

MILITARY EDUCATION AND VALUES: PRIORITIES IN THE TRAINING OF FUTURE OFFICERS

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Ukraine's military policy has undergone a profound transformation over the past decade. As defined in earlier doctrine, by the end of 2004 "Ukraine will consider as its potential adversary a state whose consistent policy poses a military threat to Ukraine, interferes in its internal affairs, or encroaches on its territorial integrity and national interests", while also maintaining defence capabilities within limits of international disarmament treaties (On the Military Doctrine 2000).

In 2008, Ukraine applied for a NATO Membership Action Plan, but the initiative was suspended after Viktor Yanukovich's 2010 election, when he opted for non-alignment. Following the Euromaidan and Revolution of Dignity, Yanukovich fled Ukraine in February 2014. The interim government initially maintained a non-aligned stance, but after Russia's invasion in 2014 and the subsequent parliamentary elections, NATO accession became a national priority.

On 21 February 2019, the Constitution of Ukraine was amended to enshrine the country's strategic course toward EU and NATO membership (The Constitution of Ukraine 2020).

The escalation of Russian aggression, especially the 2022 full-scale invasion, has greatly influenced the organization of military education in Ukraine (Medvid, Ktitorov, Medvid 2022; Medvid, Medvid, Ktitorov 2023).

A key new focus for NATO, the EU, and Ukraine is the integration of Ukrainian combat experience (CE) into military education. Similar to the U.S. Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) and NATO's Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC), Ukraine is developing structures to collect, analyse, and apply lessons from real combat.

According to Secchi (1999), "A lesson learned is knowledge or understanding gained by experience—positive or negative—that is significant, valid, and applicable in improving future operations". Incorporating such experience into curricula refines competencies and aligns training with real operational demands.

Developing Key Competencies in Future Officers

A critical task in modern Ukrainian military education is identifying and forming newly required competencies. The research employed theoretical, experimental, and statistical methods, including a pedagogical experiment conducted across diagnostic, formative, and control stages, and statistical validation using the χ^2 criterion.

Competence is defined as the ability to learn, adapt, and perform professionally through a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes (On Higher Education 2024).

Knowledge, in turn, represents information acquired through experience, education, and research.

Drawing from Ukraine's combat experience, four priority competencies were identified: Training Adults, Survival in Combat, Operation of Standard Weapons, and Use of Electronic Warfare (EW) Tools.

1. Ability to Train Adults

Ukraine's demographic structure means that young officers often lead older subordinates (Medvid, Komisarov, Merdova 2018).

Research shows that variable-priority training enhances older adults' attentional control and task performance compared to single-task practice (Bier, Ouellet, Belleville 2018).

The principles of andragogy—self-directed, experience-based learning—differ from pedagogy and are essential for effective adult instruction (Razid, Puteh 2024).

Further studies expanded this framework through diagnostic tools and pedagogical models for adult learning (Samodumska 2019a, 2019b).

2. Ability to Survive in Combat

Commanders are directly responsible for saving lives and organizing medical support (Zhahovskiy, Livinskiy 2024).

The "golden hour" principle in tactical medicine states that survival chances reach 90% if care is provided within one hour, but drop to 10% after two hours ("Golden Hour" 2025).

3. Ability to Operate Standard Unit Weapons

Future tactical-level officers must master NATO-standard and adversary weapons systems (On the Approval 2019).

Rapid technological evolution on the battlefield challenges existing standards, necessitating constant adaptation in training programs (Medvid, Biriukov, Nikonenko 2023).

4. Ability to Use Electronic Warfare (EW) Tools

The proliferation of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and advanced technologies has elevated EW to a strategic priority (Yarosh, Huriev 2022).

Ukraine's signals intelligence (SIGINT) systems have proven highly effective through adaptive deployment and specialized training.

The future of SIGINT lies in fully integrated NATO-standard C4ISR and DRMIS systems, with capabilities for automated data analysis and space-based reconnaissance (Maiboroda, Vlasov, Hlushchenko 2024).

Incorporating Combat Experience into Education

A methodology for integrating combat experience (CE) into higher military education was developed by Medvid, Medvid, and Ktitorov (2023) and formalized within the Internal Quality Assurance System of the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine (Figure 1).

The model includes:

Input: Data collected from combatants;

Discussion: Evaluation within academic departments;

Decision-making: Determining inclusion in curricula;

Implementation: Integration via modules or elective courses;

Revision: Updating teaching materials and resources;

Feedback: Assessing results and revising programs;

Output: Improved student learning outcomes.

Modernization of Military Education

Following UNESCO's 1976 Recommendation that adult education should include a theoretical foundation (UNESCO 1976), Ukraine's military education system has been restructured.

Under the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 1410 (1997; amended 2022, No. 1490), cadets study tactical-level programs aligned with their specialties while also pursuing

professional training at L-1A (basic) and L-1B (professional) levels (On the Transformation 1997).

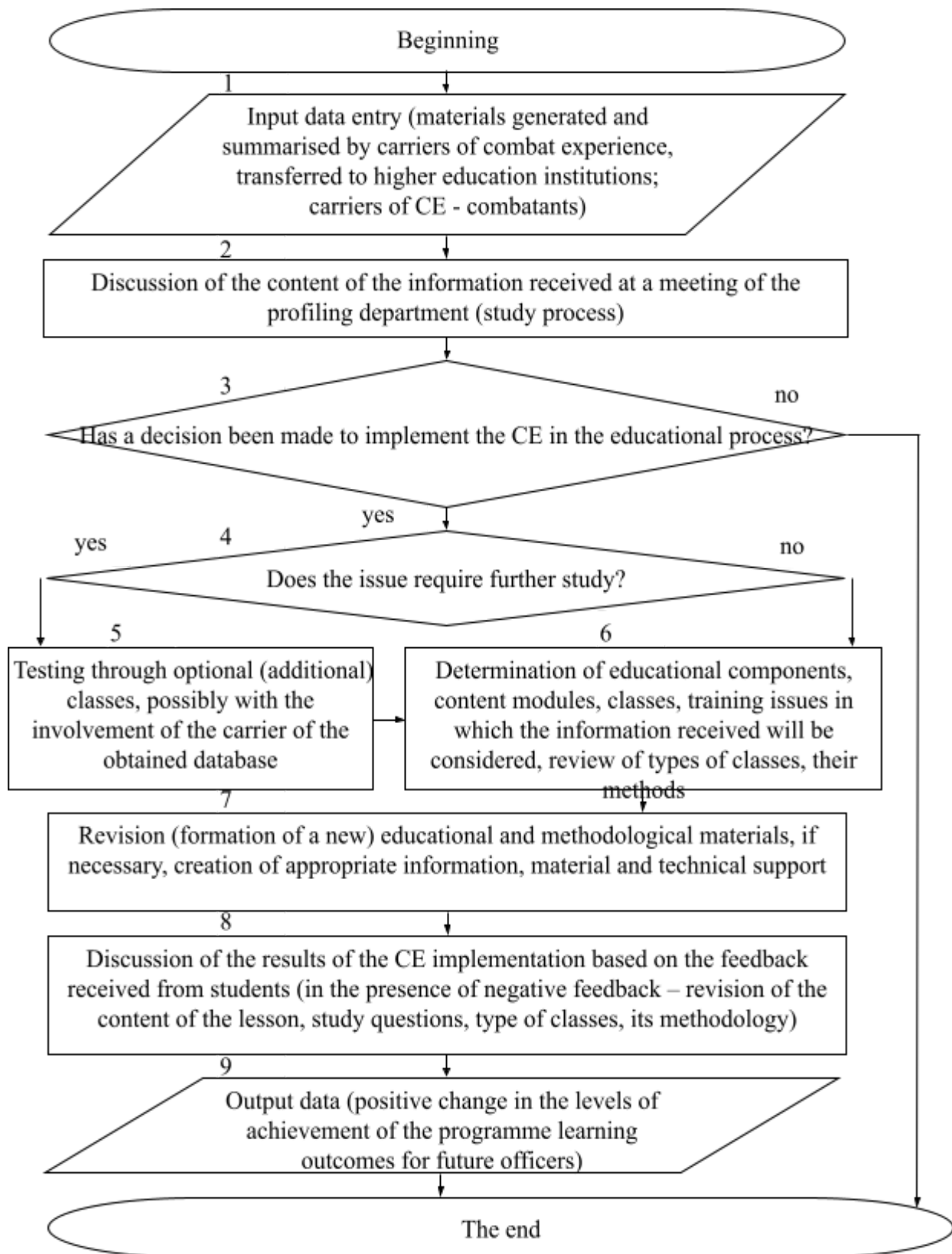


Figure 1: Scheme of the methodology for studying and implementing combat experience in the educational process

The 2024 Educational Programme introduced major updates:
Removal of Moral and Psychological Support for Military Formations;
Addition of Combat Operations in the Electromagnetic and Cyber Environments and Use of Tactical-Class UAVs;

Increased credits for Combat System of Soldier Survival (Tactical Medicine) from 2 to 3 ECTS.

These reforms demonstrate Ukraine's rapid adaptation of its officer training to modern warfare, integrating combat experience, new technologies, and adult-learning principles into a coherent system of professional development.

Definition of Competencies

The document outlines the key components of several competencies that form the basis of the present study.

Survival Ability in Combat Conditions

Cadets must:

Know the most common causes and signs of wounds and injuries that require first aid; the procedures and techniques for administering first aid; the organisation of movement through enemy-controlled territory; and the fundamental life-support measures required in autonomous environments.

Be able to administer first aid for injuries, bleeding, poisoning, and other combat-related traumas using service-issued equipment; organise and equip locations for small units in anticipation of enemy contact; and implement measures to counteract adverse natural conditions affecting human performance.

Ability to Use Standard Weapons of the Unit

Cadets must:

Know the purpose, tactical and technical characteristics, combat properties, general structure, and principles of operation of the unit's standard weapons; the procedures for incomplete disassembly and assembly; maintenance after use; battlefield observation and target selection; initial weapon settings; fire control techniques; fire mission planning; use of night sights and observation devices; and safety procedures for handling small arms and grenades.

Use standard weapons effectively; perform combat checks and sight-in procedures at various ranges; and utilise signal and illumination munitions and pistols.

Ability to Use EW Means

Cadets must:

Know the definitions, tasks, and components of electronic and cyber warfare; the organisational structure, equipment, and operational capabilities of EW units; tactical standards for EW employment; key organisational measures for cyber and electronic defence; and methods for collecting and applying electronic situational awareness to unit operations.

Be able to implement electronic protection measures (e.g., secure communications); employ basic tactics for operating in electromagnetic environments; follow regulations for cyber operations; detect signals from cellular and wireless sources (e.g., Wi-Fi, Bluetooth); apply open-source intelligence (OSINT) methods; conduct disinformation operations using digital platforms; and ensure compliance with cybersecurity protocols in the Armed Forces of Ukraine's information systems.

A skill is the ability of a person as a subject of activity to successfully and consciously solve a practical or theoretical task of a certain type, i.e., to achieve a certain goal under certain conditions. Skills represent abilities that have been internalised and automated through repeated practice and experience.

The value weighting method was used to identify the values underlying the priority competencies of future officers (see Table 1). This method is a straightforward yet powerful technique for self-reflection, based on visualising and experiencing the perceived "weight" of each value.

Table 1: Values of competencies of future officers

Name of the priority competence of future officers	Values
ability to deliver adult education	knowledge, professionalism, productivity;
ability to survive in combat conditions	health, support, teamwork;
ability to use standard weapons of the unit	strength, achievement of goals, victory;
ability to use EW equipment	risk management, material resources, engineering creativity

Pedagogical conditions refer to the scientific, methodological, and instructional strategies to transfer, systematise, enhance, and apply learners' knowledge, skills, and competencies. Based on analysing scholarly sources, institutional best practices, and the authors' personal teaching experience, the pedagogical conditions for developing priority competencies in future officers are presented in Table 2 (Medvid, Kryvoruchko, Kurbatov 2023).

Table 2: The Structure of Pedagogical Conditions for formation of priority competencies of future officers

Components of the educational process	The Structure of Pedagogical Conditions for formation of priority competencies of future officers
legal and regulatory	defining the procedure for studying and implementing combat experience in the normative legal acts of the military educational institutions;
human resources	1) filling vacant positions of academic and pedagogical staff with servicemen who took part in combat (special) missions; 2) planning of internships for research and teaching staff in the areas of combat (special) missions to acquire CE; 3) conducting planned binary and additional classes involving combatants;
educational and methodological	1) updating the content of existing educational programmes based on the results of a survey of stakeholders, including combatants; if necessary, creating new academic programmes in more relevant specialities; 2) updating the content of teaching and learning materials based on proposals made by combatants;
informational	use of educational and methodological literature compiled by combatants;
material and technical	1) obtaining new models of weapons and equipment used in the areas of combat (special) missions; 2) development of training facilities

A pedagogical experiment is a method of scientific research in the field of educational work, observation of the pedagogical phenomenon under study in specially created and

controlled conditions by the researcher, which aims to establish the relationship between a particular influence or condition of education or upbringing and the result of the research.

For this purpose, it is necessary to reflect, at the very least, that when applied to the same objects (in this case, groups of future officers), it produces different results than when traditional pedagogical influences are applied. For this purpose, an experimental group (EG) is identified and compared with a control group (CG). The difference in the effects of pedagogical interventions will be justified if these two groups initially coincide in their characteristics, and after the implementation of pedagogical interventions, they differ. Therefore, it is necessary to make two comparisons and show that in the first comparison (before the pedagogical experiment), the characteristics of the EG and CG coincide. In the second comparison (after the experiment), they differ. Since the object of the pedagogical experiment is a group of future officers, and each person is an individual, we can talk about the coincidence or discrepancy of the characteristics of EG and CG only in a formal, statistical sense. To determine whether the coincidences or differences are random, statistical methods are used that allow, based on the data obtained from the experiment, to make an informed decision about the existence of coincidences or differences (Medvid, Medvid, Ktitorov 2023). The Structure of Pedagogical Conditions for formation of priority competencies of future officers by Components of the Educational Process.

We developed a programme for a pedagogical experiment based on the analysis of scientific sources. The experiment's purpose is to test the effectiveness of pedagogical conditions. Participants of the experiment: future officers – applicants of the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine.

Based on the analysis of the experiment data, three types of tasks can be distinguished: data description (compact and informative display of the results of measurements of the characteristics of the objects under study);

identifying similarities in the characteristics of the two groups;

identification of differences in the characteristics of the two groups.

The students of the EG and CG did not differ significantly in their knowledge, skills, and practical abilities, which ensured the groups' homogeneity at the beginning of the pedagogical experiment. By the theoretical provisions (Medvid, Medvid, Ktitorov 2023), we conducted the experimental work in three stages (stating, formative and control).

The first stage was aimed at analysing the theoretical and methodological foundations of formation of the priority competencies of future officers, identifying opportunities to improve the training of future officers, studying the state of development of the problem, determining the criteria, indicators and levels of formation of priority competencies of future officers; selecting applicants for the CG and EG; identifying the level formation of priority competences of future officers.

At the second stage of scientific research, formative pedagogical conditions were implemented in the EG. The educational process of professional training of future officers was traditionally carried out for the applicants of the CG who participated in the experimental work.

According to the results of a survey of combatants who have studied the teaching materials of the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine, it was found that the following relevant topics should be reflected in the content of the classes (Medvid, Ktitorov, Medvid 2022):

the use of software for mapping the operational situation, marking targets, adjusting mortars and artillery in various ways; their advantages, purpose and capabilities;

data transmission without going on air; connecting an unmanned aerial vehicle to the components of the relevant software;

types of equipment (universal, to different kinds of combat and other specific situations);

selection of personal protective equipment for different conditions of service and combat activities;

disclosure of the content of the March protocol – peculiarities of actions of service members in different conditions of first aid;

cases of implementation of a set of knowledge, skills and abilities by a group of servicemen in conditions close to combat (combination of tactics, physical training and medicine); ensuring mine safety and providing first aid for mine-blast injuries; using software and aerial data for terrain orientation and determining the route of movement;

methods of modern electronic camouflage;

application of modern technical equipment in the implementation of known reconnaissance methods;

application of various software in the control of unmanned aerial vehicles: their advantages and disadvantages;

the procedure for small combat groups in urban warfare, during an assault on a building, car, or bus, peculiarities of using combat orders during the execution of tasks, etc.

At the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine, in addition to the pedagogical conditions indicated in Table 2, officer teachers also developed and implemented three courses, the content of which was aimed at forming (improving the level of formation) of priority competencies of future officers.

Tactical-special training in modern combat operations – Emphasis on learning advanced tactics and strategies essential for effective troop management in modern combat operations, with a focus on manoeuvrability and coordination of unit actions.

Application of modern technologies in combat operations – Training specialists for general military units capable of planning, organizing, and executing tasks within platoons and companies in support of military units (formations) during combat operations. This includes leveraging modern technologies that have demonstrated effectiveness in the context of recent military conflicts.

Application of EW and reconnaissance tools in combat conditions – Provide military personnel with knowledge and practical skills in the use of EW and reconnaissance tools to protect units, neutralize drone threats, disrupt enemy communications, and ensure reliable communication during combat operations.

In organising the training of applicants, EGs preferred to conduct binary classes, which have recently become popular not only in higher education institutions (Ananchenko, Voronina, Skorokhodova 2020; Zub, Taimasov, Turchynov 2021). A binary class is one of the forms of conducting mainly practical classes, which are implemented by two or more academic staff or a teacher and a practitioner in the speciality (field) in which higher education students are trained. The objectives of such classes are to create conditions for the motivated practical implementation of the formed competencies by higher education students, to diversify the educational process, to develop a cognitive interest in higher education students, and to promote the development of their personality. The requirements for a binary lesson are the availability of a lesson methodology that provides for each participant's role in the lesson's educational process. Such classes are particularly important for developing the competence of future officers to train adults.

In addition, training for EG applicants was organised using such training as bilateral tactical platoon exercises. In particular, bilateral tactical platoon exercises were conducted on the following topic: "Setting up a patrol base – search and assault", involving two cadet groups. The task of the first group was to move from the initial area to the area of concentration, set up a patrol base (location on the spot) and perform duties to protect and

defend a vital terrain area to prevent an enemy breakthrough. The task of the second group was to search for the enemy, conduct assault operations to destroy the first group and take over the area to ensure the further advance of their units. After completing the tasks, their tasks were reversed. To conduct bilateral tactical exercises of platoons on this topic, the following training and material base was used: "Scythian" laser battle simulation system – 40 units, "Scythian" hand grenades – 40 units, APC with a regular PC and "Scythian" kit for the PC and APC – 2 units, RPG-22 "Scythian" – 6 units, MON-50 "Scythian" – 3 units, MPL – 40 units, MKO-L – 1 set, quadcopter – 2 units, Motorola radio station – 15 units, blue and green adhesive tape (scotch tape) – 4 units each, tourniquet – 60 units. The bilateral tactical exercises ended with a summary of the cadets' actions by the cadets. By the recommendations formulated by the scientists of Hlukhiv Oleksandr Dovzhenko National Pedagogical University (Kurok, Lutsenko, Zinchenko 2024), during the preparation for the pedagogical experiment and in the process of its implementation, the case method was used both in the methods of diagnosing the formation of readiness for activity and in the methods of conducting training sessions.

The following criteria assessed their formation and considered the essence and structure of the defined competencies: motivational and value, cognitive and procedural, and performance and reflection. The motivational-value criterion reveals awareness of the need to carry out service-combat activities and the presence of a value attitude toward service-combat activities. The cognitive-procedural criterion characterises the mastery of knowledge in the reserve officer training programme and the ability to use the acquired knowledge in service and combat activities. The resultant-reflective criterion reveals the ability to self-evaluate and reflect on the results of their activities (Medvid 2019).

The third stage of the research – the final control stage – involved comparing the readiness levels of formation of the priority competencies of future officers in the CG and EG. At this stage, the results of the pedagogical experiment were generalised (Table 3).

Table 3: Results of formation of the priority competencies of future officers in the control and experimental groups

Level	Control group (64 people)		Experimental group (70 people)	
	before the experiment (persons)	after the end of the experiment (persons)	before the experiment (persons)	after the end of the experiment (persons)
Motivational and value-based				
Low	15	27	18	46
Medium	33	24	35	17
High	16	13	17	7
Cognitive and procedural				
Low	12	22	14	39
Medium	31	27	34	22
High	21	15	22	9
Effective and reflective				
Low	12	23	22	41
Medium	27	21	21	18
High	25	20	27	11

The following data were obtained according to the calculations made in the computer program "Statistics in Pedagogy". All the conditions for conducting a confirmatory experiment were met.

At the control stage of the experiment, the level of formation of priority competences of future officers; statistical criteria compared the groups, and the experimental data obtained were analysed. After studying the state of formation of the priority competencies of future officers with the help of the defined tools, the experiment results are obtained at the end. All the conditions for the experiment were met. In the experimental group, there was a positive dynamic in the formation of priority competences of future officers effective and reflective criterion.

The results of diagnosing the formation of priority competences of future officers in EG and CG are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Dynamics of the Levels of formation of priority competences of future officers

Criterion	Level	Group of applicants					
		CG (64 persons), percent			EG (70 persons), percent		
		Before the experiment	after the experiment	dynamics	before the experiment	after the experiment	dynamics
Motivational and value-based	Low	23	42	19	26	66	40
	Medium	52	38	-14	50	24	-26
	High	25	20	-5	24	10	-14
Cognitive and procedural	Low	19	34	15	20	56	36
	Medium	48	43	-5	49	31	-18
	High	33	23	-10	31	13	-18
Effective and reflective-criterion	Low	19	36	17	31	58	27
	Medium	42	33	-9	30	26	-4
	High	39	31	-8	39	16	-23

The analysis of empirical data showed positive dynamics of the formation the effective and reflective criterion in the EG. It has been found that during the experiment, the number of EG students with a low level of priority competences of future officers (by 14% for the motivational and value-based, 18% for the cognitive and procedural, and by 23% for the effective and reflective), at the same time, the number of future officers with a high level of priority competences of future officers (by 40% for the motivational and value-based, 36% for the cognitive and procedural criterion, and by 27% for the effective and reflective criterion). The changes in the CG respondents are not significant.

The collaboration between the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine and military educational institutions of NATO member states represents a mutually beneficial partnership that enhances the capabilities of higher military education. This cooperation facilitates:

The organization and integration of NATO member states' military experience into the educational process of the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine; and

The incorporation of Ukraine's combat experience into the curricula of NATO member states' military education institutions.

Based on the findings of this study, educational programs developed by the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine are now being implemented within the instructional systems of NATO military education institutions.

The findings of this study underscore the significance of incorporating Ukraine's combat experience into the training programs of military educational institutions in both Ukraine and European countries. The analysis identified a set of critical competencies that require renewed focus in preparing future officers. These competencies include training adults, surviving in combat conditions, operating standard unit weaponry, and employing EW capabilities.

Specific pedagogical conditions were formulated and implemented in the professional training process to support the development of these priority competencies. The experimental results demonstrated a marked improvement in forming these competencies among cadets in the experimental group: a 40% increase in the motivational and value-based criterion, a 36% increase in the cognitive and procedural criterion, and a 27% increase in the resultative and reflective criterion.

As a result of this research, educational programs developed by the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine are being adopted and integrated into the curricula of military educational institutions in NATO member states, enhancing officer training on an international scale.

Conclusions. In the sphere of military education, experimental studies confirmed the effectiveness of integrating Ukraine's combat experience into officer training programs. Cooperation between the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine and NATO military institutions has led to measurable improvements in key competencies of cadets, including motivational, cognitive, and reflective criteria. These results highlight the importance of combining tactical training with psychological resilience and value-based motivation, ensuring the readiness of future officers for modern warfare.

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