Development of competence of the Armed Forces of Ukraine officers to manage military units under conditions of change

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Abstract The article investigates the challenges in developing the competence of Ukrainian Armed Forces officers to manage military units amid changing conditions. The study analyzes existing concepts and approaches in psychological science related to organizational change and management in such environments. The notion of "competence of Armed Forces officers to manage personnel of military units in changing conditions" is clarified. A structural model of this competence is proposed, comprising cognitive, motivational, personal, activity, and regulatory components. The empirical study's results reveal the current state of this competence among Ukrainian Armed Forces officers. To enhance this competence, a professionally oriented psychological training program was developed and experimentally validated. Practical recommendations are provided for officers to effectively manage personnel in subordinate units during periods of change.

Keywords: organizational changes, managerial competence, professional training, officers of armed forces

1. Introduction

Since its creation, the Armed Forces of Ukraine (henceforward – AFU) have been in a state of permanent reform. The main sources of reforms in the organization are sociopolitical changes in the country and the participation of units in combat actions in the war initiated by Russia. To bring the organizational structure of the AFU into compliance with modern requirements and best global practices, the approaches to working with personnel also have to be changed. The changes to which the officers (military units' commanders) must correspond are of a strategic nature. These changes cover organizational structure, the results of combat activity, technologies, and the process of organization. Additionally, professionally important qualities and the moral and psychological state of the personnel of the military units must be aligned with the current missions of the AFU units and the situation on the battlefield. As a result of these changes, the problem of managing military unit personnel deserves special attention and careful analysis.

Under such circumstances, the search and scientific substantiation of ways to increase the level of competence of commanders of military units to manage personnel under conditions of change becomes an important scientific and practical problem and acquires special relevance.

In this regard, a systematic review of the psychological and pedagogical literature was conducted to synthesize the available evidence in response to a specific research question. In the process of the research, we considered the psychological theories of the unity of psyche and activity (Keough & Tobin 2001), theoretical foundations of the study of the individual as a subject of professional activity and professional development, provisions of the system-structural approach to the study of competence (Berson et al. 2006), and various aspects of the psychology of management under conditions of change reflected in the works of Meskon, Albert and Hedouri (1999). We agree with Panfilov and Petrova (2018), who believe that one of the effective ways of forming an innovative personality of a military leader is a "science-based innovative development of military education and formation of its new paradigm due to a change in the orientation of the educational system, which contains traditional components. Development of the personality of a modern military leader occurs during the entire service in the Armed Forces, but the fundamental principles of formation of his or her personality take place during the period of training in the system of higher military education" (Panfilov Petrova 2018).

We agree with Tarasyuk (2022) that the managerial competence of future officers of the Armed Forces is an integration of knowledge, skills, experience, and personal qualities that are implemented in the performance of managerial functions and...
ensure the professional activity of future officers of the Armed Forces. The development of the managerial competence of future officers is understood as a systematized activity of the subjects of the educational process of higher educational institutions with the aim of developing the knowledge, skills, experience, and personal qualities of cadets necessary to implement managerial functions in the professional sphere (Balendr et al. 2019).

Meskon, Albert and Hedouri (1999) defined the following main functions of management: planning, organization, motivation, and control. This definition is more convenient for application since these functions are inherent in all management processes.

Brill, Bishop and Walker (2006) believe that the high efficiency of managerial competence is a set of interrelated actions that distinguish high productivity from average productivity. The characteristics that increase managerial competence are achievement, proactive activity, presentation skills, self-confidence, influence, self-development, interaction management, interpersonal search, conceptual flexibility, concept formation, and information search (Brill et al. 2006).

Additionally, according to the results of the analysis of the abovementioned scientific literature, scientists have not yet developed a single approach to the definition of the term "organizational changes". Organizational changes are associated with transformation, changes in individual aspects, elements, and characteristics of the organization and are defined as follows:

- a change in how the organization functions, who are its members and leaders, what form it takes and how it distributes its resources (Glick Huber 1995);
- an empirical observation of some organizational element's form, quality, or state over time. Organizational elements can be the work of a specific employee, a work group, an organizational strategy, a program, a product, or the entire organization as a whole (Van Der Vegt, Bunderson 2005);
- creation of new organizational forms and development of new capabilities (Campbell et al. 2022);
- internal policies with constantly changing coalitions and factions, from a historical point of view or from the perspective of development with entry into markets and control of markets, in the future with changing ownership (Hall 1987);
- changing the main components of the organization: strategy, structure or process (Cameron, Quinn 2011);
- vision, goals, strategies, technologies, internal structures, and human resources (Freeman 1984).

Process analysis indicates exactly how this change occurs. The specified organizational changes are defined as "a sequence of events that led to an observed meaningful change in the organization, i.e., a set of reasons that caused the change and subprocesses of making a decision about change, its detailed elaboration and implementation in the organization" (Fullan 1993).

Several researchers, using a process approach, define organizational changes as follows:

- Transformation of the organization between two moments of time (Barron Harackiewicz 1999);
- It should be noted that the given definitions complement each other: "such a division has a serious applied value for researchers, a full-fledged study of organizational changes should cover both the content and the process side, otherwise a one-sided presentation of the problem will be obtained" (Campbell et al. 2022).

According to the results of the analysis of the scientific literature, M. Moskaliov singled out the main approaches to studying the essence of changes in the organization: strategic, innovative, structural and procedural, and personal (Moskaliov 2009).

An analysis of the scientific literature shows that the problem of the competence of commanders of military units to manage changes in AFUs has not been specifically studied. At the same time, scientists emphasize that the competence of managers to manage under conditions of change is an important component of their professional qualifications and significantly affects the effectiveness of management activities (Soroka et al 2019, Komarnytska et al 2019, Balendr et al 2023). The need to ensure effective reform and development of the AFU has motivated the search for ways to improve the competence of officers to manage under conditions of change to the level of an important practical task.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of the formation of competence among the unit commanders of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to manage personnel under conditions of change and to propose a scientifically based approach to increase competence.

2. Objectives of the study

- Investigate the theoretical foundations of a person's competence formation to act under conditions of change.
- Empirically determine the structure and features of the main components of the competence of the commanders of the Armed Forces units to manage personnel under conditions of change.
- Develop a structural-functional model of the competence of the commanders of the Armed Forces units to manage personnel under conditions of change.
- Develop and carry out verification of professional-psychological training as a tool for improving the competence of the commanders of the Armed Forces units to manage personnel under conditions of change.

3. Methodology of the Research
In the course of the research, the following scientific methods were used to achieve the defined goal and solve the task set:

- theoretical: analysis, synthesis, and generalization of the results of Ukrainian and foreign studies - to identify and clarify the content of various aspects of the competence of the AFU commanders of military units to manage under conditions of change;
- emissions, surveys, psychodiagnostic methods (modified questionnaire by M. Moskalev; tests by T. Ehlers "Methodology for Assessing Global Management Potential"; "Personality Self-Assessment" method in the version of S. Budassi; "Types of Personality Orientation" method by B. Bass; "The Questionnaire of V. Smekal and M. Kuchera"; the "Style of Self-Regulation of Behavior" method of V. Morosanova and E. Konoz) to determine the levels of development of the components of the competence of department heads to manage under conditions of change (Raigorodskyi 2001); psychological experiment: ascertaining and formative stages - for researching the current state of formation of the competence of the commanders of units of the Armed Forces and checking the effectiveness of professional psychological training to improve it;
- statistically: correlation analysis - for the qualitative interpretation of the received empirical data, establishment of quantitative relationships between the studied phenomena and verification of the reliability of the conclusions; methods of analysis of the received empirical data (Fisher's φ-criterion and Student's t-criterion) - for elaboration, presentation and theoretical substantiation of reliability of the research results.

The research was organized and conducted in 4 stages.

In the first stage, the purpose and tasks of the research were formulated, the state of the problem was analyzed, the category of the participants was determined, and the research methods were selected.

In the second stage, a structural-functional model of commanders’ competence was developed, and an empirical study was conducted to determine the state of competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change.

In the third stage, a professional psychological training course was developed to increase the level of competence of AFU officers to manage conditions of change, and its effectiveness was tested experimentally.

In the fourth stage, relevant recommendations to officers of the AFU on management under conditions of change were developed.

The study was conducted on the basis of the management bodies of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and is aimed at developing the competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change. The total number of respondents is 127 officers of the Armed Forces (headquarters level): 15 officers of structural subdivisions of the Armed Forces, 29 heads of the battalion level, their deputies, and 63 commanders of the company level. All study participants gave their consent to participate in the research, processing and publication of the research data.

4. Results

The problem of the essence of changes in the military unit is interdisciplinary in nature. It has been established that any aspect of the military unit’s activity can be subject to change: fundamental principles of the unit’s existence, services, technologies, systems, relationships, organizational culture, management style and methods, strategy, competencies, productivity, etc. During the period of change, management and servicemen of the unit begin to apply new relationships, methods and ways of acting in practice. The process of making changes in the military unit includes identification (during which the participants try out the proposed changes, the motives of which are formulated by management) and internalization (during which the general goals and principles of changes in the organization are transformed into the person’s own personal goals and rules).

The structure of the psychological readiness of the commanders of military units to manage changes was determined using the modeling method. On the basis of the determined structure of managerial competence, a structural-functional model of the managerial competence of the commanders of the Armed Forces units to manage personnel under conditions of change was developed. It includes the following components: cognitive, motivational, activity, personal and regulatory.

The cognitive component of the competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change is characterized by a system of knowledge about organizational and management activities and awareness of the content of the changes expected in the organization. The content of the cognitive component of the competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change is integrative quality and could be defined as a professional awareness of management under conditions of change. For this component, we included a system of knowledge about organizational and management activities in combination with awareness of the content of changes expected in the military unit. The content of the cognitive component of the psychological readiness of the commanders of military units to manage in the conditions of change is integrative quality—professional awareness of management in the conditions of change. One of the elements of the cognitive component is the commander’s life and work experience. Based on his experience, the commander is aware of the objectivity of management in the conditions of the changes being made, analyzes and evaluates their nature, and plans personal actions. The commander’s experience of participating in management under conditions of change increases the level of his or her psychological readiness for successful activity under dynamic conditions.

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The motivational component is the motivation for the effective implementation of management tasks under conditions of organizational change, which is based on ideas about the possibility of meeting professional, career, and personal needs in the event of successful organizational change. In all the studies analyzed by us, where we are talking about the management of changes in the organization, commanders or managers are considered those who do not have resistance to organizational changes. Their actions are considered exclusively in an organizational, managerial way—what to do, in what sequence, what to pay attention to. At the same time, it is not considered that the manager is the same person as any other employee of the organization and can also react differently to changes.

The personal component contains a set of individual and psychological personal qualities that actually determine the commander’s ability to carry out this type of activity, and therefore, it allows us to consider it an initial component of psychological readiness. Such personal qualities should include a person’s focus on service, adequate self-esteem, internal level of control, balance, responsibility, determination, etc. It should be noted that the manifestation of these properties will directly affect the functioning of all other components of psychological readiness.

The activity component involves the availability of skills and experience in professional management activities under conditions of organizational and management changes; management skills under conditions of organizational changes; mastering new professional knowledge in the field of management at the level of practical application under conditions of change; mastery of methods of analysis, synthesis, comparison, modeling of organizational and management changes in the organization, etc. Skills and abilities, as components of the activity component, determine the manager’s readiness to act creatively; independently make appropriate management decisions taking into account the psychological features of the management situation; be able to communicate effectively with subordinates; and take into account the individual and psychological characteristics of subordinates, their creative potential, etc. As we have already noted, the activity component of psychological readiness reflects the content of the motivational and cognitive components, and it, in turn, is affected by the reflexive superstructure—the regulatory component.

The regulatory component encompasses reflection of organizational changes and the process and results of one’s own activity. It includes the ability for self-control and self-assessment of one’s readiness to manage under conditions of change, understanding one’s own mistakes and correcting one’s position regarding changes in the organization. The content and effectiveness of managerial decisions regarding the implementation of organizational changes, which an officer will make and which will be implemented in the results of his managerial activities, depend on the position that the manager will take in relation to changes and on his behavioral reactions to them. The components of the regulatory component make it possible to adjust the content of the cognitive and activity components: to actualize new knowledge accumulated in the process of management in conditions of change, to stimulate the acquisition of knowledge that is lacking in practical activities, to analyze which new skills and abilities have been acquired and which need improvement, to increase understanding of the content of management in the conditions of changes that are being carried out, and to enrich life and service experience. Everything affects the evaluation of management in conditions of change and causes further changes in psychological readiness for management in conditions of change. Considering the results of management activities under conditions of change in the organization, the level of competence of the manager to manage under conditions of change can both increase and decrease.

Based on the results of the empirical research, it was determined that the structural elements of the psychological readiness of the commanders of military units to manage under conditions of change have different levels of formation—the most developed regulatory, activity and motivational components and the least developed—cognitive and personal components. At the same time, the personal, cognitive, motivational, and activity components have not been sufficiently developed, which is confirmed both by the study of the levels of formation of the components of each of the components and by the calculated integrative indicators. A higher level of psychological readiness for management under conditions of change is formed by commanders with 5 to 10 years of service experience. Therefore, the level of competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change was determined based on the analysis of the formation of each of its components. The analysis of the results of diagnosing the cognitive component shows that the respondents have an insufficient level of professional awareness of the specified problem. Most of them had average (58.37%) or low (29.41%) levels of professional knowledge. A small percentage of respondents (12.22%) demonstrated a high level of professional knowledge.

Measuring the level of the development of management skills under conditions of change proved that the majority of respondents had an average level of the development of skills and abilities necessary for management under conditions of change (66.97%). Weak management skills under conditions of change were diagnosed in 25.34% of respondents, while a high level was found in only 7.69% of officers. The diagnosis of the formation of the motivational component of the competence of the officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change proved that the motives for choosing a profession were formed by the respondents mostly at the average level (57.01%). More than a quarter of the respondents (26.25%) chose the profession because of its social significance, desire to be useful to society, etc. (high level of motivation). At the same time, a significant number of officers (16.74%) had a low level of motivation to choose a profession; they became military officers under the influence of parents, friends, and other circumstances unrelated to the social importance of the chosen case.

The results of testing the respondents on the motivation to achieve success showed that among the vast majority of respondents, this indicator is at the average (52.49%) and high (28.96%) levels, while a significant number of officers are not
motivated to achieve success (18.55%). Regarding the respondents’ motivation to avoid failure, the largest number of respondents showed an average level of formation of this motive (53.39%). The second group consisted of respondents who showed a low level of motivation to avoid failure (24.43%). The third group consisted of respondents with a high level of formation of this type of motivation (22.17%).

Thus, most of the respondents have an average level of motivation both to achieve success and to avoid failure. That is, a significant number of respondents experience difficulties in forming a personal position regarding changes and may make necessary management decisions in a timely manner. In general, the results of the study of the motivational component of the competence of AFU officers to manage under conditions of change indicate their certain motivational immaturity.

The activity component of the competence of officers of the AFU was studied using the methodology of global management potential assessment. In 63.35% of the respondents, an average level of global management potential was found, which determines the attitude toward the need for change. Another 27.15% had a low level, and only 9.50% had a high level of global management potential. The obtained result indicates insufficient competence of the respondents to perceive organizational changes in the military organization in the context of globalization and the best models of functioning of the Armed Forces of the USA and Europe.

The analysis of the results of the diagnosis of the personal component of the competence of AFU officers to manage under conditions of change showed that more than 96.38% of respondents had adequate self-esteem. Such managers appreciate their personality, are able to experience positive feelings about themselves, and can accept themselves as they are, both with positive and negative qualities. For the level of personality orientation, for the majority of respondents (65.61%), this indicator corresponded to the average level, another 28.96% had a high level, and 5.43% had a low level.

As evidenced by the results of the research on the regulatory component of the competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change, the level of self-regulation of the mental stability of the majority of respondents corresponds to the average level of 60.18%. The second largest group consists of respondents with a high level of self-regulation—36.65%. The third group consists of respondents with a low level of self-regulation—3.17%. Further analysis revealed that the respondents had three types of effective self-regulation profiles of mental resilience. No profiles with a low level of development of all links were found. The obtained results provide grounds for asserting that respondents have the necessary compensatory mechanisms of self-regulation of mental stability. Respondents, in general, have a high level of consciousness while planning and programming their activities; lack of fixation on failures; a high level of flexibility; quick response to the situation; stability and the ability not to get lost under the conditions of uncertainty; creativity in approaches to solving nontypical situations; an average level of independence; constant communication contacts with management; persistence in achieving their goals; and accuracy and timeliness in correcting mistakes. This level of self-regulation of managers’ mental stability should be considered a basis for their relatively easy overcoming of psychological barriers and changing their position regarding organizational changes to a more positive one.

A comparison of the structural components of the competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change was carried out. The obtained data were formed according to the integral indicators of the components of competence by levels. This made it possible to determine a generalized integrated indicator of the competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change. The level of formation of various structural components of the competence of officers of the AFU to manage the organization under conditions of change is not the same. Thus, the regulatory and personal components are the most developed (2.51 and 2.24 points, respectively), the motivational component is developed to the average level (2.05 points), and the cognitive and activity components are developed to the below-average level (1.83 and 1.82 points, respectively). It should be noted that, in general, the psychological readiness of AFU officers to manage under conditions of change is at an average level of 2.09 points out of 3 possible. However, if the level of development of the regulatory component can be considered satisfactory, then other components need further development. This especially applies to the motivational, cognitive, and activity components.

Such a distribution between the components of competence can be explained by the fact that managerial and operational-service activities in general place increased demands on the level of self-regulation of officers of the AFU. Therefore, in the process of training and service, they develop appropriate skills and self-regulation skills. At the same time, the structural-functional model of the competence of officers of the AFU to manage under conditions of change and the obtained empirical results allow us to assert that all its components are in a dialectical relationship and that their development is mutually dependent (Table 1 Indicators of the AFU officers’ competence formation to manage personnel under conditions of change).

To increase the level of competence of AFU officers to manage under conditions of change, professional and psychological training, such as a "psychological training course for the officers of units of the AFU for management under conditions of change", was developed. Its purpose was to increase the level of competence of officers of the AFU to manage conditions of change that concern organizational structure, leadership skills while performing service and combat activities, and working with subordinates. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to gradually accomplish the subtasks, namely:

increasing the level of training of officers in the theory of organization and management, development of military agencies of developed countries, management skills and abilities, and awareness of current organizational changes in the AFU;

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increasing the commander’s level of satisfaction from active participation in carrying out organizational changes in the armed forces, his or her motivation to manage under conditions of change, removing psychological barriers and forming a positive attitude toward organizational changes;

Table 1 Indicators of the ability of AFU officers to manage personnel under conditions of change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The components of the cognitive component</th>
<th>high respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>The level of formation: average respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>low respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The level of professional knowledge</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12,22</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>58,37</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>29,41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of skills to manage teams under the conditions of change</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7,69</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>66,97</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25,34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of motivation to choose a profession</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26,25</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>57,01</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16,74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of motivation to achieve success</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>28,96</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>52,49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of motivation to avoid failure</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22,17</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>53,39</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of global management potential</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9,50</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>63,35</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of self-esteem</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>27,60</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>68,78</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3,62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of formation of personality orientation</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>28,96</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>65,61</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of self-regulation of mental stability</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>36,65</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>60,18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

increasing the level of self-control and self-assessment of the officer as the result of his or her own managerial activities under conditions of organizational change;

increasing the level of self-regulation of officers’ mental states in the process of management under conditions of change.

The effectiveness of professional psychological training was tested experimentally during a formative experiment consisting of three stages: preparatory, implementation, and final. At the preparatory stage, the first diagnostic test was conducted, based on the results of which the experimental (EG) and control (CG) groups were formed, consisting of 28 people each. At the same stage of the experiment, the problem of a representative and justified choice of methods, ensuring the identity of the characteristics of the EG and CG participants and establishing the information collection procedure, was solved.

The analysis of these indicators revealed significant positive changes among officers who participated in the professional psychological training course "Psychological training course for the AFU units officers for management under conditions of change" and the absence of such changes among the participants from the control group.

As a result of the implementation of professional psychological training in the experimental group, the participants' level of competence to manage under conditions of change increased significantly. At the same time, the indicated changes are statistically significant according to the $\phi$ criterion (Fisher's criterion). The obtained experimental data were also checked for the presence of a correlation using Student's t test for the connected population. The t test confirmed that after the experiment, there were statistically significant changes in the results shown by the respondents in the experimental group.

From the obtained data, it can be seen that after participating in professional psychological training, the number of AFU officers who demonstrated a high level of general competence for management under changing conditions increased by 2 times. The indicator $\phi^*=4.101$ indicates the statistical significance of the changes that occurred. At the same time, there were no statistically significant changes in the general indicators of management competence under conditions of change in the control group.

Analysis of changes in the indicators of the cognitive component showed that the number of officers of the AFU who showed a high level of formation of this component increased in the experimental group, and those officers of the AFU who showed a low level improved their results to average indicators ($\phi^*=3.592$). Regarding the control group, a certain increase in the number of AFU officers with a high level of development of the cognitive component should be noted. During an individual conversation with a member of the control group, who increased his score, after the control test, he became interested in the problem of organizational changes and independently began to study the relevant literature. It is also noteworthy that there were no statistically significant changes in the levels of development of the cognitive component in the control group.

A statistically significant change ($\phi^*=4.702$) occurred in the motivational component of competence of the participants in the experimental group. In particular, the number of AFU officers with a high level of formation of the motivational component increased, and there were no participants with a low level of its formation. At the same time, in the control group,
indicators worsened due to a decrease in the number of managers with a high and medium level of formation of the motivational component.

The number of officers of the AFU who demonstrated a high level of formation of the activity component increased to a statistically significant value ($\phi^*=3.479$), and only two participants who remained at a low level of its formation were recorded. At the same time, in the control group, the indicators worsened due to a decrease in the number of managers with a high and medium level of formation of the activity component.

There were no statistically significant changes in the indicators of the personal component ($\phi^*=1.676$), but the number of officers of the AFU with a high level of development of the personal component increased. Officers, who showed a low level in the first test, improved their results to average indicators. In the control group, the number of officers of the AFU with a high level of quality development who were diagnosed increased slightly.

A statistically significant increase in the level of formation of the regulatory component of management competence under conditions of change in the organization ($\phi^*=3.479$) occurred in the experimental group. In the control group, the number of officers with a high and medium level of formation of the regulatory component decreased, and the number of managers of operative and search units with a low level of formation of this component increased. However, the changes that occurred were not statistically significant.

The analysis of the results of the formative experiment revealed significant positive changes among managers who participated in the training course "Psychological training course for the officers of units of the AFU for management under conditions of change" and the absence of such changes among managers from the control group, which confirms its practical significance for solving the problem of developing the competence of AFU officers to manage personnel under conditions of change.

5. Discussion

The conducted analysis of scientific research made it possible to establish that the problem of competence has been the object of scientific research for a long time, and the understanding of its content is continuously changing (Keough Tobin, 2001). Starting in the middle of the 20th century, researchers associated competence with the emotional, volitional, and intellectual potential of an individual in relation to a specific type of activity and characterized it as a qualitative indicator of a specialist's self-regulation at various levels of processes that determine his or her physiological, psychological, and social behavior (Wu 2008, Wahyuningsih et al 2019).

At the current stage of psychological science development, two approaches to the study of the phenomenon of competence have been developed—functional and personal. Within the framework of the functional approach, researchers (M. Levitov, E. Ilyin, L. Nersesyan, O. Konopkin, B. Smirnov) consider competence a certain state of mental function that ensures a high level of achievement when performing one or another type of activity. Within the personal approach, scientists (B. Ananiev, O. Leontiev, A. Pun, M. Dyachenko, and L. Kandybovich) consider competence to be the result of preparation (readiness) for a certain activity. The variety of approaches to the analysis of the essence of competence also leads to the variety of its definitions (Rosenstil et al 2014).

On the basis of the analysis of the scientific literature, the author's definition of the concept of "competence of the AFU officers to manage under conditions of change" is formulated; this is a long-term mental state that is formed in the process of professional and psychological training of the officer for professional activities by improving his or her knowledge, abilities, skills, motives, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and personal qualities and is activated with the beginning of organizational changes. This state is aimed at the adaptive preservation of the psychological integrity and balance of a person and is manifested in the compliance of management decisions with the requirements of the dynamically changing professional environment.

The task of clarifying the reasons, essence and influence of the effectiveness of the managerial activity of the officers of the AFU units under conditions of organizational changes became important for our research. Analysis and generalization of conclusions from studies of the problem of organizational changes (D. Boddy, A. Van de Ven, E. Campbell, J. Kimberly, R. Quinn, E. Lapin, R. Merton, R. Peyton, M. Poole) made it possible to distinguish between the substantive and procedural components (Gergen 1992, Heidegger 1993, Hofstede et al 1991). Organizational changes are associated with transformation, changes in individual aspects, elements, characteristics of the organization, etc. (Didenko et al 2020, Cameron Quinn 2011, Farion 2022).

Based on the results of the theoretical research, we concluded that the organization is an association of people who strive to achieve their goals in an organized way—a unification of an institutional nature with defined functions and status—and achieves its goals by transforming the main resources—human, financial, material, technological, and informational. It has been established that in psychological research, there is a tendency to use the concept of readiness, both in a wide range of meanings and in the context of a sufficiently versatile spectrum of psychological phenomena: readiness for risk, activity, work, choosing a profession, professional activity, political activity, pedagogical activity, combat activity, etc.

Managers, who must determine specific measures for the implementation of changes and decide on the style and intensity of their direct participation, play a leading role in the management of organizational changes. The key criteria here are the complexity of the changes being prepared and the degree of their importance for the future of the organization. In many cases, management under conditions of change causes opposition from the organization's personnel and the managers.
The implementation of these main directions for increasing its efficiency have been identified: drawing the attention of subordinates to the need for change, ensure the support of officers for specific proposals and decisions, exchange information regarding changes, overcome resistance to change, master the structure and methods of making changes, train and develop the abilities and skills of subordinates, and provide relevant psychological assistance to subordinates. Psychological measures to increase the level of psychological readiness of the commanders of the military units to manage under conditions of change should be aimed at improving the training of commanders of the military units in the sphere of the theory of organization and management, skills management, increasing the level of awareness of the reform of the State Border Service of Ukraine, encouraging the commanders of the units to actively participate in changes in the organization, developing their motivation to serve in conditions of change, increasing the level of self-control and self-assessment by the commanders of the results of their own management activities in the conditions of change, and increasing the level of self-regulation of mental states.

6. Conclusions

This article presents the results of a theoretical and empirical study of the problem of forming the competence of officers as commanders of the military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to manage personnel under conditions of change. Achieving the goal of the study required specification of the content and structure of competence for management under conditions of change, which made it possible to design its structural model on the basis of which to diagnose the current state of competence and develop an appropriate program of professional and psychological training for heads of units of the Armed Forces.

The results of the experimental test confirmed the effectiveness of the practical application of professional-psychological training, namely, a psychological training course for the officers of units of the AFU for management under conditions of change. The implementation of the mentioned professional psychological training made it possible to increase the level of development of all components of competence for management under conditions of change.

Thus, quantitative and qualitative changes in the development of competence and its structural components among the participants of the experimental group were confirmed. A comparison of the results obtained at the beginning and at the end of the experiment made it possible to determine the positive dynamics. The significance of the obtained results is confirmed by significant differences identified using the statistical test φ (Fisher) and Student’s t test at the level of p≤0.05. The indicators of participants in the control group remained almost unchanged, with a certain downward trend.

As a result of this study, practical recommendations have been developed to increase the efficiency of the management of military unit commanders. The following main directions for increasing its efficiency have been identified: drawing the attention of subordinates to the need for organizational changes; ensuring the support of officers of military units for specific proposals and solutions; informing subordinates about the course of organizational changes and receiving feedback from them; carrying out measures to overcome resistance to organizational changes; mastering the structure and methods of carrying out organizational changes; and training, developing the abilities and skills of participants in organizational changes.

The practical value of the obtained results is the following: the possibility of applying the results of research by psychologists in the process of psychological support, diagnostic, individual and group consultation work with the heads of military and other units to increase the level of psychological readiness for management in conditions of organizational changes; the improvement of the content and teaching methods of the training courses "Fundamentals of military psychology", "Moral-psychological support of military activity", and "Psychology of extreme activity" based on the generalizations of the theoretical and empirical results of the study; and the development and implementation of the authors’ professional and psychological training for the development of the psychological readiness of the heads of military units to manage in conditions of change in the process of improving their qualifications.

Ethical considerations

Informed consent.
The authors confirm that they have obtained all the consent required by the applicable law to publish any personal details or images of the research subjects. They have retained written copies of all such consents and agree to provide multidisciplinary reviews with copies of the consents or evidence that such consents have been obtained if requested.

Conflicts of Interest
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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