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EVIDENCES PROVING VALIDITY OF INDICATORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND ASSISTANCE DURING THE SPECIAL TRAINING COURSES FOR OFFICERS

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ABSTRACT

As part of the program for psychological assistance and training, an extended and complex battery of tests was applied to the selected officers before and during special training courses they attended.

The following procedures were used as a source of criterion-indicatorsfor success, at the end of the course:

- the final marks given by the military instructors and teachers for the specialty subjects (evaluation by supervisor ratting);
- the results of standardized sociometric (SOCIO) and peer inter-evaluation tests (INTER-PI) we developed, which provided multiple criterion-indicators for interpersonal relations and level of evaluation by peers based on various interpersonal and task criterion (self-evaluation, peer inter-evaluation);
- evaluation by the psychologist (assessment by expert).

15 out 19 indicators for mental tests and 39 out of 40 indicators for personality tests have created a significant ($p<.05$) correlation with the criterion-data (determined by the help of Spearman correlation method).

Validity of personality tests was enhanced and coefficients for inter-correlation with selected criterion-indicators reached values ranging from .40 to .76.

The good evaluations performed by the psychologist added to the high final marks represent the best predictive indicators for the promotion of the officers having graduated specific training courses.

In order to calculate the terms of multiple regression equation, research should be continued by an additional validation (confirmation) study because classes of officer-students represent the small group type (less than 30 students).

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INTRODUCTION

The military activity in operational-intelligence area is a special, complex and stressing activity requiring high mental and personality qualities, as published studies and papers on the topic show.

One of the operational methods used to establish the predictive value of the psychological exam for the selection of officers for special (operational-intelligence) tasks is the study of validity of indicators obtained in psychological tests compared to criterion-indicators regarding performances and behavior of the selected officers during an advanced specific training course.

Research was part of the program for psychological assistance and training we implemented during the 9 month post-academic military intelligence course. After teaching the psychological topics (6 topics in 45 hours) and after the tests are completed, the psychologist, in his capacity of military instructor, gives a final mark representing the way he evaluates student's knowledge about the topic. The final mark for psychological training is taken into account together the final marks obtained for specialty knowledge when in the military intelligence course final graduation marks calculated.

OBJECT AND METHOD

The psychological examination meant to select officers who are to attend the 9 month post-academic military intelligence course lasts 2 days. In the first day, the collective exams proceed and take 8 hours and in the second day individual examinations take place – 2 hour for each candidate.

Selection base is assured by recruiting twice or 3 times more candidates than the 25 available places in a lot. The candidates belong to all arms and specialties, are 27 to 45 years old and graduated military or civil higher education schools. Besides psychological examination, they go through a knowledge exam and a foreign language (English, French, German or Russian) exam. 2 student groups (2000 and 2001, N=42) were used for research. The same extended and complex batteries of tests were used for all of them, both before and during the course.

During the psychological training and assistance we provided, we applied standardized sociometric (with a form we developed) – SOCIO - and peer inter-evaluation – INTER-PI tests, all along the course and at optimal intervals. The SOCIO test periodically investigates nature of interpersonal relations and provides partial and global indicators for students' integration in the group (intensity of collective positive and negative evaluation, the total and mutual number of positive and negative evaluation relations, sociometric and reputation state of each member of the group, the positive and negative features indicated by the group as well as the individual indicators for perception of positive and negative relations in the groups' interpersonal space, etc.). The peer inter-evaluation test INTER – PI challenge group members to evaluate themselves and the others, using marks on the scale from 1 to 9, based on the criterion of their performances as far as their training (in the main specialty subjects) is concerned: operational training level, intelligence training level, discipline, physical-sportive aptitude level, creativity, theoretical knowledge, activism, etc. - as well as based on behavior in interpersonal relations and professional conduct such as: agreeableness, credibility, self-improvement spirit, emotional self-control, cooperation, tendency to dominate, diplomacy, courage, sociability, tenacity, etc. Indicators of self-evaluation and collective evaluation are thus obtained. By the help of automated data processing program – PC – derived indicators are obtained: the difference between self-evaluation and collective evaluation, dissonance or consonance of inter-evaluations for each member of the group and for each feature or criterion taken into account for self- and inter-evaluation. The results or individual raw scores obtained for both laboratory and standardized personality tests as a result of investigation of interpersonal relations within the group were transformed into T standard marks for the group in order to diminish errors which may appear when non-standard scores are used.

The initial extended and complex psychological test battery, used before and during the course for selected officer specific training as part of the program for psychological training and assistance, included:

9 general and specific mental aptitude tests applied in a limited time as follows:

1. GI_1-GI_4 – non-verbal general intelligence (N-GI) and verbal general intelligence (V-GI) tests, translated and adapted by us in the Romanian language, after the Belgian psychologist Azzopardi G. (1993) – 30 minutes x 2 parallel versions;

2. DA – Prague distributive attention, 16 minutes;

3. CA – concentrated attention (a test taken into account for calculation and tiebreak) – 5 minutes;

4. VAM – verbal-aural memory, our own version – 7 minutes;

5. GVA – general verbal aptitudes, our own version with its subtests (GVS_1 – synonyms – 2 minutes; GVA_2 – endings – 10 minutes; GVA_3 – sentence logical arrangement – 8 minutes; GVA_4 – proverb analysis – 10 minutes; GVA_5 – foreign language decoding – 10 minutes; GVA_6 – essay analysis -10 minutes).

6. EWCI – resistance to word-color interference, resistance to stress test, STROOP – 16 minutes;

7. RIST – resistance to information stress test translated and adapted by the Romanian psychologist M Toma after W. Bernard and I. Leopold (1988) – 5 minutes;

8. PI – psychological intuition test translated and adapted by the Romanian psychologist P Popescu – 20 minutes;

9. AVT – associative-verbal test, applied in individual version to obtain 3 indicators: verbal reaction spontaneity (VRS), verbal reaction consistency (VRC), immediate memory of association (IMA); test adapted after the Romanian psychologist V Ceausu – 30 minutes.

12 personality tests:

1. FPI – G version – Freiburg multi-phased questionnaire, after Fahemberg, Sely and Hampel, 212 items, with 12 scales: nervousness (N_1), aggressiveness (A_2), depression state (D_3), emotional state (E_4), sociability (S_5), calmness (C_6), tendency to dominate (TD_7), inhibition (I_8), open behavior (O_9), extravert behavior (E_{10}), emotional instability (I_{11}), masculinity (M_{12}) – 30 minutes.

2. 14PF – multi-phased questionnaire with 14 scales, 173 items, adapted by us from Russian, after Melnikov and Iampolski (1985); it investigates the following factors: neurotic behavior (N_1), psychotic behavior (P_2), depression (D_3), conscientiousness (C_4), impulsiveness (Im_5), general activism (A_6), timidity (Ti_7), sociability (S_8), esthetic sensitiveness (Se_9), femininity (Fe_{10}), psychic instability (Pi_{11}), asocial behavior (As_{12}), introvert behavior (I_{13}), and sensitivity (S_{14}).

3. T – temperament questionnaire translated and adapted by us from Russian, after Rusalov (1989), 105 items and 9 scales: energetic potential for activity (EPA), energetic potential for communicating (EPC), plasticity in activity (PA), plasticity in communication (PC), activity tempo (AT), communication tempo (CT), emotional behavior in activity (EA), emotional behavior in communication (EC) and tendency to lie (L) – about 20 minutes.

4. IE – internalism/externalism questionnaire after Allan and Potkey (and they adapted it after Rotter), including 25 alternative items (a, b) – 10 minutes.

5. IE-CT – internalism /externalism and resistance to rumors (R) questionnaire, including 56 items, adapted by us after the Romanian psychologist S Chelcea;

6. CHAR – character investigation questionnaire after Gaston Berger, 90 items and 9 scales: emotiveness (E), activity (A), resonance (R), conscientiousness depth (D), Mars spirit (M), avidity (A), sensorial interests (SI), tenderness (TE) and intellectual hobbies (IH) – 15 minutes.

7 TEQ – temporal experience perception questionnaire, including 80 items, adapted by the Romanian psychologist V Preda (1978); it investigates the following factors: rigidity (1R), flexibility (1F), discontinuity (2D), continuity (2C), delay (3D), programming (3P), instability (4I), stability (4S) – about 20 minutes.

8 MBTI – Meyer-Briggs preference type indicator, G version, including 126 items; it was translated and adapted by us from English, after authors' book; it includes scales for the following types: introvert (I), extravert (E), sensorial (S), intuitive (N), feeling (F), thinking (T), perceptive (P), and judging (J); their combination results in 16 personality types (cognitive styles) – 25 minutes.

9. LBA – leader behavior analysis test; it was translated and adapted by us after the American authors K. Blanchard, R. Hambleton, D. Forsyth, D. Zigarmi (1991); it comprises 20 problem-situations and provides data about the preference for 4 leadership styles: High Directive and Low Supportive Behavior (S_1); Low Directive and High Supportive Behavior (S_2); High Directive and High Supportive Behavior (S_3); Low Directive and Low Supportive Behavior (S_4); 2 of the indicators are synthetic and they investigate: effectiveness (Efs) and – flexibility of style (Fxs) – 25 minutes.

10. L.H. – loyalty/honesty test; it is collectively applied and it provides standard conditions for "*bringing about*" a tendency to dishonesty and "*deception*" – 25 minutes.

11. R – resistance to frustration projective test; it is adapted after Rosenzweig and formed by us for collective application; it includes 24 sketches with answers from which you can choose – about 20 minutes; results are

obtained for the following indicators: group conformity indicator (G.C.R.), extra-punitive reaction (E), intra-punitive (I), punitive (M), obstacle domination (OD), ego defense mechanisms (ED), need persistence (NP).

12. Anamnesis record and psychological interview investigates the biographical data in order to qualitatively interpret them based on the psychometrical data.

We used the following criterion-data to validate all test- and non-test information:

1. **evaluation based on marks by the military instructors** as far as the main specialty topics are concerned and final graduation mark obtained at course – 7 indicators in total (supervisor ratting);
2. **INTER-PI standardized test indicators** - 20 criteria and 80 indicators (self-ratting and peer ratting);
3. **SOCIO – standardized sociometric test indicators** – 12 indicators (peer ratting, interpersonal perception);
4. **evaluation based on marks by the psychologist** as far as psychological training is concerned – 3 indicators (expert ratting).

Given that the class-groups include less than 30 students, Spearman method, correlation based on rank or correlation among classifications was used to achieve inter-correlations.

Only the validity indicators for risk threshold $p<.05$ were taken into account.

HYPOTHESES

H1. The psychological evaluation and assistance during the officer specific training courses may have both a formative and a diagnostic and predictive role as to the success of training process and the interpersonal behavior of graduates, provided that evidences showing the aptitude and personality test validity will increase.

H2. Improvement of validity of test-indicators used for psychological evaluation of the officers attending such specific training courses is possible by solving the issue of success criteria. It may be achieved by standardization of some methods and procedures for group interpersonal relation investigation (peer inter-evaluation test – INTER-PI and sociometric test – SOCIO) as well as by application by instructors and experts (evaluation by supervisor ratting) of partial and global evaluation indicators.

H3. As far as the officer specific training courses are concerned, the number and intensity of personality test validity evidences compared to aptitude test validity evidence is likely to increase and therefore to bring about an increase in predictive value of the psychological evaluation both for selection of officers for such courses and their future promotion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Calculation of simple linear correlation (Spearman rank based correlation method) between the 59 tests-indicators (provided by 20 aptitude and personality tests) and the 124 criterion-indicators (104 provided by INTER-PI, 12 by SOCIO and 8 by evaluation marks given by instructors) resulted in the validation of 54 tests-indicators, for a $p<0.05$. The same psycho-diagnosis and criterion-data collecting methods were used for 2 groups of students, in 2 successive years (2000 and 2001), 42 subjects in total. Validity related to criterion coefficients of psycho-diagnosis test battery covered the values ranging from $r=0.42$ to $r=0.72$. Coefficients of inter-correlation of criterion-indicators reached sometimes values of up to $r=0.90$ (proving a high construct validity between some external criteria). The maximum numbers of criterion-anchors (statistically significant correlation coefficients) for a test-indicator are as many as 6 (the score for the general verbal aptitude test– GVA-T, the score for lie scale– L, from temperament questionnaire– T). Also, the maximum numbers of test-indicators validated by one and the same criterion-indicator (operational aptitude level) reach the value 10 (9 test-indicators are established by personality tests) - see *Table 1*.

TABLE 1: ***Test-Correlates or Predictors for Operational Aptitude Criterion-Indicator Level (N=42)***

No	Test-Correlates Predictors	Test and Predictor Symbol	*r*	*p*
1.	Feeling Decision Style	M.B.T.I.-F	-.60	.001
2.	Timidity	14 P.F.-Ti_7	-.57	.005
3.	Thinking Decision Style	M.B.T.I.-T	.55	.005
4.	Internalism	I.E.-I	.49	.02
5.	Effectiveness Behavior Style	L.B.A.-Ef.S.	.49	.02
6.	Tendency to Dominate	F.P.I.-$T.D._7$	-.45	.05
7.	Loyalty and Honesty	L.H.	.45	.05
8.	General Verbal Aptitude	$G.V.A._6$	.44	.05
9.	Plasticity in Activity	T-P.A.	.44	.05
10.	Mars Spirit	C.A.R.-M.S.	.42	.05

APTITUDE TESTS

15 test-indicators out of the 19 indicators resulting from 9 aptitude tests were validated; they considerably correlate with the 26 criterion-indicators (23 – INTER –PI, 2 – evaluation marks given by instructors, 1 – SOCIO). Validity coefficients have ranged from r =.44 to r =.66 and the percentage of validated indicators out of the total number of those verified was about 70%. Table 2 includes the most significant 8 predictors of aptitude test compared to soft criterion-indicators of success we used for psychological assistance and evaluation of students attending post-academic specific training course.

TABLE 2: ***APTITUDE TESTS AND THEIR CRITERION-CORRELATES (N=42)***

No	Test/Indicator Symbol	Psychic Attribute	*r*	*p*	Method /Procedure	Validity Criterion
1.	VAM	Verbal-Aural Memory	.66	.001	INTER-PI	Collaborative Spirit
			.50	.05	INTER-PI	Dissimulate Capacity
2.	RWCI	Resistance to Word-Color Interference	.62	.005	INTER-PI	Collaborative Spirit, *Self Ratting*
3.	GVA-T	General Verbal Aptitudes-Total Score	.61	.005	INTER-PI	Collaborative Spirit, *Self Ratting*
			.60	.005	INSTRUCTOR RATTING	Foreign Language Mark
			.52	.02	INSTRUCTOR RATTING	Final Mean Graduation Mark
4.	PIT	Psychological Intuition	.59	.01	INTER-PI	Tendency to Dominate, *Self Ratting*
			.53	.02	INTER-PI	Collaborative Spirit, *Self Ratting*
5.	DA	Distributive Attention	.55	.02	INTER-PI	Emotional Self-Control
			.53	.02	INTER-PI	Dissimulate Capacity
			.51	.02	INTER-PI	Courage
6.	GI-T	General Intelligence Total Score	.52	.02	INTER-PI	Tendency to Dominate
			.46	.02	INTER-PI	Negative Chooses of Collective Members
7.	AVT-VRS	Verbal Reaction Spontaneity	.50	.05	INTER-PI	Dissimulate Capacity
8.	GVA-6	Essay Analysis Aptitude	.44	.05	INTER-PI	Operational Intelligence Level

The constructs on which measurement of criteria-variables was based – evaluation, self-evaluation and inter-evaluation of behavior and school performances in the specific interpersonal context – explain, in our opinion, the high value of r >.40 of coefficients indicating correlation between aptitude test results and behavior indicators that may be observed for this category of officer-students. Soft methods and procedures used to obtain criterion-data are applied to complex behaviors "*contaminated*" by attitude factors and considered to be synthetic features of the behavior and personality. In the military groups in special units, personality factors seem to play a more and more important role in the professional and inter-personal conduct.

PERSONALITY TESTS

39 indicators out of the 40 indicators obtained by the help of 11 eleven personality tests were validated covering 84 criterion-indicators (65 INTER-PI indicators, 11 indicators of evaluation by instructors and 8 SOCIO indicators). Validity coefficients range from r =.42 to r =.76 which indicates an increase in their number and intensity compared to aptitude test indicators. Out of the total numbers of personality test indicators verified by the help of established external criteria, 90% were validated during our research, meaning an increase of 20% compared to aptitude test validity.

The fact is surprising given that the behavior of the same person changes generally according to the situation. This is why some authors concluded that the value of personality test validity coefficient, when the tests are used to predict an action, cannot be higher than .40 (Funder, 1983).

Table 3 shows the most powerful 13 predictors (r >.50) of personality tests taking into account the criterion-indicators used for psychological assistance and evaluation of the students.

TABLE 3: ***PERSONALITY TESTS AND THEIR CRITERION-CORELATES (N=42)***

No	Test/Indicator Symbol	Personality Attribute	*r*	*p*	Method /Procedure	Validity Criterion
1.	T-EPA	Energetic Potential for Activity	.76	.001	INTER-PI	Dissonance among Inter-Evaluations on **Diplomat** Criterion
			.73	.001	INTER-PI	Dissonance among Inter-Evaluations on **Orderly** Criterion
2.	TEQ-2C	Continuity in Activity Planning	-.67	.001	SOCIO	Positive Choices Number Obtained in Collective
			-.56	.01	INTER-PI	Agreeableness
3.	T-L	Tendency to Lie	.67	.001	INTER-PI	Self Ratting Level on **Creative** Criterion
4.	TEQ-2D	Discontinuity in Activity Planning	.63	.005	Instructor Ratting	Mean Graduation Mark of Final Paper
			.57	.01	INTER-PI	**Creative** Criterion
5.	T-AT	Activity Tempo	.62	.005	INTER-PI	Tendency to Overvalue Owen Physical-Sportive Skill Level in Self Ratting
6.	MBTI-F	Feeling Decision Style	-.60	.005	INTER-PI	Operational Aptitude Level
7.	LBA-S_1	High Directive and Low Supportive Leadership Style	-.55	.01	Instructor Ratting	Mean Graduation Mark of Final Paper
			-.54	.02	Instructor Ratting	Final Mean Graduation Mark
8.	IE-I	Internalism	.53	.02	INTER-PI	Courageous
9.	LBA-S_3	High Directive and High Supportive Style	.52	.02	Instructor Ratting	Mean Graduation Mark of Final Paper
10.	TEQ-3D	Delay	-.52	.02	SOCIO	Sociometric Status Level
11.	IE-CT-R	Resistance to Rumor	.52	.02	Instructor Ratting	Final Mean Graduation Mark
12.	TEQ-1F	Flexibility	.50	.02	SOCIO	Sociometric Status Level
13.	R-M	Impunitive Reaction to Frustration	.50	.02	SOCIO	Prestige Status Level

Table 3 shows the high values of validity coefficients for the 13 personality features diagnosed by the help of 6 questionnaire type test (T, T.E.Q., I.E., I.E.-C.T., M.B.T.I. and L.B.A.) and for a projective test (R=Rosensweig) and the criterion type individual values obtained by application of the standardized peer inter-evaluation tests (INTER-PI) and sociometric tests (SOCIO) and evaluation by instructors (mark for written final paper, final mean mark).

A high dissonance among inter-evaluations for **diplomatic person** (r =.76) and **disciplined person** (r =.73) criterion is recorded for the officers who describe themselves, by temperament questionnaire (T), as having a **highly energetic potential for activity** and those officers tend to arouse controversy in the group inter-evaluations for these criteria. Also, those who describe themselves, based on time perception questionnaire – T.E.Q, as having a feeling of continuity in activity planning, enjoy a low number of positive choices in the group when sociometric test is applied (SOCIO for r = -.67) and receive low scores for **agreeable** criterion when peer inter-evaluation test (INTER-PI for r = -.56) is applied. Also, those officers who describe themselves, based on the same test, as having a feeling of **discontinuity** in activity planning (2D) are likely to have high chances to receive high scores as far as evaluation of course final paper by the instructors (evaluation committee, r =.63) is concerned, and high scores as far as peer evaluation for **creative person** criterion (r =.57) is concerned. Officers obtaining high scores for lie scale of temperament questionnaire – T (r =.67) tend also to obtain high scores for self-evaluation as far as **creative** criterion is concerned. For the same temperament questionnaire, the students describing themselves as having high activity tempo tend to overrate physical aptitudes criterion of the peer inter-evaluation test (INTER-PI, r =.62). The persons obtaining high score for internalism-externalism questionnaire (I.E.-I) are very likely to be perceived and receive high scores for **courageous** criterion (r =.53). The students describing themselves as having a mainly feeling decision style (M.B.T.I.- F) are very likely to obtain

low scores at inter-evaluation test for **operational aptitudes** criterion (r = -.60). The persons giving, at the behavior style analysis test, answers that include them in **high directive and low supportive behavior style** (S_1- authoritative persons) tend to receive low marks from instructors both for the written final paper (r = -.55) and the other subjects included in the final graduation mark obtained at graduation (r = -.54). On the contrary, those who, given their answers, are included in **high directive and high supportive behavior style** (L.B.A.– S_3) tend to receive high marks from the instructors for the written final paper (r =.52). The high score obtained for **delay** factor – (T.E.Q – 3D) entails a low level for the **sociometric status** the student obtains for sociometric test –SOCIO (r = -.52). The subjects obtaining high scores for **resistance to rumors scale** of I.E.-C.T. questionnaire are likely to receive high marks from the instructor and therefore a high final mean graduation mark (r =.50). A high score for **flexibility scale** (T.E.Q.- 1F) entails a high level for SOCIOMETRIC STATUS (r =.50). Finally, the students who are diagnosed by the help of projective test (R – Rosenzweig) with **impunitive reaction of tolerance to frustration** (M) are very likely to reach a high **prestige status** obtained by the help of the sociometric test (SOCIO, r=.50).

CONCLUSIONS

Our observations resulted in the following conclusions:

1. The evidences proving validity of some indicators of psychological assistance and evaluation carried out during the post-academic officer specific training course reveal and increase the list of psychical features of optimal personality profile taken into account in psychological examination of the military selected for special tasks of operational-informative type. Thus the first hypothesis we investigated during our research is confirmed.
2. Unlike other authors who found a low predictive value for personality tests and questionnaires (values of correlation coefficients was not higher than .40), we found **considerably powerful correlations** ranging from r =.42 to r =.76. A possible explanation for it is that the criterion -data establishing method was improved, on one hand, and that we identified and adopted the personality tests appropriate to the goal we had in mind, on the other hand (2^{nd} hypothesis).
3. The results of standardized test for group inter-personal relation investigation (we used for data processing and application our own original versions of sociometric test – SOCIO, and peer inter-evaluation test – INTER-PI) have solved the complex problem of success in the officer intensive specific training for special missions and at the same time they may be used as **powerful predictors of success in operational-informative activity of the armed forces** (which confirms the 3^{rd} hypothesis).
4. The conclusions of psychological assistance and evaluation during post-academic courses for officer training, together with final mean marks can be, in our opinion, **the best** (for now) **predictors for selection and promotion of officers for operational-informative type special missions**.
5. Additional studies for validation (counter-validation) of test batteries used for selection of officers for special courses and missions are needed because such courses are attended by small groups (as many as 25 students); we observed only 2 series of officer graduates (N=42); the number of subjects has to be increased by accumulation in order to calculate multiple regression equation coefficients and the test battery has to be applied in the same standard conditions for more student groups.

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