulated interaction situation; e) consistency of the role positions of the participants; f) use of active methods of teaching, modelling
and creating problem situations, which are adequate to future professional activities.

Some researches indicate the importance of equipping young people with the business communication skills [3]. Preparation for business communication can be considered as the specifics of future professional activities and the level of cadets’ readiness for professional communication in general, as well as for communicative tasks related to these activities.

In order to improve the forming of the cadets’ psychological readiness for social interaction, we have developed and tested a special program, which included a block of development of emotional and communicative abilities, a block of improvement of cadets’ communication, a block aimed at mastering the skills to overcome conflicts. For this purpose, we have used trainings, appropriate communication exercises, role-playing and business games, one of the main requirements for which was the possibility for a cadet to identify himself with the participants of role-playing and business situations with in order to master the relevant educational situational content.

In view of the requirements for the optimal organization of preparation for business communication, which should be systematic, integrated and holistic, some authors point out the importance of: a) knowledge of business communication; b) business communication skills; c) communicative reflection; d) treating it as a value [4]. That is why the training of our cadets for social interaction relied on the forming of their needs and motives, adequate ideas of interactive relationships, detailed ideas about the specific activities of the border guard in view of its procedural and productive aspects.

The border guard-cadets with an insufficient level of development of psychological readiness for social interaction were included into the forming experiment. At the request of the cadets, experimental group (EG) and control group (CG) of 25 people were formed. The experiment was conducted during the academic year. Experimental \((n = 25)\) and control \((n = 25)\) groups were created by the method of pairwise selection, the essence of which is to find pairs of the cadets that are as similar as possible to the experimentally relevant indicators. This way of creating groups, provided that their equivalence is confirmed, helps to avoid possible erroneous variability and to increase the reliability of the experimental results.
The use of active social and psychological training of the cadets provided the integration of various applied aspects of psychology, elements of psychotherapy, organization of mental work, culture of emotions and thinking, creative potential of communication in the process of forming a person who should work with people. The effectiveness of this process was ensured by a number of group phenomena. At the lessons, the participants were surrounded by care and they genuinely cared about others; they helped and counted on help. The subjects were able to experiment with different communication styles, to acquire and master completely new skills for interaction, while feeling psychological comfort and security. The lessons gave a great opportunity to identify with others.

The main techniques used during the lessons were psycho-gymnastics, interactive games, techniques of self-regulation. The exercises were designed in such a way that the training participants could feel more active every time, daring and free in their manifestations, actions and words moving from an exercise to an exercise, from a technique to a technique. During the research, the cadets increased their skills of effective interaction and awareness of the communicative contact features. The participants were able to track their own features of getting in and out of the contact, to assess their own leadership potential, to learn about self-motivation techniques, and enhance their own assertiveness and empathy.

The part of the training program was aimed at expanding the range of verbal and non-verbal means of communication, activating or enhancing reflective processes and acquiring the effective feedback skills, correcting self-perception.

It should also be noted that the participants of the experimental and control groups attended scheduled different in duration and frequency lessons at the Academy. Therefore, by these parameters, the experimentation procedure was also equivalent. However, the content of the lessons in the experimental groups corresponded to our developed program. This particular feature of conducting forming lessons will be considered to be an experimental influence, which explains the changes in the psychological readiness of participants for social interaction in the EG. At the beginning of the study, no significant differences between the EG and the CG in the
indicators of psychological readiness for social interaction were found. The final stage in testing the impact effectiveness of our program was to compare the results of the research between EG and CG. It made it possible to establish that the level of psychological readiness for social interaction of the EG participants improved significantly in comparison with the CG (Table).

**Table**

**Psychological readiness for social interaction of the cadets in the experimental and control groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of person's readiness for social interaction</th>
<th>EG (n = 25)</th>
<th>CG (n = 25)</th>
<th>Student's t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average indicator value (in points)</td>
<td>Average indicator value (in points)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-assessment of readiness for social interaction</td>
<td>3,26</td>
<td>0,52</td>
<td>2,81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert assessment of readiness for social interaction</td>
<td>3,15</td>
<td>0,55</td>
<td>2,83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness for social interaction</td>
<td>3,21</td>
<td>0,39</td>
<td>2,82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using yourself as a standard when evaluating other people</td>
<td>4,36</td>
<td>2,64</td>
<td>5,76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorical, conservative features in the assessments of other people</td>
<td>4,70</td>
<td>2,55</td>
<td>6,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-concealment of the attitude to the communication partner</td>
<td>4,55</td>
<td>2,94</td>
<td>5,70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus, according to the average values of the indicators after the end of the experiment in the EG, the self-esteem regarding psychological readiness for social interaction was 0.45 points higher than in the CG (Student’s t-test is 5.29 at the confidence level of $p < 0.01$). Equally significant is the difference in the values of the indicator of cadets’ psychological readiness for social interaction by the results of expert evaluation – by 0.32 points ($t = 4.00$; $P < 0.01$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desire to re-educate partners</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to fit a partner for yourself</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to forgive mistakes of other people</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>2.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intolerance to discomfort created by other people</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to adjust to the personality of other people</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General communicative tolerance</td>
<td>45.06</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>52.99</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>5.92**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for communication</td>
<td>27.11</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>24.79</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>2.66**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness to change</td>
<td>22.59</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>22.14</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness to overcome failures</td>
<td>25.80</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>23.15</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readiness to reach the goal</td>
<td>25.31</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>22.05</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.91**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General satisfaction indicator</td>
<td>31.31</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>26.64</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>4.80**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General indicator of adaptability</td>
<td>174.56</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>159.79</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>5.04**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * – differences are statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.05$; ** – differences are statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.01$. 
and the average indicator of readiness for social interaction – by 0,39 points \((t = 6,23; p < 0,01)\).

By the indicators of communicative tolerance, the statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups were also revealed after the experiment. This is a significant increase in the average values in the control group by the indicators: “using yourself as a standard when evaluating other people” – by 1,4 points \((t = 2,96; p < 0,01)\), “categorical, conservative features in the assessments of other people” – by 1,69 points \((t = 3,47; p < 0,01)\), “non-concealment of the attitude to the communication partner” – by 1,15 points \((t = 2,24; p < 0,05)\), “inability to forgive mistakes of other people” – by 0,9 points \((t = 2,00; p < 0,05)\), “inability to adjust to the personality of other people” – by 1,09 points \((t = 2,25; p < 0,05)\), “general communicative tolerance” – by 7,93 points \((t = 5,92; p < 0,01)\).

At the same time, the differences in the indicators “desire to re-educate partners”, “desire to fit a partner for yourself” and “intolerance to discomfort created by other people” are not statistically significant. The significant differences were found between the experimental and control groups by indicators of sociability: “need for communication” was, on average, 2,32 points higher in the EG than in the CG \((t = 2,66; p < 0,01)\) point.

It should also be noted that the EG in comparison with the CG started differing positively by the indicators social adaptability: by the indicator “readiness to overcome failures” – by 2,65 points \((t = 4,32; p < 0,01)\), by the indicator “readiness to reach the goal” – by 3,26 points \((t = 4,91; p < 0,01)\), by the indicator “general satisfaction” – by 4,67 points \((t = 4,80; p < 0,01)\) and by the indicator “general indicator of adaptability” – by 14,77 points \((t = 5,04; p < 0,01)\).

At the same time, the differences between the groups by the indicators of “sustainability of emotional experience” and “readiness to change” did not reach statistical significance after the experiment. There are no statistically significant differences in both indicators of emotional maturity: “emotional expressiveness” and “emotional self-regulation”. However, the “empathy” indicator in the experimental group showed a significantly higher average point than in the control group. And by the “emotional maturity” indicator in the experimental group, this point is higher than it is in the control group.
The obtained data showed that the cadets in the experimental group, which before the experiment showed the same state of psychological readiness for social interaction as the cadets in the control group, after the experiment began to differ significantly because of higher level of psychological readiness, assertiveness, communicative tolerance, sociability and emotional maturity.

A significant increase of psychological readiness for social interaction in the EG was revealed as it was recorded by the self-assessments of the training participants, expert assessments.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Our experimental research revealed the problems with the development of psychological readiness of some future border guard-officers for social interaction in professional activities and the possibility of its significant improvement through the inclusion of the cadets into a special program of social and psychological training. It has been proved that by attending lessons in accordance with the introduced program, the cadets can achieve significant positive changes in personal and professional development, in the development of psychological readiness for social interaction.

Prospects for further scientific exploration may be the research of the processes of social and psychological adaptation of graduates of the NASBGS of Ukraine to their professional activities and peculiarities of their behaviour in conditions of extreme social interaction on the border.

Список використаних джерел

References


дослідження. Проаналізовано сутність соціальної взаємодії особистості та психологічну готовність особистості до неї. Виокремлено компоненти, показники психологічної готовності особистості до соціальної взаємодії. Запропоновано психологічні методи і прийоми для цього дослідження.

Установлено, що курсанти з низьким рівнем психологічної готовності до соціальної взаємодії можуть бути охарактеризовані як схильні до домінування, а не емоційно стрімні, агресивні.

Виявлено зв’язок психологічної готовності курсантів до соціальної взаємодії з їхніми комунікативними якостями та властивостями: комунікативна толерантність; товариськість і принаймність.

На основі аналізу проблем розвитку курсантів зазначеної готовності пропонується програма її формування з використанням комплексу вправ, тренувань, спеціальних занять. Основними прийомами, які використовувались під час занять, були психогімнастика, інтерактивні ігри, прийоми саморегуляції. Їхня перевірка на експериментальній групі курсантів з використанням порівняння з контрольною групою та методів математичної статистики підтвердила ефективність запропонованої програми.

Ключові слова: психологічна готовність; соціальна взаємодія; курсант-прикордонник; програма формування; саморегуляція.