

Formation Skills of An Officer-Leader



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Abstract: Education of a cadet as a leader is integral to training of officers at many military educational institutions worldwide. A number of them appreciate the necessity of purposeful formation of psychological skills of a leader in future officers. However, psychological training of cadets is limited, since military specialty courses take the lead in the general officers training system. It is possible to create effective conditions for formation and development of psychological skills of a leader in future officers over a fairly short period of time using a role-playing game in the form of psychological hands-on classes. The research objectives were identifying the characteristics of the activities of army officers as leaders and a set of relevant psychological skills; making an overview of the need for leadership (psychological) training of cadets in various countries of the world based on study of official sites of military academies; outlining traditional approaches to education of a military leader and substantiating the expediency of using a role-playing game in the form of psychological hands-on classes; giving a description of a role-playing game; revealing the essence of individual psychological skills of an officer-leader and specifics of their enhancement in the course of a game. This paper reveals the theoretical and experimental aspects of research devoted to introduction of this role-playing game. In particular, it gives its description, identifies the psychological skills of an officer-leader that were studied, and describes the state of these skills enhancement.

Keywords: cadet, training, psychological skills, role-playing game, psychological hands-on classes.

I. INTRODUCTION

An officer of each army of the world needs established leadership skills. These skills are important when interacting with personnel both amid military operations and during training activity and service in peacetime. The quality of influence on soldiers depends heavily on those leadership skills that characterize an officer as a psychologist. These skills play an important role when conducting training sessions with soldiers, educating them, forging them into a cohesive team, psychologically supporting them etc., that is, they are almost constantly relevant. Such activities require substantial and even professional psychological training. However, just psychological training of officers at educational institutions is not a major (usually, only a few training courses are devoted to it), and in some cases it does not exist at all. That makes sense, since military academies

and universities first of all teach cadets numerous military sciences that comply with the area of their military specialty. Therefore, little time is allotted for psychological sciences. Consequently, there is a problem of creating conditions for high-quality psychological training of officers as leaders when time is limited. We suggested solving this problem by means of a role-playing game whose essence consisted in preparing and delivering psychological hands-on classes by cadets themselves.

II. ANALYSIS OF SOURCES CONCERNING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Definition of the entire set of psychological skills of an officer-leader as a subject of our research requires identification of the characteristics of his activities exactly as a leader. Such characteristics are described in a number of scholarly papers. Note that we will focus on those aspects of officer's activities and skills that are, in our opinion, common to all branches of troops or military units/elements. For example, organizing joint activities of servicemen, regulating relations in a military unit/element, exerting influence on individuals and a group as a whole, and teambuilding can be considered as general characteristics of the activities of officers-leaders [1]. These, as well as a number of other aspects of the activities of officers, are defined in another publication [2]: ensuring professional development of soldiers, their training, providing servicemen with information on the goals of military discipline, their duties, command climate assessment etc. Accordingly, psychological leadership skills can be classified into psychological communication, psychological organizational, psychological diagnostic, psychological intervention, psychological training and so on and within these groups specified and detailed [3]. Note that some psychologist's skills are related to, interdependent or interrelated with certain pedagogical and organizational ones, particularly when working with a group of persons. Therefore, we should not disregard such skills, while their taking into account in the context of training an officer as a leader and a competent psychologist will impart consistency to our research. A number of dissertation studies confirm our opinion. Scientists investigated the leadership practices of future officers in different educational institutions of the military-grade. A. Valkov [4] has analysed and summarized the results of these theses. We can identify several groups of the military leader's psychological features in his work. For example, such kind of characteristics are sociability, communicability and eloquence (psychological communication skills), the ability to be in control of oneself, the ability to convince and inspire, the skill to achieve consensus in the collective

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(psychological organizational traits), the ability to psychoanalysis, the capacity for reflection (psychological diagnostic abilities), the ability to an active psychological impact, the capacity for dealing with problems and predicting the consequences after taking a decision (psychological corrective characteristics), the pedagogical thinking and pedagogical excellence (psychological training skills).

In this research, we did not set ourselves the task to specify and detail all psychological skills of an officer-leader, because such a task must be a subject of other thorough research. We can specify via individual examples the skills to identify and value the best in subordinates, make maximal use of their capabilities, rapidly assess a situation and adequately respond to it etc. The qualities of an officer-leader corresponding to these skills are, in particular, the object of educational work at the Australian Defence Force Academy [5]. A number of sources define other psychological skills of a leader, which, we are convinced, are necessary for an officer. In particular, they stress the importance for him of learning to understand himself and know as much as possible about the other group members, help cooperate, explain and answer questions, be mindful of other people, celebrate success of others and be fair [6].

We will regard the said skills as a reference point in the work with cadets. We will detail or reduce to simpler skills some of them with due regard for specifics of further research. And we will specify some skills ourselves and consider them in the main body of research with account taken of the already identified aspects of the activities of an officer-leader. The demand for psychological training of an officer is reflected in relevant curricula of various educational institutions. For example, the Course Catalog at United States Naval Academy contains the course Leadership, Ethics, Law, and Philosophy & Psychology [7]. The point to note is that this course combines leadership and psychology. And it is right, since each leader relies on laws of psychology when interacting with other people. Future naval officers study such sciences as elementary psychology (human behavior), social psychology, principles of sociological social psychology, personality, psychology and leadership etc. The leadership course constitutes a part of the core course at the Korea Military Academy, while Communication, Counseling Psychology and Leadership theory are its successive components [8]. Thus, we have yet another confirmation that psychological knowledge and skills underlie the leadership skills of an officer.

At the Theresian Military Academy (Theresianische Militärakademie), education of an officer-leader also is one of the major tasks of officers training. The concept of such training is founded on the Theresian Leadership Model whereby an officer must acquire, in particular, socio-psychological competence [9].

Training officers as leaders takes also place at the National Defense Academy of Austria (Landesverteidigungsakademie). At this educational institution, special leadership courses are held for cadets [10]. Such courses are exemplified by attendance at exercises, visits to command centers, the Danube crossing operations involving military equipment etc. Although this leadership course is intended to form organizational rather than psychological skills of an officer, it serves as an example of

formation of leader's skills and qualities by means of active training methods. Note that the role-playing game we will conduct is just an active training method.

In summary, purposeful training of officers-leaders should be considered as prevalent in the world practice of military education.

Formation of a leader's personality is possible by involving an individual in various Leadership Development Programs (including, in the military sphere as well [11], teaching a special training course, which has been discussed above, through e-learning etc.; scholarly literature developed even a methodology for this process [12]. The existing practice of becoming a leader provides, as a rule, for a future officer's making a comprehensive self-assessment of the leadership skills, his immersion into the professional environment, working with him individually or within a group and so on. All these kinds and forms of work with a cadet are designed to ensure all-round development of his leadership skills and qualities. We believe that regarding solely the psychological aspect of an officer's leadership competency the development of his relevant psychological skills will be significant in case of his immersion into a situation where he will act just as a psychologist. Such a situation can represent a role-playing game in the form of a psychological hands-on class where cadets will alternately perform the duties of a trainer and, accordingly, the functions of a leader and then will carry out a self-analysis and a self-assessment. Using this technique fully complies with the traditional approaches to leader formation as described above. Nevertheless, such experience of forming the personality of an officer-leader is not represented in scientific sources and sources of official institutions. At the same time, just the activities of a trainer-psychologist when interacting with servicemen requires of him using a whole number of leader's psychological skills as identified above. In further work, we tried to track enhancement of 23 of these skills. Presenting the key research findings, we will give a detailed account of each of them, as well as of the specifics and results of their improvement.

The research goal is to substantiate the expediency and prove the effectiveness of using a role-playing game in the form of psychological hands-on classes as a method of forming the psychological skills of an officer-leader in cadets.

The research objectives are to identify the set of relevant psychological skills of an officer-leader; give a description of a role-playing game in the form of psychological hands-on classes; reveal the specifics of enhancement of individual psychological skills of an officer-leader in the course of a game based on the results of an appropriate self-assessment of cadets, which prove its effectiveness; substantiate the objective nature of the results of cadets' self-assessment of their own psychological skills of a leader by means of mathematical statistics techniques.

The research participants included forty-four cadets of the Military Institute of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv majoring in political science.

Note that training of military political scientists is common practice in the world. For example, the United States Military Academy (West Point) trains students and cadets majoring in American Politics [13]. These specialists will generally work on development and implementation of political-military strategy in military command bodies of various levels. In the Ukrainian army, a military political scientist carries out other functions. Upon completion of training, he is appointed to the position of deputy company (regiment, division) commander for moral and psychological support for activities of his element/unit and performs educational, pedagogical and outreach functions (the latter requires his thorough political training). This work is very important, because an army's achieving its goals is impossible without solution of, for example, cultural problems [14]. The major tasks of this officer include formation of moral and psychological qualities of servicemen [15]. It is natural that only a personality with strongly-pronounced qualities of a leader can successfully perform such a work. Formation of morality of servicemen and maintenance of high morale in an element/unit promote education of leaders in a military group, since scholars established not only a link but also a correlation between authentic leadership, moral courage, ethical conduct and social behavior [16]. Note that this position of officer in Ukraine and those similar to it have existed in armies of ex-USSR countries since the days of the Soviet Army. It can be defined as a morale or political officer. However, the purpose of this position does not change. Armies of the world generally do have such a position. At the same time, it is the unit commander who is in charge of moral and educational influence on servicemen, formation of moral and psychological qualities in them, as well as ideological and propaganda work with them. Chaplains, psychologists and various organizational and staff bodies of armies, for example, the Personnel Service in the US Army, are also involved in this work [17].

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

A. General description

Research techniques are as follows: theoretical analysis, generalization, forecasting, simulation, role-playing game, observation, questioning, mathematical statistics techniques (determination of the arithmetic mean, percentage, and Pearson correlation coefficient).

The first stage of the research was making the analysis of sources concerning the research problem. The second stage was creating the idea of a role-playing game in the form of psychological hands-on classes and the next step was preparing the one. The role-playing game was organized in 2017 and 2018.

B. Algorithm

The structure of the role-playing game consisted of theoretical, methodological and organizational training of cadets prior to conducting a psychological hands-on class, its delivery and generalization of the results of the role-playing game. We simulated the psychological hands-on class as comprising several stages. One of them provided for explanation of training material (an equivalent of a training session). The second stage consisted in organizing work of the group when doing diverse hands-on exercises. At the

third stage of the role-playing game, future political scientists analyzed whose exercises were successfully done and summarized the results of the hands-on class. In such a way, we succeeded in involving cadets in psychological activity in its various manifestations, pedagogical and organizational in particular. Note that overall eight psychological hands-on classes were conducted in three training groups with 2nd and 3rd year cadets. The topic of each hands-on class corresponded to the specifics of work with servicemen, for example, teambuilding, relieving emotional tension in the group, interpersonal relations, success of an individual etc. Two or three cadets gave each hands-on class.

IV. RESULTS

Cadets concluded that before the role-playing game the average level of maturity of individual skills had varied between 5.43 and 6.8 points. Following the hands-on classes, that value ranged from 7.73 to 8.57 points. The minimum increase in the skill was of 23.08%, while the maximum one constituted 48.77%.

Let us describe individual psychological and related to them (pedagogical and organizational) skills of an officer-leader and analyze the specifics and results of their development.

A number of leader's practical skills described the ability of a future officer to prepare for training sessions with servicemen. The skill to select exercises for a hands-on class (training session) increased on average from 5.55 to 8.25 points or by 48.77%. When selecting exercises, cadets carried out our instruction to ensure their compliance with the purpose of a hands-on class and diversity of types and methods of their performance. The exercises themselves had to be arranged in a certain meaningful sequence. The exercises were selected from recommended Internet and any other sources. Cadets could also propose their own exercises if they complied with the concept of a hands-on class or improve the proposed ones. As it turned out, they nearly lacked such experience that is why the above-said skill showed the maximum increase among the other ones. Given the importance of selection of psychotraining (training) exercises, we asked cadets to also assess some related skills. It appears that in their view the skill to use and alternate various types of exercises (intellectual, motor, communicative, creative, individual, group etc.) and various training methods (oral, written, graphic, check and so on) grew from 5.66 points by 43.78%. The skill to forecast the effectiveness of some exercises increased from 5.43 points by 45.61%. The skill to calculate the time of performance of some exercises and that of a class as a whole grew on average from 5.84 points by 40.47%. The significant indicators of the skills enhancement confirm the relevance of this role-playing game to cadets' gaining the ability to prepare for training sessions with personnel. We recorded a slighter increase in such an important officer's skill when getting ready for holding a training session as that to prepare display, handout materials and equipment – by 33.09% from 6.25 points. This is due to cadets' available experience in preparing presentations and visualization.

At the same time, the increase in the skill level is sufficiently high in this case too, since cadets learned to prepare the above-noted materials and visualization for use under conditions that are new for them.

The next group of skills of a future officer-leader concerns his actions in the first phase of communication with a group. The skill to diagnose psychological and practical readiness of a group to do exercises is very important just at the beginning of training interaction although used at all stages of training. This skill increased in cadets on average from 5.61 to 7.73 points, that is, by 37.65%. Future officers performed diagnosis through observation over the psychological attitude of servicemen for active work, as well as through dialog with them in order to identify certain activities and the level of knowledge required. In case of unsatisfactory readiness of the hands-on class participants to do a certain exercise or actually work, the cadet-trainer took appropriate measures. That cadet either additionally psyched other cadets up for performing an exercise or explained required material, or decided to use a preparatory exercise.

Cadets assessed the increase in the skill to explain the essence of tasks and their requirements on average as by 28.62% from 6.27 points. We established clarity, laconicism, comprehensibility for others and completeness of necessary information as criteria for self-assessment of this skill. Correct performance of exercises by the hands-on class participants served as an indicator of successful explanation of the essence of tasks and requirements of the cadet-trainer.

Description of the essence of exercises and performance requirements was not our only demand during preparation of the group for accomplishment of tasks. Preparing cadets to work with personnel of military units, we tried to teach them to motivate servicemen. Therefore, cadets-trainers had to determine the significance of some exercises for each hands-on class participant or the group of participants as a whole. Accordingly, cadets assessed maturity of their own skill to mainstream the significance of performance of some exercises or other. This skill improved from 6.05 points by 33.46%.

Since practical activities of an officer-leader provide for various forms of work with servicemen, we required of cadets using both group and individual exercises. Individual exercises were generally creative in nature (drawing, preparation of an account, character finding and rendering etc.), therefore, required that attention were paid to individual hands-on class participants. Some participants needed additional explanation of the essence of a task, while others actually wanted assistance of the trainer when fulfilling it. The objective of the cadet-trainer's work was to provide all organizational conditions in order for each hands-on class participant to do an exercise with maximum effectiveness. In addition to explaining the essence of tasks, advising participants, the cadet-trainer had to provide them with hand-outs, paper, pencils etc. As a result, cadets acquired the skill to organize work of individuals, maturity of which eventually increased from 6.36 to 8.16 points or by 28.21%.

Organization of performance of group exercises enabled cadets to ensure development of the skill to organize work of groups of people by 30.82% from 6.34 points. Aside from the tasks peculiar to organizing work of one person, the cadet-trainer fulfilled a number of other ones. That future

leader had to determine the group size, form its composition and, where required, appoint a person in charge. Determining functions and tasks for each of the group members was a significant element of organizing work of the group and a criterion for maturity of the officer-leader's skill.

This latter skill comes close to the skill to organize collective discussion and solution of a problem situation. We placed emphasis just on this skill, since it is very important in the work of an officer responsible for moral and psychological support for activity of a military element/unit. At training sessions with servicemen, problem situations related to, for example, countering the enemy's information influence on local population, servicemen themselves, complexity of interaction with the local population who support the enemy troops and so on are discussed. Accordingly, using exercises that provided for discussion of a problem situation was a requirement for training sessions. Those situations could concern various sides of the life and activities of a serviceman. Based on the results of the role-playing game, cadets noted improvement in maturity of the skill to organize collective discussion and solution of a problem situation on average by 34.81% from 6.14 points.

Management of work of a group of servicemen facilitated development of the psychological skill of cadets to weld a team, which is very important for an officer-leader. We required of cadets-trainers ensuring unity of a group of persons on the principles of mutual responsibility for a shared result and mutual respect of its participants during a hands-on class. To fulfill this requirement, they had to use group exercises geared towards competition of teams. That competition could refer to the time and correctness of an exercise fulfillment, quality of a creative or intellectual result. It is important that each group participant identifies relevance of his role for achieving an overall result of the team, as well as realizes the importance of quality of interaction with the partners for reaching a high level of such a result. Upon completion of the role-playing game, future officers established that the skill to weld a team improved

by 28.98% from 6.43 up to 8.3 points. Development of the previously mentioned skills and successful hands-on classes would not have been possible without the cadets' skill to ensure activity of every individual. This skill also is significant for an officer-leader. To form this skill, cadets-trainers were given an instruction to purposefully observe the hands-on class participants. Those participants who were passive were reprimanded and landed the most complex role when performing subsequent exercises. In addition, the cadet-trainer had to once again explain the importance of a given exercise and active behavior of the hands-on class participants. Ultimately, this cadets' skill increased by 39.68% from 5.73 points.

In the course of a hands-on class, future officers formed another set of skills of a leader necessary for his activities as a psychologist. In particular, cadets mastered the skill to supervise correct performance of exercises by other people. Owing to a relevant instruction, this skill increased on average by 23.08% from 6.8 points, based on the results of their self-assessment.

Since two or three cadets conducted hands-on classes, only one of them alternately fulfilled the role of an exercise performance organizer. At the same time, all of them supervised its correct performance. This concerned both individual and group exercises. At that, each of the cadets-trainers could see after his own group or, in case of performance of individual exercises, divide the audience into sectors. In case if they detected an error in performance of exercises they had to make certain adjustments. Accordingly, they formed the skill to make timely adjustments to activities of other persons. This skill increased from 5.86 to 7.89 points (by 34.5%) during the course of the role-playing game.

Detection and correction of errors required of future officers learning to analyze them. Cadets-trainers had to understand the cause of an error and not to make it when doing the following exercise. As the role-playing game showed, they successfully performed such analysis. The common causes of errors included inattention of the hands-on class participants when both getting acquainted with a task and completing it, as well as shortcomings in the work of the trainers themselves. Cadets designated as such shortcomings the insufficiently clear-cut explanation of the essence of a given exercise and the unhappy choice of exercises in terms of their complexity. Thus, based on the survey results, we found out that the skill to analyze errors of servicemen when performing exercises, which is important for a leader as a psychologist, increased by 30.58% from 6.32 points.

During the role-playing game, one more set of psychological skills of future officers gained momentum. This concerns in particular the skill to examine and get to know individual servicemen during the course of performance of exercises. The fact that cadets already studied together for a long time did not hinder the said skill enhancement. The role-playing game offered them such terms and opportunities to show their worth, which they had not had before. All cadets without exception performed the role of trainer for the first time. The predominant part of cadets did some exercises or other for the first time. All cadets received the task to examine one another during their performance. Cadets-trainers tried to get to know other hands-on class participants. Cadets who did exercises examined cadets-trainers and other of their comrades. Cadets-trainers studied such personal characteristics of servicemen as creativity, the ability to get their bearings in a new situation, decision-making speed, conscientiousness, readiness for work in a group, performing activity etc. Some personal characteristics of cadets were a subject of direct study during performance of special training exercises, for example, the level of self-assessment, degree of identification of a serviceman with representatives of his specialty, career advancement motivation of future officers etc. The results of knowledge of the hands-on class participants factored into appropriate decisions of the cadets-trainers on the further course of performing a given exercise. In their turn, the hands-on class participants studied the personalities of the trainers. The subject of that study included communicative, organizational and creative characteristics of future officers. Mutual observation and supervision of and by the hands-on class participants in the course of performing exercises facilitated the development in them of the skill to study and get to know servicemen on average from 6.27 points by

33.33%.

The skill to ensure mutual trust and understanding between themselves and the other servicemen formed in the cadets-trainers due to their execution of a number of our instructions. The first of them regarded discussion of the rules of conduct and communication at the beginning of each training session. Candor and sincerity of each of the hands-on class participants as a prerequisite for building trust and mutual understanding among them were elements of those rules. The second instruction concerned communicative behavior of the trainers. They had to be correct and considerate towards each of the cadets, allow everybody to express his opinion while taking the very opinion as a valuable one etc. The third instruction referred to perfection of organization of conducting exercises since only that officer whose activities feature order and reliance will earn trust as a leader. In the fourth instruction, we recommended to select only exercises relevant to servicemen and those which would have been done for sure. The fifth instruction concerned mandatory joint discussion of all important situations and exercises performance results with elements of cadets' self-analysis by the hands-on class participants. As a consequence, the indicator of the increase in the skill to ensure mutual trust and understanding between themselves and the other servicemen constituted 26.55% (from 6.25 to 7.91 points).

Observation of the activities of the hands-on class participants enabled the cadets-trainers to ensure an increase in the skill to diagnose achievements and progress of individual servicemen according to the results of exercises performance. For that end they examined to what extent individual servicemen achieved the purpose of a given exercise. Observation also dealt with achieving the purpose of the hands-on class as a whole. Knowledge of one's own personality, acquisition of the ability to work in a team, development of analytical skills, gaining leadership experience and so on can be considered as examples of achievements and progress. The said cadets' skill increased on average from 6.34 points by 29.75%.

The skill to summarize the results of servicemen's performance of some exercises and work in general, including from a psychologist's perspective, is an important skill of an officer-leader. In the context of a role-playing game, the cadets-trainers summarized such results as regards individual cadets and a group of hands-on class participants. Individual conclusions concerned achievements of servicemen, as well as suggestions and recommendations to them as regards further improvement. We asked to minimize critical assessments to ensure a situation of success and to leave a positive impression of the hands-on class on each cadet. Certain recommendations and suggestions were also made to the group as a whole. However, we asked the cadets-trainers to minutely point out shortcomings and errors, which took place when performing some exercises, and assess the effectiveness of the training session as a whole, without mentioning any names.

It should be noted that the results of performance of exercises also concerned their significance for professional advancement of cadets. As a consequence, the said skill in future officers increased from 6.57 points by 28.72%.

Development of cadets' analytical skills with respect to their own behavior and results of their own activities should also be regarded as an important result of the role-playing game. According to them, the skill to manage one's own psychological state during delivering a hands-on class with servicemen increased in them from 6.32 up to 8.57 points (by 35.61%). Such a result of the role-playing game will add them confidence just as leaders in military units. The skill to detect one's own errors as a psychologist and educator (trainer), which is significant for an officer-leader, increased in cadets by 29.93% from 6.45 points. They not only took note of individual errors but also distributed them into groups: errors in planning and preparing a training session, organizing performance of exercises, errors when interacting with the hands-on class participants etc. Following a self-critical analysis, the cadets-trainers assessed the degree of achieving the training session's objectives they had set themselves in advance. At that, we insisted on detailing the assessment of performing individual tasks of the hands-on class. The other hands-on class participants also described effectiveness of the training session. They determined the degree of achieving their own objectives and pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of each hands-on class as a whole. As a result, upon completion of the role-playing game cadets noted improvement in the skill to determine the degree of achieving the objectives of the training session from 6.7 up to 8.45 points or by 26.1%.

We checked the objective nature of the results of cadets' self-assessment using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Correlation was determined between the average final value of the self-assessment of skills of every cadet and the assessment the instructor awarded him for successful delivery of a psychological hands-on class (up to 100 points). The existence of such a relation rests on the assumption that effectiveness (success) of a certain activity is proportional to the level of maturity of appropriate skills in the performer of this activity.

The correlation coefficient was of $r=0.396$. At that, the coefficient significance levels of 0.297 ($p=0.05$) and 0.384 ($p=0.01$) correspond to the sample size ($n=44$). Thus, the correlation coefficient is in the range of significance. This proves a direct relationship between the average values of the self-assessment of the cadets' skills and the instructor's assessment and confirms the objective nature of the self-assessment, hence overall effectiveness of the role-playing game.

V. DISCUSSION

Study of sources concerning the research problem enabled us to determine the totality of components of the activities of an officer-leader and his relevant psychological and other skills that ensure the psychological aspect of such activities. In particular, the activities of an officer aim at welding, training, organizing joint activities of servicemen, and regulating the psychological climate in a given element/unit etc. Identification of the specifics of the activities of an officer-leader made it possible in the following to

particularize relevant psychological and related pedagogic and organizational skills that were under study.

It is found that the practice of training officers as leaders is common at military educational establishments worldwide. Some of them use holding leadership training courses, some of which contain study of psychological sciences while in individual cases leadership and psychology courses are taken concurrently. Thus, formation of psychological skills of a leader in cadets is important today. The world practice shows examples of leadership development programs, individual training, using active methods for leadership training etc. However, we did not find examples of direct immersion of future officers into psychological activity, which would purposefully form psychologist's skills in them. And this despite the fact that psychological training of officers is always substantially time-limited as compared with their military specialty training. Therefore, introduction of role-playing games in the form of psychological hands-in classes as a means to resolve our research problem is relevant.

During the role-playing game, cadets carried out all-round preparation for delivering a hands-on class, fulfilled the role of trainer, observed over the hands-on class participants, adjusted and analyzed their activities etc. This ensured a systemic increase in their leader's psychological and other skills, enabled to gain relevant experience in interacting with a team of servicemen (that was actually first experience for all of them).

VI. CONCLUSION

The research findings proved that using a role-playing game in the form of psychological hands-on classes is expedient from the perspective of creating effective conditions for formation in cadets of the psychological skills of an officer-leader.

Effectiveness of the role-playing game was confirmed by the results of the self-assessment of the leader's skills before and after conducting it (from 23.08 to 48.77 points). The objective nature of the self-assessment results is due to its criteria available for each skill and confirmed through calculation of the Pearson correlation coefficient, which revealed a relationship between the average value of the cadets' overall assessments and the assessment the instructor gave to success of their work as trainers-psychologists.

The results of the research are important for vocational education and applied psychology because we have gained new experience in the use of psychological trainings. For the first time psychological hands-on classes were used as a role-playing game for leadership training.

The positive results of the role-playing game enable to expand the practice of using this training method for leadership training in the different social and branch systems.

Further prospects for the research conducted consist in substantiating and testing other active methods for training military and civil leaders in the psychological scopes that feature intensity and effectiveness.

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