

MILITARY CULTURE AND LEVELS OF MILITARY CULTURAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract:

This article analyzes the content, significance, and stages of development of military culture competencies. It substantiates the crucial role of cultural, ethical, patriotic, and communicative competencies in professional training within the military sphere. These competencies contribute to the formation of professional knowledge, spiritual maturity, and social responsibility among youth.

Keywords: Military culture, skill, qualification and mastery, competence, competency, stage of military culture, levels of military culture.

Introduction

Raising any field to a new qualitative stage and further improving it requires shaping and developing the intellectual, physical, and scientific potential of the younger generation, as well as their professional competencies in chosen fields, in accordance with modern requirements. High-level professional competencies of future specialists serve as a guarantee of their successful adaptation to the rapidly changing conditions of society and ensure prospects for carrying out effective social and professional activities in practice. The first direction of the “Uzbekistan – 2030 Strategy” defines the strategic tasks of developing science through consistent and targeted reform of the education system, with a strong focus on improving the quality of education [1; p.230]. It is emphasized that the need to raise the quality of education is directly linked to the acceleration of political, social, economic, and cultural transformations, the emergence of new global challenges, and ethical contradictions.

Military culture, as a set of special social institutions created to protect the independence, sovereignty, and security of each state, simultaneously reflects a specific example of a people’s culture and, in turn, exerts a significant positive impact on its development. Although culture and military culture are relatively independent systems, they possess strong mutual influence and operate in close interconnection. At the same time, each of them has distinctive features, which can be observed in their semiotic and symbolic signs, hidden and explicit forms, specific values, the highly formalized nature of relationships during the work process, and strict adherence to clear rules and regulations. If we consider that military culture is expressed through various symbols, signs, and semiotic systems—manifesting military traditions, discipline, personal and collective identification, as well as military ideas—we can conclude that while culture and military culture interact closely, they nevertheless remain relatively independent systems with their own unique features. For example, personal and group

identification indicates the affiliation of soldiers, officers, and military units to a particular structure, while the designation of discipline and hierarchy is reflected through symbols of military ranks and positions. Moreover, reflecting historical and cultural heritage serves to preserve national and historical traditions.

Military symbols (uniforms, colors, emblems, insignia, orders, medals, flags, coats of arms, etc.) and their meanings carry distinctive content, form, and specific functions, signifying a range of concepts inherent in the military sphere. For instance, military uniforms indicate the state, unit, or position to which a military serviceman belongs, while camouflage uniforms serve as a special type of attire used to distract or make detection by the enemy more difficult. Similarly, the colors of military uniforms also convey particular meanings: for example, blue is associated with peacekeeping forces, while red—contrary to purely psychological interpretations—often symbolizes bravery and heroism. Military symbols also include specific emblems for different branches of the armed forces, orders and medals awarded for services and heroism, as well as flags that embody certain ideas, traditions, and historical values of military units and national armies.

Undoubtedly, military symbols contribute to strengthening values of patriotism and national defense in society, provide moral strength to military personnel and citizens, and reinforce collective spirit. In military culture, semiotic and symbolic signs reflect not only external appearance but also deeper spiritual and strategic meanings. They embody military traditions, discipline, and respect, serving as indicators of a society's military culture and potential.

Military culture represents a distinct form of protecting the interests of society, the state, and the individual. As a set of values, social relations, and norms, it directly or indirectly reflects its components, stages of development, and specific characteristics. In conclusion, military culture is the sum of a society's values, traditions, knowledge, and experience in the fields of security, defense, and the military sphere. This concept encompasses military ethics, combat training, military-technical knowledge, issues of national security, and state defense functions. Military culture ensures spiritual and moral maturity, patriotism, as well as a high level of discipline and responsibility in the military sphere.

The components forming military culture together constitute a certain competence. From this perspective, as a part of general culture, military culture competencies include young people's physical and moral preparation, organizational skills, responsibility, and both personal and collective activity skills.

Military culture competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that define young people's attitudes toward military discipline, service, and patriotism. This competence is aimed at developing their physical, moral, and psychological preparedness, playing an important role in preparing them for military service. Organizing the process of forming military culture competencies on a scientific basis is one of today's complex pedagogical tasks. This process is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Developing knowledge, skills, and abilities related to military culture among young people;

2. Delivering knowledge of military culture as a component of general culture, relying on innovative approaches;

3. Ensuring a consistent implementation of the developmental stages of military culture competence in an integrated sequence, accelerating young people's acquisition of these competencies. This means gradually moving from a reproductive level of knowledge, skills, and abilities to a productive level, ultimately achieving a high level of military culture competence in society as a positive indicator of general culture.

It is well known that the concept of *competence* (Lat. *competentia* – relevant, related, appropriate, corresponding) refers to the ability to apply knowledge, qualifications, skills, and experiences in a specific field. At present, many studies have been conducted on the concepts of “competence” and “competency.” The term “competence” was first applied in the scientific field by American sociologist R. White in 1959, who defined it as “the effective interaction of an individual with the environment” [2; pp. 297–333]. Some dictionaries describe it as “having knowledge and experience in a certain field” [3]. In 1965, N. Chomsky introduced the concept of “competence” into linguistic theory, associating it with an individual's ability and experience in speaking and listening [4; p. 122].

R. Meyers interpreted “competence” as “not only conforming to categories related to a certain activity but also demonstrating developed skills in the process of production” [5; p. 15]. British scholar D. Raven, in his works, assessed the term as “a phenomenon consisting of components that are relatively independent of one another, belonging to the cognitive and emotional spheres, or as life success in socially significant areas” [6; p. 78].

Among local scholars, N. Muslimov and others defined it as “the ability to effectively apply theoretical knowledge in activity, demonstrating high-level professional skills and talent” [7; p. 120]. M. T. Akhmedova and a group of researchers described it as “a person's awareness of a certain field and their level of knowledge in that field” [8; p. 84].

Today, competence is understood as an integral professional and personal characteristic that determines a specialist's readiness to perform professional functions, as well as conformity with the norms and standards accepted in society. In this sense, “competence is a set of issues in which a person possesses knowledge and experience” [9], i.e., the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and experience in familiar situations. In our view, the concept of competence is narrower, being limited to the knowledge, skills, and abilities within a specific professional field.

The composition of these definitions has gradually expanded in the context of time and space with new concepts such as “readiness,” “responsibility,” “determination,” ability, “confidence,” as well as other components necessary for every specialist. These include personal development, intellectual potential, emotional willpower and personal qualities, a sense of targeted responsibility, humanism, tolerance, dedication, professional mastery, and qualities connected with certain types of professional activity.

Moreover, their content reflects: the practical application of a set of knowledge; an individual's abilities, traits, and virtues; a measure of preparedness for practical activity; the capacity to solve problems and achieve necessary practical results; the integrity of knowledge, skills, and

abilities ensuring professional activity; an activated (applied in practice) set of learning, knowledge, and experience; and an individual's goal-directed emotional willpower [10; p. 160].

Competencies have also been studied conditionally in such aspects as social, intercultural, linguistic, informational, self-development, as well as "political and socio-economic," "social-communicative," "cultural diversity," "information-instrumental," and "individual-personal" components [11]. Pedagogue B. Khodjayev identified three levels of competencies: "basic competencies related to the general content of secondary education; general competencies belonging to a specific group of subjects in accordance with the reflection of reality; and specific competencies that cover and are formed within a single subject" [12].

The pedagogical foundations of forming military culture competencies are based on experiences and theoretical approaches from different fields. To achieve this goal, pedagogy and education rely on a set of fundamental principles, methods, and techniques. While sources and dictionaries often define military culture primarily as the formation of knowledge, skills, abilities, mastery, technical expertise, and professional qualities necessary for soldiers and military personnel, in essence, it represents not only a military necessity but also a significant part of the general competencies that should be formed in every citizen, especially the youth. Thus, military culture also constitutes a set of knowledge, skills, and competencies grounded in an independent position, serving as an essential component of general development.

Within the structure of military culture competencies, abilities and mastery undoubtedly occupy a crucial place. In accordance with the personal-activity approach of subjects engaged in military training, ability and mastery determine specific actions within human activity. If activity itself, through its goal orientation, objectivity, and the desire to transform the subject of activity, acts as a distinct type of human practice, then the content of this activity can be expressed as a system of conscious, partly conscious, and unconscious actions, operations, or behaviors.

In the context of a modernizing Uzbekistan, a holistic military-pedagogical process encompasses not only the preparation of future specialists in the military field but also the education and development of young people for future military-cultural activity. It requires ensuring the continuity of the psychological-pedagogical foundations of military culture, which are person-centered and competence-based. It should be emphasized that in terms of tasks and content, military pedagogy differs slightly from general pedagogy, namely in its orientation toward achieving planned outcomes and maintaining the dynamic characteristics of activity. It is distinguished by positions, professional mastery, level of potential, functions, and directions. Skills mainly include gnostic, constructive, communicative, organizational, and specialized ones, whereas abilities encompass transferring knowledge into new pedagogical situations, finding solutions in any pedagogical context, creating new knowledge, working with emerging pedagogical problems, engaging with educational material, applying psychological-pedagogical knowledge, performing communicative tasks, conducting pedagogical interaction effectively, maintaining a professional stance, organizing one's professional development, and evaluating and monitoring learning outcomes.

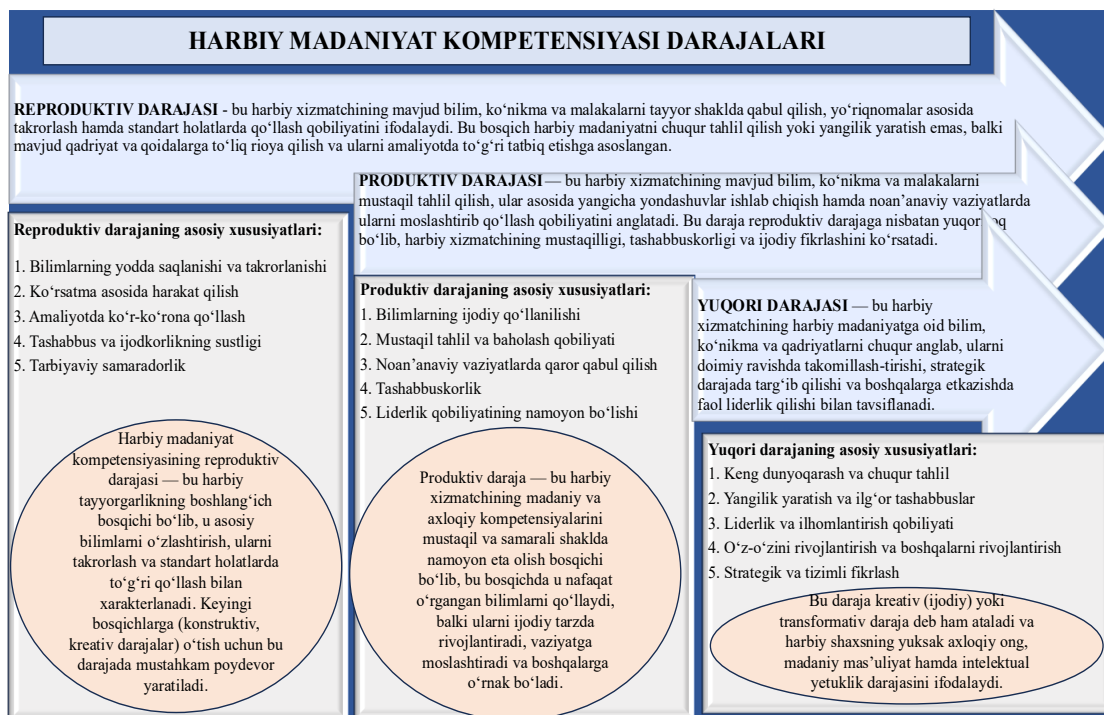
Military culture competencies guide individuals toward integrity, honesty, purity, patriotism, humanism, benevolence, and ultimately high morality. Pre-prescription military education is a crucial stage in preparing young people for military service, and its primary goal is to form military culture competencies, ensure knowledge of military service rules, adherence to discipline, physical preparedness, and, most importantly, to foster patriotism and teamwork. As stated, "Military culture plays an important role in shaping patriotism, discipline, physical and spiritual preparedness, as well as a conscious attitude toward military service among youth" [13]. It holds significant value in youth upbringing because it fosters qualities such as patriotism, discipline, physical and spiritual readiness. Particularly, by shaping a conscious attitude toward military service, youth develop a sense of responsibility, dedication, and discipline. This, in turn, lays the foundation for them to become active and patriotic citizens not only in the sphere of defense but also in other areas of society.

Military culture competence refers to the embodiment of such qualities as military discipline, patriotism, loyalty, and responsibility in the fulfillment of a serviceman's professional duties. By integrating military culture into education, students are provided with opportunities to develop courage, bravery, dedication, teamwork, and leadership abilities. At the same time, military knowledge is taught at various stages of education, including schools, colleges, and higher educational institutions, through specialized subjects or programs.

One of the main components of this competence is **military-legal knowledge**, which encourages servicemen to thoroughly master the laws and regulations related to national defense. In addition, the principles of **military ethics and morality** help to form discipline, dedication, loyalty, and teamwork in individuals [14]. **Military-psychological training** serves to develop stress resistance and the ability to make quick decisions in complex situations. **Physical training** is also an important component, enhancing the endurance of military personnel and their preparedness for combat situations.

The structure of military culture competence consists of several key components that ensure military personnel remain disciplined, responsible, and both mentally and physically prepared. Military-legal knowledge, military ethical values, military-psychological training, military-aesthetic culture, and physical training are considered the main pillars of this competence.

As noted, "It is necessary to rely on effective pedagogical foundations in shaping military culture skills among young people, increasing their preparedness for military service, and fostering the spirit of patriotism" [15]. This process includes educational methods, interactive teaching technologies, and motivational approaches.



The **reproductive level of military culture competence** represents the initial stage of military training, characterized by the acquisition of basic knowledge, its repetition, and correct application in standard situations. The main features of this initial reproductive stage include memorization and reproduction of knowledge; acting according to instructions; blind application of learned skills in practice; predominance of obedience and execution over initiative; and an emphasis on educational effectiveness. However, this stage creates a solid foundation for subsequent levels, namely the constructive and creative stages.

The **productive level of military culture competence** refers to the serviceman's ability to independently analyze existing knowledge, skills, and abilities, to develop new approaches on their basis, and to adapt and apply them in non-standard situations. This level is higher than the reproductive stage, demonstrating the serviceman's independence, initiative, and creative thinking. Its main characteristics include the creative application of knowledge, the ability to analyze and evaluate independently, decision-making in unconventional situations, initiative, and the manifestation of leadership qualities. In short, at the productive level, the serviceman is able to demonstrate cultural and ethical competences in an independent and effective manner, not only applying acquired knowledge but also developing it creatively, adapting it to circumstances, and serving as a role model for others.

The **highest level of military culture competence** is characterized by the serviceman's deep understanding of military culture-related knowledge, skills, and values, as well as continuous improvement, strategic promotion, and active leadership in communicating them to others. This stage, also referred to as the creative or transformative level, reflects a high degree of moral consciousness, cultural responsibility, and intellectual maturity. Its main features include

broad worldview and deep analysis; innovation and advanced initiatives; leadership and the ability to inspire; self-development and the capacity to develop others; and strategic, systemic thinking. At this level, the individual not only masters and applies military culture but also emerges as a leader who develops, promotes, and communicates it, creating the moral and ethical foundation of the field.

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