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**SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF CONSCRIPTS TO MILITARY  
CONDITIONS**

**511.03 - SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

**The relevance and significance** of the topic under study. The lack of theoretical foundations and practical experience in military affairs, as well as the negative impact of the political, economic, socio-psychological crisis on the military body has led to the imperfection of the modern system of ensuring state military security. This was one of the main reasons for the development of the Concept of Military Reform, one of the directions of which is the scientific research of the problems in the field of military-social-psychological research, which presupposes the creation and development of national military-scientific potential. The reformation of the army system takes place within the framework of a transitive modern society, i.e., in close connection with the processes of transformation of the social structure of the Republic of Moldova. In the continuously changing complex socio-economic, socio-political and informational environment, the socio-psychological portrait of the serviceman's personality is also transformed.

**Presentation of the research topic in international, national, zonal researches in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary space.** Adaptation was considered in the framework of different research directions and schools. The problems of the general theory of "adaptation" were investigated in the works of А.А.Реан [22], С.И. Сороко, А.А.Алдашева [24], the emphasis on studying "adaptation potential" was placed by А.Г. Маклаков [18]. Adaptation factors were studied by Е.В. Леонова [17]; Б.Г. Ананьев [12]. Peculiarities and factors of adaptation of conscripts to army conditions have been studied in works by: Ж.Г.Сенокосова [23]; А.А.Алдашева [11]; А.А. Налчаджян [19]. The specifics of relations in a military team were studied by В. Г. Демин, П. А. Корчемный [15]. In the Republic of Moldova the phenomenon of adaptation was studied by such authors as: O.Paladi [5], E.Losii [4], S.Rusnac [8], J.Racu, В.Красковская [16], Н. Букун [1], Е.Руж [7], U. Stati [9], M.Chirilov [2], V.Gonța [3,28], M.Pleşca [6].

**Description of the situation in the field under study and statement of the scientific problem.**

Due to the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of the problem of the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts to military conditions, its study is a common topic for several sciences, being at the junction of military psychology, social psychology of personality,

age psychology, communication psychology, educational psychology, organizational psychology and management psychology, thus reflecting the dynamics of scientific production, contributing to the identification of the national defense system risk factors as well as mechanisms of overcoming them. Mental disorders, among conscripts, are one of the main causes of discharge and account for 46% of all diseases in the structure of the general discharge rate of conscripts [20]. According to the statistical data of the Central Commission for Military Medical Expertise of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Moldova, there is a tendency for the increase of mental disorders, which are most often detected among military men during the first months of military service. Besides its defensive function, the military organization is an institution of control and socialization, which produces the standardization of the new social status of the individual - soldier, conscript. The abrupt transition from one social status to another implies difficulties in adapting to the new conditions of life. Conditions of military service impose rather strict requirements on the personality of a young conscript, where he is exposed to specific influences of numerous factors of service and social nature.

Adaptation to these new for a recruit army conditions largely depends on his personal characteristics. A.G. Maklakov notes that a set of relatively stable personal characteristics of servicemen determines the success of adaptation to various army situations, and he calls their interrelation the adaptation potential [18]. Not least of these are the conditions of service and relationships in military teams, which always remain tense, and not only between soldiers, but also between conscripts and contract servicepersons (junior commanders) [13]. Thus, the above-mentioned factors determined the choice of the research topic and formed the **research problem**, which is based on the importance and necessity of developing certain personality traits that will lead to the successful adaptation of conscripts to army conditions.

**The purpose of the study** was to examine the factors determining the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts to army conditions; to test and propose for implementation a program of personal characteristics development, aimed at forming the adaptation potential of conscripts and socio-personal competences of their commanders.

In accordance with the goal of the study the following **tasks** were formulated:

1. to carry out a theoretical analysis of scientific research areas of the phenomenon of socio-psychological adaptation. To determine the factors and identify the peculiarities of the manifestation of socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts in the army environment.

2. to conduct socio-demographic analysis of the composition of conscripts of the National Army for the 2010-2020 call-up period.

3. to examine conscripts' personal characteristics determining the success of adaptation to army conditions, to identify their interrelation, and to create a socio-psychological profile of an adapted recruit's personality.

4. Determine the socio-personal competencies of unit commanders.

5. Develop, test and determine the effectiveness of a program to develop the adaptation potential of conscripts and the socio-personal competencies of their commanders.

6. Develop and implement recommendations in a practical manual to effectively provide psychological work in the National Army.

According to the preliminary analysis of the problem, in accordance with the purpose and objectives of the research, the **main hypothesis** was defined: *the success of the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts to the conditions of military service is determined by both social and personal factors, and depends on the level of adaptation potential of conscripts, which can be optimized by implementing a special program aimed at the formation of certain characterological features of servicemen.*

**The methodology of scientific research** consists of a complex of methods: theoretical (analysis of scientific sources, generalization of scientific material, hypothetic-deductive method of research and interpretation of results); empirical (conducting, forming and control experiments); and methods of mathematical statistics.

**The solution to a significant scientific problem** which is based on the definition of social and psychological factors influencing the process of adaptation/disadaptation of recruits, as well as on the need to develop a special program aimed at the development of certain characterological features of personality, which will determine the successful adaptation of recruits to army conditions and lead to the formation of a favorable moral and psychological climate in military units. The urgency of the problem lies in the absence of such programs at the organizational and methodological level of the professional activity of the psychological services of the National Army.

**Scientific novelty and originality of the obtained results.**

For the first time in the Republic of Moldova a scientific socio-demographic longitudinal study was carried out in the present work, which revealed the socio-demographic profile of the

average Moldovan conscript. The study of the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts made it possible to identify the main causes of their maladaptation and to determine the personality profile of adapted and maladapted conscripts, on the basis of which a program was created to develop the individual-personal characteristics of servicemen, in order to optimize the adaptation potential of conscripts and develop the social and personal competences of their commanders.

**The theoretical significance of the work** lies in the specification and systematization of theoretical studies of the content of the concepts of "adaptation", "adaptability", "adaptation potential", "factors of socio-psychological adaptation". On their basis, the characteristic features of the adapted and disadapted personality of a recruit were revealed. The theoretical interpretation of the interrelation between the socio-personal characteristics of conscripts and the effectiveness of their adaptation to army conditions, which was revealed in the work, makes a certain contribution to the solution of important theoretical problems in psychology.

**The practical relevance** of defense research provides a holistic view in finding measures to promote the role of the research scientist as a representative of defense structures. The identified socio-demographic profile of the recruit is one of the criteria determining the defense capability of our state. The features of the revealed profile allow us to make recommendations in the development of strategic programs for increasing the combat effectiveness of troops, the ability to respond quickly and deploy forces and means in conditions of mobilization. On the basis of the psychological regularities revealed in the work, practical recommendations and a manual "Psychological guide of a military psychologist" have been developed. These recommendations are used in the work of military psychologists in order to optimize the social-psychological adaptation of young soldiers as well as to direct the commanders toward a correct selection of conscripts recommended for activity in extreme conditions.

**Approbation and implementation of the results of the study.** The theoretical and empirical data obtained during the research were discussed at the meetings of the Psychology Department of the International Independent University of Moldova and Chisinau State Pedagogical University named after I. Creanga. The results of the research were presented at the following scientific forums: Conferințe științifice internaționale " Mental Health combat stress mitigation" 2011; "Dificultăți de adaptare la mediul militar" 2012; "Paradigmele inteligenței în psihologia contemporană" 2012; "Psihologie: a pas spre viitor" 2012; "Practica psihologica moderna" 2013,; "Adaptare militarilor recent încorporați la mediul militar"-2013; "Fundamente

psihopedagogice ale prevenirii și combaterii violenței în sistemul educațional" 2014; "Practica psihologica moderna 2014; "Metode și strategii eficiente de organizare a psihologice activitate la diverse etape serviciului militar, cu diferite categorii de militari" 2014; "Sănătatea psihologica o prerogative a contemporanții" 2014; "Strategii Chișinău eficiente de adaptare la etapa instruirii" 2014; The mentalities of society in transformation 2015; "Practica psihologica modernă" 2016; "Dezvoltarea Armatei Naționale în contextul aprofundării reformelor democratice; "Dezvoltarea Armatei Naționale în contextul aprofundării reformelor democratice" 2019; "Life changing rehabilitation: The best practice, challenges and opportunities" 2019, Lithuania or. Draskuninkaite "Armata, statul și societatea - trecut, prezent, viitor" 2022; "Mental health in the security sector", George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Germania, 2023

**Scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation.** The contents of the dissertation are reflected in 14 scientific publications: 1 monograph; 11 publications on proceedings of international conferences; 2 articles in specialized academic journals in our country (B and C level).

**Scope and Structure of the Dissertation.** The thesis consists of an abstract (in Romanian, Russian and English), an introduction, 3 chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, a bibliography (283 sources), 3 annexes, 24 figures and 40 tables. The main text of the thesis is 140 pages.

**Key words:** socio-psychological adaptation, maladaptation, personal, social factors, army conditions, personality of a serviceman, conscript, socio-personal comportment of commanders.

## **WORK CONTENT**

**The introduction** reveals the relevance of the problem under study, defines its degree of study in psychology; formulates goals, objectives and hypotheses of the study; describes the methodological framework; outlines the scientific novelty and originality, as well as the theoretical and practical significance of the work, approbation and implementation of research results.

The first chapter, "**Theoretical and Methodological Analysis of the Problem of Socio-Psychological Adaptation of Conscripts to Military Service,**" analyzes the scientific psychological literature on the problem of socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts. Different research schools, depending on their theoretical views, interpret the phenomenon of adaptation differently: some view adaptation as a process of establishing a balance between a person and the environment (functionalists, neobehaviorists, humanists, existentialists) , others as a result of this



process (interactionists) and others as a process and a result (psychoanalysts, humanists). In the global sense, "adaptation" is the process of interaction between a person and the environment, which results in changes both in the person himself and in the environment in which he lives.

The analysis of theoretical and methodological views allowed us to develop a table of the conceptual apparatus of the phenomenon of adaptation.

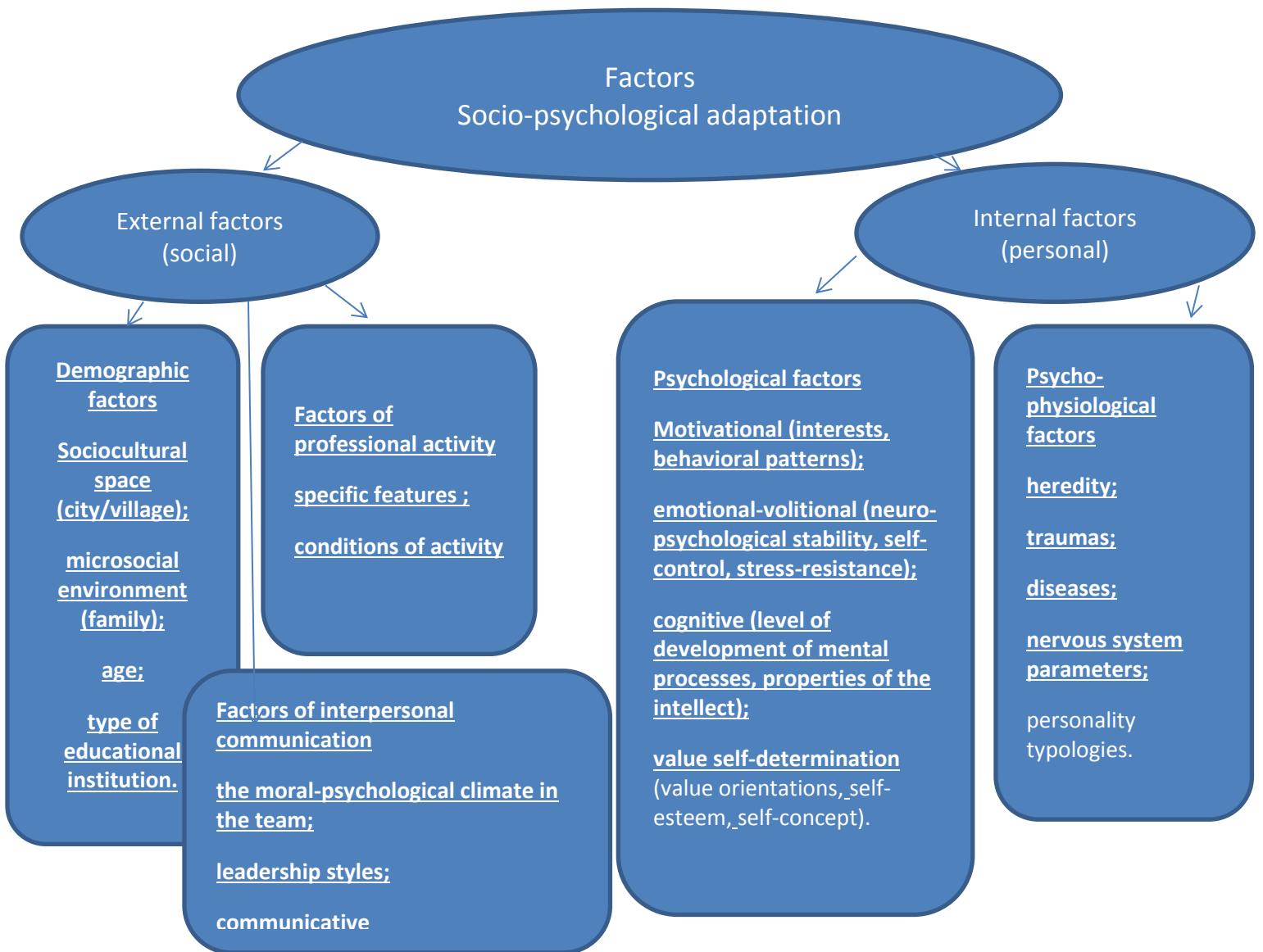
**Table 1: Research areas of the phenomenon of socio-psychological adaptation**  
**[developed by the author].**

Research	direction process	process result
Functionalism	The process of adapting to a new environment	-
Psychoanalysis	The process of changing personality and environment	Adapted person
Neo-behaviorism	The process of changing social relationships	-
Interactionism -	-	General Effective Adaptation
Humanism	Adaptation as a process of actualization	Functioning person
Existentialism	Adaptation as the Process of Finding Meaning in Life	-

"Social adaptation" emphasizes the study of adaptive changes that occur in society. "Mental adaptation" studies the adaptive changes in a person's psychophysiological system, in which the optimal provision of a person's mental activity occurs. "Socio-psychological adaptation" reveals the interaction of a person with the social environment in the process of which the assimilation of norms, values and traditions of the society in which the individual lives occurs. J.G. Senokosov gave his understanding of the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts to military service - "the process of choosing such behavior strategies and communication forms that allow to coordinate expectations of participants in the current adaptation situation in terms of matching or mismatching the basic values of the individual and the military collective" [23]. The degree to which a person has mastered all the norms and values of the group, on the one hand, and the satisfaction of his personal and sociogenic needs, on the other hand, shows the level of a person's "adaptation" in society.

It was found that socio-psychological adaptation is a powerful stimulus for personal development, and its success depends on the level of development of individual-personal characteristics of a particular individual. Combination of some personal characteristics in a single construct, form "personal adaptive potential" this property of the personality, on which depend the

limits of adaptive capabilities of the person, it is formed during life and depends on the age periodization of personal development. In the study of adaptation potential, we are impressed by the views of A.G. Maklakov, who includes the following personal features in the adaptation potential: neuro-psychological stability, self-esteem, sense of social support, level of personality conflict and social communication experience [18, p. 16-24]. Socio-psychological adaptation is formed gradually and is the result of the interaction of various combinations of external and internal factors.



**Pic.1. Factors of socio-psychological adaptation [developed by the author]**

Internal factors include a significant number of personal dispositions, which are associated with individual personality traits, the development of which involves the formation of the adaptive potential of the individual and the manifestation of successful adaptation to a wide range of social environment conditions. External factors are associated with the influence of social determinants, the impact of which either promote or hinder the formation of the adaptive potential of the person. The theoretical analysis carried out gives us an opportunity to present schematically our vision of the structural relationship between the above factors and in this context highlight some specifics inherent in the army environment (Fig.1).

Socio-psychological adaptation is a multidimensional and complex process of readjustment of the physiological, psychological, and social components of a recruit's life activity to the conditions of the army environment. Army conditions, are external disadaptive factors, including specific, professional features of the environment and interpersonal interaction in military teams according to military regulations and clear subordination. According to A.S. Shapeev life contradictions of adolescence and the need to adapt to new conditions of life provoke such states as: anxiety, apathy, inadequate self-esteem, protest, which together can lead to the formation of destructive behavior [25 p. 250-255]. The inability to meet many needs in the army conditions, typical for the age period of conscripts, generates psychological tension and frustration, which leads to difficulties in the adaptation of the latter [27, p.85-88]. It is at the adaptation stage that personality traits play a special role, which promote or on the contrary retard the process of adaptation to army conditions. Theoretical analysis of numerous researchers allowed us to identify and present in the table a theoretical model of personality characteristics of the adapted and maladapted personality of a recruit.

**Tab. 2. Peculiarities of personality characteristics of an adapted and maladapted recruit's personality**

<b>Psychological characteristics of the personality</b>	
<b>Adapted personality of the conscript</b>	<b>deadapted personality of the conscript</b>
Neuropsychological stability	Neuropsychological instability
Adequate self-assessment	Low self-esteem, insecurity, shyness
The Positive Self Concept	The Negative Self Concept
Low conflict level	Emotional rigidity, high level of conflict,
Stress Resistance	Expressed aggression

Orientation to ethical and moral norms	A low level of moral normativity
Well-developed communication skills	Presence of some character accentuations, depressive state, withdrawal, tearfulness
Internal locus of control	External locus of control
Motivation and satisfaction with military service	Reduced motivation for military duty
In behavioral patterns - willingness to take on a new role, constructive relationships in the team	In behavioral patterns-unstable relationships, suicidal behavior, use of somatic symptoms
Positive relationship with peers and unit commander	Difficulties in establishing interpersonal communication in the unit

Psychological, individual-personal characteristics of the adapted and disadapted personality constitute a spectrum of some features of emotional, motivational, cognitive and social spheres of the recruit's personality.

The success of adaptation changes depends on the formation of certain individual-personal characteristics of a recruit, which form an integral construct - personal adaptation potential. The study of socio-psychological factors (internal and external) determining the formation of adaptive potential will allow us to identify and compare those personal and social characteristics of conscripts in the personality structure which condition successful adaptation. As a result, we will be able to optimize socio-psychological adaptation by developing and implementing programs for the formation of certain personality traits, which will lead to the successful adaptation of conscripts to army conditions and improve the quality of the combat potential of the National Army.

The second chapter "**Empirical research of social-psychological adaptation**" designates the purposes, tasks and stages of the fact-finding experiment. The methods of research are described, and its results are also presented.

In this part of the experimental research the following **particular hypotheses** were put forward:

1. the adaptation of conscripts is determined by the influence of factors of socio-demographic nature (unfavorable environment where the individual grew up and was brought up, low level of education);

2. difficulties in adaptation are caused by characteristic features of the conscripts' personality (character accentuations, neuropsychological instability, low level of self-esteem, motivation and stress-resistance);

3. socio-personal competencies of commanders are determined by specifics of military service in the army, manifested in prevalence of authoritarian (directive) leadership style and in the choice of competition (coercion) as the main strategy of behavior in conflict situations.

Based on the hypothesis, the following **tasks** are set:

1. to construct a generalized socio-demographic profile reflecting the social characteristics of conscripts through the analysis of socio-demographic data for the recruitment period 2010-2020;

2. on the basis of the results of the socio-psychological research, to identify the factors of socio-demographic character that influence the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts;

3. To identify personal characteristics of conscripts (character accentuation, neuro-psychological stability, self-esteem, motivation, and stress-resistance) that determine successful adaptation to various army situations;

4. to study the peculiarities of commanders' socio-personal competencies in the army environment.

#### **Characteristics of the samples**

To implement the socio-demographic study, we used personal data of conscripts who were drafted into the army in the period 2010-2020. The total sample size of the above study was 23766 conscripts. Age range: 18-25 years old.

To implement the socio-psychological study (2018), the total sample size was 302 conscripts (age range: 18-24 years) and 20 contract servicemen holding the position - platoon, company commander (age range: 21-26 years).

Statistical packages SPSS 22.0 and Excel were used for data processing

The following methods were used in the ascertaining experiment:

-questionnaire;

-multilevel personality questionnaire (MLQ) "Adaptability" by A. G. Maklakov and S. V. Chermyanin (1993);

- Abbreviated Multifactor Personality Questionnaire (SMOL), adapted by V. P. Zaitsev, V. N. Kozulya (1994);

- questionnaire "Assessment of neuro-psychological stability Prognoz-1" by V.Y. Rybnikov (1985);

- S.V. Kovalev's "Self-Esteem Determination" questionnaire (1991);

- A.A. Rean's method "Motivation of Success and Fear of Failure" (2003);
- Projective technique "Man in the rain" by E. Romanova and T. Sytko (1992);
- "Self-assessment of management style" technique by E.P. Ilyin (2004);
- Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann (1973), "Determining Ways to Manage Conflicts" methodology.

Based on the objectives of the socio-demographic study, we analyzed a summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of conscripts from the recruitment period 2010-2020 (23766 conscripts) by the following criteria: family typology (complete/incomplete), place of residence (village, city), and the education of the recruit. Examining the data of the questionnaires for each criterion, we would like to note that the age range of our sample varies from 18-25 years old conscripts from rural areas (the average figure for the period 2010-2020 is 74%) compared to urban areas (the average figure for the period 2010-2020 is 26%), most of them have an average educational level. The results of our study show that the majority of conscripts (43%) are young men who have completed gymnasium education, (38%) conscripts with secondary vocational education. The number of conscripts drafted after the 12th grade is 12%. Analyzing the influence of family typology (complete/incomplete), we observe a growing trend of incomplete families, in which the conscripts were brought up. Thus, for the period 2010-2020, the average rate of conscripts who grew up and were raised in incomplete families is 30%.

Socio-psychological study of conscripts (2018). Analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (302 conscripts) shows that most conscripts (97% - 293 people) enlisted in the army aged 18-20 years old live in rural areas (77% - 233 people) and graduated from grammar school (48% - 145 people) or secondary vocational education (40% - 121 people). A fairly large percentage of the conscripts (41% of 124 persons) in this sample grew up and were raised in single-parent families.

An analysis of psychological characteristics made it possible to determine general tendencies in the personality profile of the conscripts called up for military service. The processing and analysis of the data obtained made it possible to identify 41% (126 persons) of the conscripts with various accentuated characteristic features of personality. The largest number of conscripts was identified with personality profiles reflecting the characteristics of stenotic (35% - 19 persons) and mixed (25% - 36 persons) types of response, characterized by the prevalence of excitable traits and pronounced activity of counteraction to the influence of the army environment.

Analyzing the manifestations of neuropsychological stability, we conclude that the majority of conscripts 42% (128 people) have average indicators of the level of manifestation of neuropsychological stability, and the largest number of conscripts 51% (154 people) have an average level of stress resistance. Low indices were noted in 31% (94 persons) - these are those servicemen who have great difficulty in overcoming difficulties and cannot tolerate emotional and volitional stresses. Perceptions of the development of adaptive potential showed that half of the conscripts, 50% (150 people), had a low level of adaptive potential development. Failure motivation was detected in 32% (95 persons) and low self-esteem in 31% (94 persons) of the subjects.

Spearman rank correlation coefficient was used in order to study statistically the relationship between psychodiagnostic variables. As a result, it was found that the indicators of neuropsychological stability positively correlated with the indicators of character accentuation of conscripts and personal adaptive potential ( $r=0.48$ ), communication abilities ( $r=0.39$ ), self-esteem ( $r=0.45$ ), perception of adverse situation ( $r=0.39$ ) and sociodemographic conditions of development of conscripts ( $r=0.40$ ). We note a strong correlation ( $r=0,72$ ) between the indicators of neuro-psychological stability. A weak level of significance ( $r=0,24$ ), between the indicators of neuro-psychological stability and moral normativity and a moderate negative correlation ( $r=-0,48$ ) between the indicators of motivation and neuro-psychological stability is detected.

One of the tasks of our study was to examine the social and personal competencies of commanders. Thus, analyzing the percentage ratio of the obtained data, we conclude that the largest number of commanders 30% (6 people) in conflict situations resort to such behavior as competition, and the management style of the majority of unit commanders is authoritarian style - 50% (10 people). Thus, the socio-personal competencies of commanders are determined by the specifics of military service in the army. Therefore, in this context, the most effective management style in the army is the authoritarian style, which was found in the largest number of unit commanders we studied. Perhaps when the commander is faced with solving ambiguous tasks in the long term, related to the establishment of trusting relationships between conscripts, the formation of group cohesion and a favorable moral and psychological climate in the team, this type of leadership is not effective enough. As a result, signs of maladaptation of conscripts under the leadership of authoritarian commanders are exacerbated. The prevalence of an authoritarian (directive) leadership style among commanders explains their choice of a strategy of behavior in

a conflict situation - competition (coercion), in which the position of the other is not taken into account. The analysis of interrelationships of socio-personal characteristics of servicemen allowed us to build a hierarchy of the main characteristics of a new recruit that determine the success of socio-psychological adaptation. Thus, motivation ( $r = -0.55$ ) is the first position among all the psychological characteristics we studied, which determine the integral construct - adaptation potential and contribute to effective adaptation. The following characteristic features in the hierarchy of socio-psychological characteristics that contribute to the optimization of socio-psychological adaptation of recruits are determined: neuro-psychological resilience ( $r = 0.48$ ), socio-demographic situation of personality development ( $r = 0.46$ ), self-esteem ( $r = 0.44$ ), stress resistance ( $r = 0.43$ ), the level of development of communicative abilities ( $r = 0.39$ ) and moral normativity ( $r = 0.24$ ). Consequently, effective socio-psychological adaptation is based on constructive motivation to achieve success by recruits at the initial stage of compulsory military service.

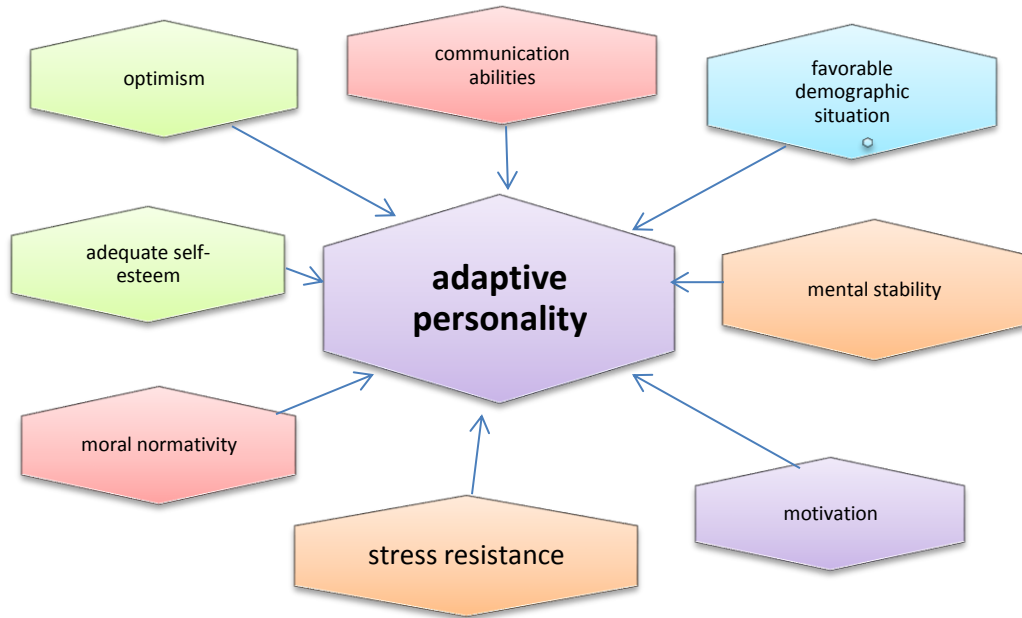


**Fig. 1 Hierarchy of personal characteristics determining the socio-psychological adaptation of a new recruit**

The analysis of correlational interactions between the characteristic features of conscripts allowed us to build a socio-psychological personality profile of the adapted and the de-adapted recruit. Thus, the personality profile of an adapted recruit includes the following characterological features: a complex character without dominance of some of its features (accentuations), formed



personal adaptive potential, neuropsychological stability, adequate self-esteem, motivation, developed communication abilities, moral normativity and stress-resistance.

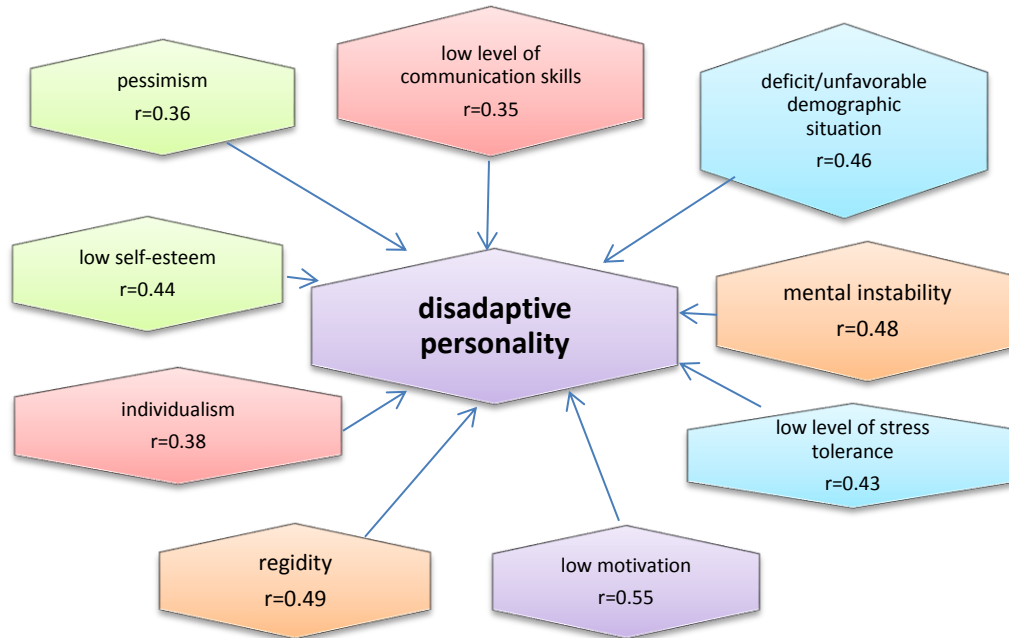


**Figure 2 Personality profile of an adapted conscript**

The manifestation of imbalance in the interaction between army conditions and the characteristic features of conscript leads to a polar adaptation process - maladaptation. The results of our study showed that the disadaptive personality of a conscript has the following socio-personal characteristics: defic

it or unfavorable socio-demographic conditions of personality development, the presence of various accentuated character traits, nervous and mental instability, low levels of self-esteem, motivation, stress-resistance, moral normativity and communication abilities.

Low indicators of the above socio-personal characteristics lead to a lack of personal adaptive potential and, as a consequence, lead to the manifestation of maladaptive behavior of conscripts in the army team.



**Figure 3. Personality profile of a disadapted conscript, with significant statistical values presented**

Behavioral patterns of maladaptive behavior are most often manifested in non-statutory relations and breaches of discipline in the units, in demonstrative and blackmail actions and manifestations of suicidal behavior, reduction of efficiency in professional activities and the occurrence of various kinds of neuropsychiatric diseases [31, p. 3-13; 34, p. 10-17]. In this context, the relevance of our study is confirmed by the presence of the problem in this area, where an important role is played by the possibility of optimizing the social and psychological adaptation of conscripts to the conditions of the army environment.

The third chapter, "**Optimization of the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts through the formation of personality traits of servicepersons**", presents the methodological basis of the forming experiment.

**The goal** of this section of the work was to develop, test and evaluate the effectiveness of the model and program for developing individual-personal characteristics of servicemen. The following **tasks** were outlined in order to successfully implement the goal:

1. To scientifically justify, develop and approve a program aimed at optimizing the conscripts' adaptation potential and developing the commander's socio-personal competence to ensure prevention of maladaptive conditions in the conscripts;

Evaluate the effectiveness of the developed program by conducting repeated psychodiagnostics to compare the results obtained by the experimental and control groups.

Hypothesis of the forming experiment: *it is possible to optimize the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts through the use of a specially designed program of psychological support aimed at developing the individual and personal characteristics of servicemen who determine the level of the adaptation potential of conscripts and the socio-personal competencies of commanders.*

In developing our program of psychological support, we also took into account the general conclusions received in the course of the ascertaining experiment. Thus, the low level of development of some individual-personal features leads to a deficient adaptation potential and maladaptability of a recruit to army conditions. In addition, the established authoritarian leadership style of unit commanders can negatively influence the dynamics of the conscripts' socio-psychological adaptation when establishing subordination relations in the military team.

Thus, these studies led to the idea of creating a program that included both conscripts and their unit commanders. As a result, we developed and tested a special program consisting of 2 blocks where the 1st block was directed at optimizing the adaptive potential of the conscripts and the 2nd block was oriented at the development of the social and personal competence of their commanders through the formation of communicative abilities.

In the group of participants of the first block of the program, conscripts with low indicators of the level of formation of psychological characteristics of the personality were included. Thus, 10 conscripts were selected from a training battalion (302 men) consisting of three subdivisions (100 men in each). In the group of participants of the second block of the program, the commanders of the units in which the conscripts serve were included. Thus, 12 commanders were selected. As a result, taking into account the methodology of the forming experiment and the structure of the program developed by us, it was decided to realize the experiment within each unit. Thus, the experimental and control groups of the forming experiment were formed:

Group 1: experimental group 1, I company, where the program for the development of the individual-personal features of military men was used: the participants of the first block were conscripts (10 people), and the participants of the second block were commanders (6 people);

Group 2: Experimental Group II, company II, where our developed program of the first block was conducted only with the category of conscripts (10 persons);

Group 3 was the control group, company III, where neither the conscripts nor their commanders underwent the program aimed at developing the individual-personality traits of the servicemen.

A statistical comparison of the experimental and control groups of conscripts and their commanders before the beginning of the forming experiment showed their homogeneity according to the constructs under study - the intensity of character accentuations, neuro-psychological stability, stress-resistance, adaptability, self-esteem, motivation, social situation in conscripts, and the leadership style and behavior strategy in conflict situations in unit commanders. A total of 19 psychological training sessions lasting from 90 to 120 minutes were conducted.

To determine the effectiveness of the program for the formation of individual-personal features of servicemen, developed and tested during the forming experiment, control cuts (re-tests) were carried out, which allowed us to evaluate the effectiveness of the work performed.

The obtained psychodiagnostic data of experimental group №1, demonstrate that there are significant differences before and after training on all diagnostic scales. Comparing the obtained indicators of the level of significance (significance level  $p \leq 0,05$ ) for all personal characteristics of conscripts we determine that the most pronounced changes were subjected to: personal adaptive potential ( $W = -2.803$   $p = 0.005$ ), neuro-psychological stability ( $W = -2.805$   $p = 0.005$ ), motivation ( $W = -2.814$   $p = 0.005$ ), self-esteem ( $W = -2.803$   $p = 0.005$ ) and perception of adverse situation ( $W = -2.919$   $p = 0.004$ ).

Thus, we obtained data on positive changes in the individual-personal characteristics of servicepersons in the unit where the training sessions took place and the commanders of these units. The presence of positive changes allowed the conscripts to adapt effectively in the army environment.

Considering the obtained results of experimental group #2, we note that significant differences ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), exist only for some diagnosable characteristics. The results of the SMOL technique identified significant changes on the following scales: rigidity ( $W = -2,366$   $p = 0,018$ ), individualism ( $W = -2,384$   $p = 0,017$ ) and anxiety ( $W = -2,524$   $p = 0,012$ ). Similarly, there is a more intensive shift in the following indicators: personal adaptive potential ( $W = -2,805$   $p = 0,005$ ), neuropsychological stability ( $W = -2,521$   $p = 0,012$ ), motivation ( $W = -2,859$   $p = 0,004$ ) and self-esteem ( $W = -2,499$   $p = 0,012$ ).

Test subjects in experimental group #2, became less anxious, self-confident, and had markedly improved self-esteem and communicative features, but the success of their adaptation depended on the perception of external factors of the situation they were in.

Psychodiagnostic data that were obtained as a result of primary testing and re-testing of the control group show us that there were no significant changes in the characteristic features of the conscripts who did not participate in the program for the development of individual-personal features of servicemen. Thus, we can conclude that the conscripts who did not participate in the formative experiment were not able to change their individual-personal characteristics on their own and adapt effectively to army conditions.

The next step of our study was to compare the average indicators of the experimental and control groups. In the analysis of statistical data conducted by Mann-Whitney U-criterion of experimental group №1 and the control group, statistical differences in the level of the studied attributes measured quantitatively are noted for all diagnosed attributes (significance level  $p \leq 0.05$ ). This suggests that the subjects of the control group, even after one month of active stay in the army, still experience difficulties related to adaptation to the new conditions of life, while the conscripts, participants of the training program, significantly increased the level of their characteristic features affecting the success of adaptation to the army conditions. Analysis of statistical data by Mann-Whitney U-criterion of experimental group №2 and control group shows that significant differences (significance level  $p \leq 0.05$ ) are found not for all, but only for some scales: SMOL technique (supercontrol, emotional lability and anxiety), personal adaptive potential, neuropsychological stability, motivation and perception of unfavorable situation. Thus, we conclude that there are changes in individual-personal characteristics in the unit where only conscripts underwent the developed training program, but in order to achieve our goal, we need additional psychological work also with the commanders of those units where young conscripts undergo military service.

After a month of active interaction between conscripts and their commanders, we repeated psychodiagnostics with the control and experimental group of unit commanders, which showed that there are significant differences before and after the training of the experimental group of commanders on some diagnostic scales. Comparing the obtained indexes of significance level (significance level  $p \leq 0,05$ ) of leadership style and behavior in conflict situations of sub-unit commanders we can determine that such leadership styles as authoritarian ( $W = -2,030$   $p = 0,041$ )

and democratic ( $W=-2,182$   $p=0,026$ ) as well as cooperation ( $W=-2,173$   $p=0,023$ ) as one of behavior strategies in conflict situations have experienced the most significant changes. Thus, the unit commanders who underwent training, in arising conflicts, will more often choose cooperation as one of the ways of interaction in these situations.

With the control group of commanders (K.G.) №2, as well as was conducted re-testing (re-test), which showed that over the period of time between the primary and secondary psychodiagnostic, no significant changes occurred.

The next step of our study was to compare the results of the experimental and control groups of unit commanders, which were obtained after repeated psychodiagnostics. Analyzing the significant statistical differences by Mann-Whitney U-criterion of the experimental and control groups of unit commanders on such characteristics as leadership style and behavior strategies in conflict situations, we note that the most significant results (significance level  $p \leq 0.05$ ) are found on the cooperation scale ( $U=0.005$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Thus, we note that the program for the development of individual-personal features of servicemen, which was conducted with unit commanders, had a beneficial effect on changing the ways of behavior in conflict situations. Also, the result of approbation of the program developed by us was the formation of commander's socio-personal competence in establishing interpersonal relations with conscripts in the conditions of army environment.

### **General conclusions and recommendations**

In accordance with the topic of the doctoral work, the main hypothesis, goals and objectives of the study the following scientific results were obtained:

1. Within the framework of the analysis of theoretical and methodological approaches it was established that socio-psychological adaptation is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon [33, p. 130-134]. The formation of socio-psychological adaptation is determined by both external (social) and internal (personal) factors. The external, social factors under study include: demographic factors - sociocultural space, microsocial environment, age, and type of educational institution, as well as factors of interpersonal communication - social and personal competences of commanders. Internal, studied factors include the level of development of the conscripts' character traits (self-esteem, neuropsychological stability, motivation, character accentuations, stress-resistance). The higher the level of development of these characteristics, the higher the probability of successful socio-psychological adaptation and the greater the range of

environmental factors to which an individual can adapt [34, p.241-247]. Characteristic features of a personality are interrelated and constitute one of the integral characteristics of the mental development of a personality - the personal adaptive potential, which allows to differentiate people by the degree of resistance to the impact of psycho-emotional stressors.

2. The socio-demographic profile of conscripts over the past 11 years helps build an image of the state's defense human resources in a transitional society [30, p. 102-110]. The study of the socio-demographic characteristics of the conscripts fully reflects the situation in the Republic of Moldova.

The results of the experimental work proved to us that social and personal factors influencing the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts to army conditions are closely interconnected with each other.

First, considering the influence of demographic factors, we note that the very age period of adolescence, when young people are drafted into the army, already implies difficulties in the formation of adaptive potential. Thus, according to the statistical data of our study, there is a growing trend in the number of conscripts brought up in single-parent families. The main conscript contingent has gymnasium/vocational education and lives in rural areas, this fact is explained on the one hand by low financial and economic situation of rural families and on the other hand by crisis of educational system. As a result, socially vulnerable and psychologically immature citizens, whose socio-psychological adaptation has not yet been formed, are drafted into the army.

Second, a psychological study of the personality of conscripts shows that most of them show nervous and psychological instability, motivated by possible failure and the experience of negative emotions that affect the manifestation of their imbalanced self-esteem [27, p. 85-88]. That is why every second conscript, getting into an unfamiliar for him army environment, experiences difficulties in adaptation.

Thirdly, the successful adaptation of conscripts is largely determined by external factors of interpersonal communication through the development of socio-personal competencies of military commanders.

4. In the formative part of the study the positive dynamics of the development of all the studied variables in specially created experimental conditions was established. The results of the formative work revealed the possibility to develop the characteristic features of the personality and proved that conscripts adapt effectively to the new conditions of army life in those units where the

program of psychological support for the development of individual-personal features of servicemen was carried out.

The analysis of the scientific results obtained in the doctoral work allows us to conclude that the **hypothesis of the study has been confirmed**, namely, conscripts experience difficulties in adapting to the army conditions of life activity, as their characteristic features forming the basis of adaptation potential are not yet developed. Because of the influence of various external and internal factors, a personality is formed that has difficulty adapting in society, and any change in the social environment leads to an imbalance in the psychological balance of regulatory mechanisms, which leads to the maladaptation of young soldiers in army conditions. In this connection, the work conducted with the category of maladapted conscripts on the development of their personal characteristics contributes to the formation of their adaptation potential as the basis for successful adaptation to army conditions.

#### Recommendations for organizing the process of socio-psychological adaptation

According to the results of the study, the recommendations were based on the factors (social and personal) that affect the formation of the adaptation potential of conscripts. Thus, we conditionally divided them into 2 groups: the first group included the recommendations aimed at positive changes in the social aspect of the conscripts, and the second group included those focused on the development of the conscripts' personal features in the army environment.

Recommendations aimed at optimizing the development of the personal characteristics of conscripts.

✓ to improve the psychological support of new conscripts in the following directions: organizational and methodological (planning and organization of the activity of psychological services of the National Army); research (use of psychodiagnostic tools with the purpose of studying the adaptation possibilities of young soldiers and early identification of disadapted conscripts); advisory (use of modern methods of psychological aid in problem situations of soldiers); correctional and developmental (development of the personality of new conscripts).

✓ to orient the activities of military psychologists toward working out and conducting psychological programs aimed at development of value and behavioral standards, self-confidence, adequate self-esteem and self-perception, self-control, communicative traits, choice of behavioral strategies in conflict situations. Teaching methods of self-regulation of psycho-emotional states



and mastering behavioral strategies by young soldiers, in order to prevent negative phenomena in the period of adaptation to the army conditions of life.

Research Perspectives. This study was a definite stage in the study of the problem of socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts to army conditions. The attempt made by us to illuminate all psychological aspects of adaptation does not claim to be complete. In this connection we will allocate the following directions for the further researches on this problem: 1) study of adaptive/disadaptive factors of socio-psychological adaptation of contract servicemen, and students of Alexandru cel Bun Military Academy at the initial stage of military career; 2) study of adaptive/disadaptive mechanisms of socio-psychological adaptation of servicemen, during deployment in the zones of operations of national and international peacekeeping missions.

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## АННОТАЦИЯ

**Дзык Илона. Социально-психологическая адаптации новобранцев к армейским условиям. Диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора психологии, Кишинев, 2023.**

**Структура диссертации.** Работа состоит из введения, трех глав, общих выводов, рекомендаций, библиографии из 283 источников, 3 приложений и насчитывает 140 страниц основного текста, включает 40 таблиц и 24 рисунков. Результаты исследований опубликованы в 14 научных работах.

**Ключевые слова:** социально-психологическая адаптация, дезадаптация, личностные, социальные факторы, армейские условия, личность военнослужащего, новобранец, социально-личностные компетенции командиров.

**Целью исследования** Определение социально-психологических факторов адаптации/дезадаптации новобранцев к условиям армейской среды, а так же разработка, апробирование и оценка эффективности программы, направленной на развитие индивидуально-личностных особенностей военнослужащих.

**Задачи исследования:** выявить и представить теоретическую модель личностных характеристик адаптированной/дезадаптированной личности новобранца; выявить влияние социальных и внутриличностных факторов социально-психологической адаптации; составить социально-демографический портрет новобранца за последние 11 лет; разработать, апробировать и выявить эффективность программы по развитию индивидуально-личностных особенностей военнослужащих, разработать рекомендации для практической деятельности военного психолога в армейском подразделении.

**Новизна и научная оригинальность:** впервые в Республике Молдова было проведено лонгитюдное, психо-социологическое исследование социально-демографического портрета новобранца, а так же проведено научное, теоретико-экспериментальное исследование феномена социально-психологической адаптации новобранцев, проходящих срочную службу в Национальной Армии.

**Решенная в исследовании значимая научная проблема:** основана на определении факторов социально-психологической адаптации, влияющих на уровень сформированности индивидуально-личностных особенностей новобранцев, определяющих успешность их адаптации. А так же, на разработке программы на организационно-методическом уровне профессиональной деятельности психологических служб Национальной Армии, направленной на развитие индивидуально-личностных особенностей военнослужащих, направленной на оптимизацию адаптационного потенциала новобранцев и формирования социально-личностных компетенций командиров.

**Теоретическая значимость** исследования выражается в том, что полученные результаты дополняют, структурируют и конкретизируют научное знание о проблеме социально-психологической адаптации новобранцев к армейским условиям, а так же выявляет теоретико-прикладной профиль личностных характеристик адаптивной/дезадаптивной личности новобранца.

**Практическое значение** состоит в применении полученных знаний в работе военных психологов с целью оптимизации социально-психологической адаптации военнослужащих прибывших на срочную военную службу, а так же ориентации командиров на корректный отбор молодых солдат, рекомендованных для деятельности в экстремальных условиях.

**Внедрение научных результатов:** базовые результаты исследования были внедрены в практическую деятельность военных психологов Национальной Армии Республики Молдова. Основные выводы и рекомендации были включены в тематику Психологического гида деятельности военного психолога в Национальной Армии.

## ADNOTARE

**Dzîc Iona. Adaptarea social-psihologică a militarilor recent încorporați la mediul militar. Teza de doctor, Chișinău, 2023.**

**Structura tezei.** Lucrarea este constituită din introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale, recomandări, 283 de surse bibliografice, anexe, 140 pagini de text principal, 40 tabele și 24 figuri. Rezultatele cercetării sunt publicate în 14 lucrări științifice.

**Cuvinte cheie:** adaptare socio-psihologică, dezadaptare, factori psiho-sociali, mediul militar, militar recent încorporat, recrut, personalitatea militarului.

**Scopul studiului:** determinarea factorilor psiho-sociali ai adaptării/dezadaptării la mediul militar a militarilor recent încorporați, elaborarea și aprobarea experimentală a programului formativ de dezvoltare a caracteristicilor individuale ale militarilor.

**Obiectivele studiului:** elaborarea unui model teoretic al caracteristicilor personale ale personalității adaptive/dezadaptive a militarului recent încorporat; elaborarea portretului socio-demografic al militarului recent încorporat din ultimii 11 ani; identificarea factorilor psiho-sociali ai adaptării la militarii recent încorporați în Armata Națională; elaborarea, aplicarea și evaluarea eficienței programului de eficientizare a procesului de adaptare a tinerilor la mediul militar; elaborarea recomandărilor pentru optimizarea adaptării socio-psihologice a militarului recent încorporat.

**Noutatea și originalitatea științifică:** pentru prima dată în Republica Moldova a fost realizat un studiu longitudinal al profilului socio-demografic al militarului recent încorporat, precum și un studiu experimental al procesului de adaptare socio-psihologică a militarului recent încorporat, care execută serviciu militar în termen în cadrul Armatei Naționale al Republicii Moldova.

**Problema științifică importantă soluționată** constă în identificarea factorilor psiho-sociali, care influențează la nivelul de formare a caracteristicilor individuale tinerilor încorporați, determinând succesul adaptării acestora, precum și elaborarea unui program la nivel organizatoric și metodologic al activității profesionale a serviciilor psihologice ale Armatei Naționale, care vizează dezvoltarea caracteristicilor individuale ale militarilor, având drept scop optimizarea potențialului de adaptare a tinerilor încorporați și formarea competențelor socio-personale ale comandanților.

**Semnificația teoretică** a cercetării este exprimată prin faptul că rezultatele obținute completează, structurează și concretizează cunoștințele științifice despre problema adaptării social-psihologice a tinerilor încorporați la mediu militar și conturează un profil teoretico-aplicativ al caracteristicilor personale ale personalității adaptive/dezadaptive a tânărului încorporat.

**Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării:** constă în posibilitatea aplicării cunoștințelor obținute în activitatea psihologilor militari în vederea optimizării adaptării socio-psihologice a militarilor încorporați pentru executarea serviciului militar în termen, precum și în orientarea comandanților în vederea selectării corecte a tinerilor soldați recomandați pentru activități în condiții extreme.

**Implementarea rezultatelor științifice:** rezultatele principale ale cercetării au fost implementate în activitățile metodologice ale psihologilor militari ai Armatei Naționale a Republicii Moldova. Concluziile generale și recomandările tezei de doctor, au fost incluse în Ghidul activității psihologice în Armata Națională.



## ANNOTATION

**Dzic Ilona. Socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts to military conditions, Psychology PhD Paper, Chisinau, 2023.**

**The structure** of the thesis. The paper includes an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, recommendations, 283 bibliographical references, 140 pages of main text, as well as 40 tables and 24 figures. The research results were published in 14 scientific papers.

**Key words:** socio-psychological adaptation, potential of adaptation, desadaptation, social role, psychological, environmental, educational factors, military conditions, recruit, social and personal competencies of commanders.

**The goal of this research** is a theoretical and practical study of the socio-psychological adaptation of conscripts to the conditions of military life, as well as the development, approval and evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme to streamline the process of adapting conscripts to the military environment.

**Objectives of the study:** to identify and present a theoretical model of personal characteristics of the adapted/disadapted personality of a conscript; to identify the influence of social and intrapersonal factors of socio-psychological adaptation; to compile a socio-demographic portrait of a conscript for the last 11 years; to develop, test and reveal the effectiveness of the program to improve the adaptive abilities of conscripts and the formation of an effective leadership style of unit commanders, to develop recommendations for the development of a conscript's adaptive abilities.

**Novelty and scientific originality:** which is based on the definition of social and psychological factors influencing the process of adaptation/disadaptation of recruits, as well as on the need to develop a special program aimed at the development of certain characterological features of personality, which will determine the successful adaptation of recruits to army conditions.

**Topical scientific issue resolved in this:** is based on determining the factors of socio-psychological adaptation that influence the level of formation of individual-personal characteristics of conscripts and determine the success of their adaptation. As well as on the development of a program at the organizational and methodological level of professional activities of psychological services of the National Army, aimed at the development of personal characteristics of servicemen, at optimizing the adaptation potential of conscripts and the formation of socio-personal competencies of commanders.

**Scientific significance** of the research is expressed in the fact, that the results obtained complement, structure and concretize the scientific knowledge about the problem of the socio-psychological adaptation of recruits to military conditions.

**The practical relevance** is to apply the obtained knowledge in the work of military psychologists in order to optimize the socio-psychological adaptation of servicemen arriving for compulsory military service, as well as the orientation of commanders to the correct selection of young soldiers recommended for activities in extreme conditions.

**Implementation of scientific results:** the basic results of the research were implemented in the practical activity of military psychologists of the National Army of the Republic of Moldova. The main conclusions and recommendations were included in the Psychological Guide of Military Psychologist's Activity in the National Army.

**INTERNATIONAL INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY OF MOLDOVA**

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**DZIC ILONA**

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