



New Trends
in Psychology

Professional Motivation for Learning among Military Students

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Abstract: This article presents the results of both theoretical and empirical research on learning motivation among military students. The main objective of the empirical study was to identify the specific features of professional learning motivation in this population. Previous studies in educational and organizational psychology have emphasized the role of motivation in academic success, but research on military students remains limited, particularly in Eastern Europe. This article builds on classical motivational theories while situating the discussion within the specific psychosocial context of military education. The research employed a comparative design, analyzing motivational structures among military students across different years of study. Both theoretical analysis and empirical data were integrated to capture the dynamics of motivation in relation to psychosocial development during higher education. Findings indicate that the core motivational structure, oriented towards professional learning, varies significantly depending on the students' academic year and developmental stage. Differences were observed in the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, with higher-year students displaying stronger professional orientation. These results highlight the need for differentiated pedagogical and psychological strategies in military higher education, tailored to students' psychosocial development and year of study. The study provides one of the few empirical investigations into the learning motivation of military students in the region, contributing both to the theoretical understanding of professional motivation and to the practical improvement of military education and training.

Keywords: academic achievement; psychosocial development; professional training; educational psychology; higher education

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1. Introduction

Motivation is a fundamental psychological construct and an indispensable component of human activity. It functions as an internal state that initiates, directs, and sustains behavior, influencing how individuals approach tasks and pursue their goals. In the context of education, learning motivation represents the set of motives that energize and orient the student's engagement with academic activities. It is widely recognized as a central factor in determining the effectiveness of instruction, shaping performance, persistence, and personal development at all stages of the educational process.

Motivation in learning serves multiple functions. It signals internal imbalance and the need for adaptation, acts as a trigger for action, guides the choice between alternatives, and regulates conduct by ensuring persistence and selectivity. These functions illustrate why motivation cannot be considered an end in itself, but rather a necessary condition for achieving high levels of performance. Its effectiveness depends not only on external rewards but also on the extent to which the individual attributes personal meaning and value to the learning process.

For young people preparing to enter the labor market, motivation is particularly relevant as they face the challenges of professional competition, integration, and social responsibility. In higher education, motivation is closely tied to students' acceptance of learning goals as significant and personally meaningful. This link between the individual's inner motives and educational objectives makes motivation a decisive factor in the success of both academic and professional training.

Military students represent a special category of learners, as their education is inherently oriented toward professional training. The goal of military higher education is not only academic success but also the cultivation of discipline, responsibility, professional identity, and the capacity to respond effectively in critical situations. In this sense, professional learning motivation refers to the alignment of educational goals with the student's personal and professional identity, where learning objectives are internalized as meaningful and necessary. Professional motives integrate both cognitive and social dimensions: on the one hand, the acquisition and mastery of knowledge, and on the other, cooperation, recognition, and the desire to contribute to society.

Despite extensive research on student motivation in higher education, the professional motivation of military students remains insufficiently investigated,

particularly in Eastern Europe. Addressing this gap is important not only for advancing theoretical understanding but also for improving the quality of training in military institutions. The present study therefore aims to identify the specific features of professional learning motivation among military students, to analyze how dominant motives vary according to year of study, and to explore the role of psychosocial development in shaping the motivational structure.

2. Literature Review

The study of motivation has a long and diverse history in psychology and pedagogy. Early approaches emphasized internal drives and physiological needs, while later models integrated cognitive, affective, and social dimensions. Among the most influential contemporary frameworks is self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), which distinguishes between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. This theory stresses that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential for sustaining motivation in learning. Research inspired by this framework has shown that intrinsic motivation is linked to deeper engagement and creativity, while extrinsic motivation can support performance under external constraints.

From a sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky (1978) and Leontiev (1978) argued that motivation develops within social contexts and cultural practices, mediated by interaction and activity. This line of thought is particularly relevant for military students, whose educational experience is embedded in structured institutional frameworks and collective values. Bandura's (1977) concept of self-efficacy further complements this view, emphasizing that students' beliefs in their own ability to succeed strongly influence the level of effort and persistence they invest in learning tasks.

In developmental psychology, Bozhovich (1968) explored the evolution of motives throughout childhood and adolescence, stressing their role in personality formation and academic achievement. Romanian scholars such as Mitrofan (1988), Miclea (1994), Zlate (2000), and Neacșu (2010) enriched this field by analyzing motivation as a multidimensional system that integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements, highlighting its implications for both performance and self-development.

In the Republic of Moldova, several researchers have examined learning motivation from various perspectives. Focșă-Semionov (2012) investigated the correlation

between motivation and student performance, while Guțu and Negură (2014) highlighted the role of social influences in shaping students' orientation toward learning. Poștan (2016), Șevciuc (2017), and Verdeș (2018) extended this research by exploring the relationship between cognitive motives, professional aspirations, and academic engagement. Their findings suggest that motivation in higher education integrates both the pursuit of knowledge and the need for social recognition, cooperation, and professional fulfillment.

Across this body of literature, two broad categories of motives have been identified: cognitive motives, associated with the acquisition and mastery of knowledge and skills, and social motives, related to interpersonal relationships, cooperation, and the aspiration to contribute to collective goals. The interaction between these categories shapes the motivational structure of students in higher education. For military students, this interaction acquires unique significance due to the specific demands of their professional training, where learning is closely linked to future responsibilities in the armed forces.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The study included 51 students enrolled at the "Alexandru cel Bun" Military Academy, aged between 19 and 24 years. A stratified sampling procedure was employed, using the year of study as the criterion for stratification. The final sample was distributed across four strata: first-year students ($n = 11$), second-year students ($n = 12$), third-year students ($n = 14$), and fourth-year students ($n = 14$).

3.2. Instruments

To assess professional learning motivation, several empirical methods were applied. These included:

- the questionnaire Research on the Motives of Students' Learning Activities in Higher Education (apud Staricov, 2010);
- the Motivation for Learning in Higher Education test developed by T. I. Ilyina (1972);

- the Diagnosis of Learning Motivation in Students test by A. A. Rean and V. A. Iacunin, later modified by I. Badmaeva (2004);
- as well as semi-structured interviews and systematic observation.

The combination of quantitative instruments and qualitative techniques was chosen to capture both the explicit and implicit motives underlying students' learning engagement, as well as their attitudes, interests, and professional orientations.

3.3. Procedure

All instruments were administered individually. Participants were informed in advance about the purpose of the study and were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Clear instructions were provided prior to completing the tests, and additional clarifications were offered during the process when necessary. Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility: while a core set of questions was followed, additional items were introduced, reformulated, or reordered depending on participants' responses, in order to collect richer and more accurate data.

3.4. Results and Interpretations

Analysis of the Motivation for Learning in Higher Education test (Ilyina) revealed that the dominant motive for enrolling in the "Alexandru cel Bun" Military Academy was the accumulation of knowledge, reported by 43% of respondents. These students expressed a strong desire to expand their understanding across multiple domains, to become broadly educated, and to acquire knowledge that supports both personal and professional development.

The second most frequent motive, reported by 30% of participants, was the pursuit of a higher education diploma. For this group, obtaining a degree represents a primary driver of their academic engagement. This orientation can be explained in part by the socio-economic background of many students: in recent years, the Academy has attracted young people from modest or vulnerable families, for whom free access to higher education, fully supported by the state, constitutes a decisive advantage.

Finally, 27% of students indicated that their primary motive was the acquisition of professional skills and specialization. This group is driven by the desire to master

the requirements of their future profession and to develop competencies that would allow them to perform effectively in the chosen field. Although this percentage is lower compared to the other categories, it reflects the presence of a cohort of students strongly oriented toward professional mastery and practical expertise.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while knowledge acquisition remains the leading motivational factor across the student body, socio-economic considerations and pragmatic career goals also play an important role in shaping students' commitment to learning. The distribution of these motives is illustrated in Figure 1.

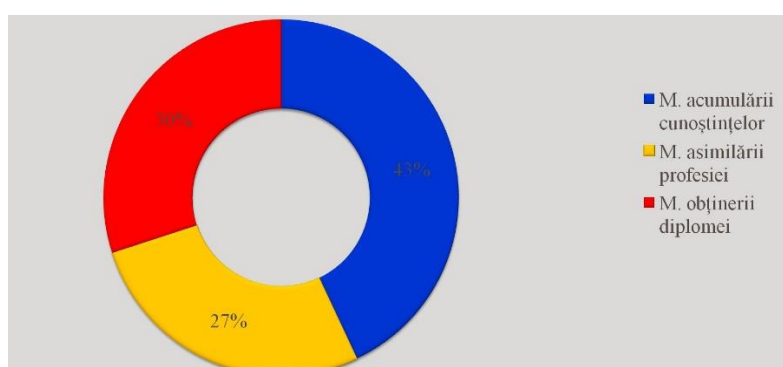


Figure 1. Distribution of learning motivation among military students

The second most frequent motive identified among participants was the pursuit of a higher education diploma. For these students, obtaining a degree represents the primary reason for engaging in the learning process. This finding is understandable considering that, in recent years, the student body of the Military Academy has increasingly included young people from families with modest socio-economic backgrounds or from socially vulnerable contexts, for whom covering the costs of higher education would otherwise be difficult. The Academy is particularly attractive to these students because tuition and living expenses are fully supported by the state, making it a viable path toward academic achievement and professional stability.

By contrast, the smallest proportion of students indicated that their main motive for enrollment was the mastery of professional knowledge and skills. These students are primarily driven by the desire to become specialists in their field, to understand the nuances of the military profession, and to apply their competencies effectively in practice.

A longitudinal analysis of motivational patterns across the four years of study reveals that the desire for knowledge acquisition remains the dominant motive throughout

the program, reaching its highest levels during the final year of training (see Figure 2).

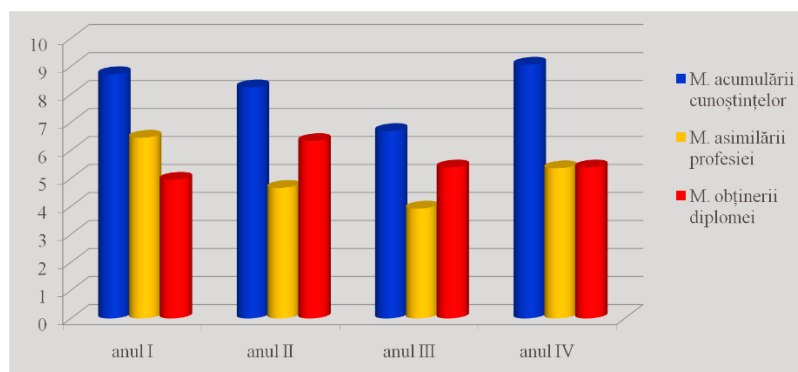


Figure 2. Distribution of learning motivation among military students by year of study

The motivation for professional mastery appears to be strongest among first-year students, followed by a steady decline in the second and third years, and then a resurgence in the fourth year, as illustrated in Figure 2. This pattern can be explained by the fact that newcomers are initially drawn to the distinct features of the military profession, including its values, the novelty of the environment compared to civilian life, the prospect of a stable salary after graduation, and even the symbolic appeal of the military uniform.

However, the restrictive nature of the military environment also exerts a significant influence on students' motivation. Military training is characterized by limited personal freedom, an emphasis on teamwork, hierarchical interpersonal relations that combine authority and cooperation, well-defined roles and statuses, and a highly regulated and supervised daily regime. These conditions often diminish enthusiasm for the profession during the second and third years, when the immediate goal of obtaining a diploma becomes more salient than professional mastery. Nevertheless, interest in the profession tends to increase again in the fourth year, as students intensify their preparation for entering the workforce and assuming professional responsibilities.

To test our hypothesis—that military students' learning motivation is shaped by a variety of psychosocial factors (social, cognitive, behavioral, and professional)—we applied the questionnaire Research on the Motives of Students' Learning Activities in Higher Education. The instrument included four items:

- assessing the personal dimension of learning, namely the importance of individual interest in higher education;
- exploring the socio-cultural dimension, linked to needs for interaction, acceptance, and recognition by others;
- examining the behavioral dimension, which reflects the dynamic and regulatory role of motivation in directing conduct;
- investigating the cognitive dimension, referring to students' need to exchange information with their environment and to develop self-understanding.

The results for the first item, “My university studies will be useful for...”, are presented in Figure 3.

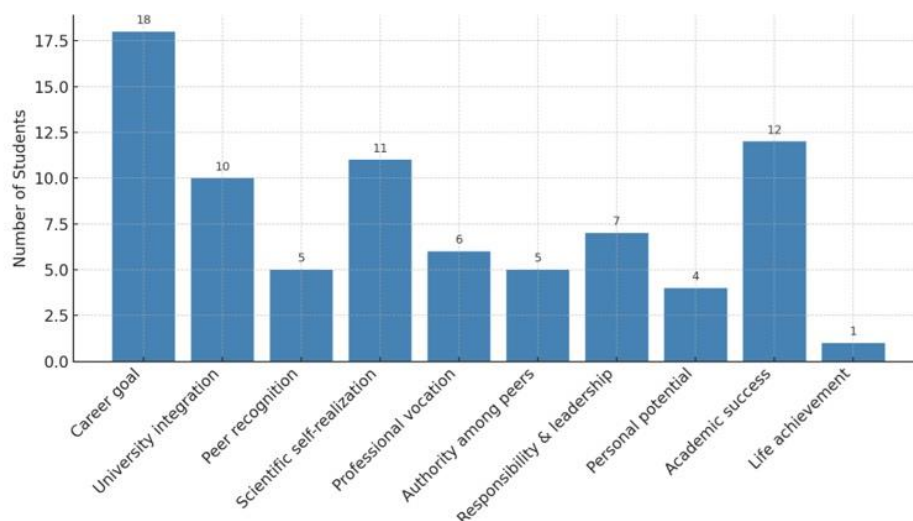


Figure 3. Motivational Factors for Military Students (Personal Dimension)

From Figure 3 it can be observed that several motivational factors stand out within the personal dimension. The largest proportion of respondents (17%) emphasized the importance of a desired career, reflecting long-term professional aspirations. This is followed by self-realization of personal potential (13%) and life achievement (12%), both of which highlight broader existential goals linked to personal growth and success beyond the academic setting. Approximately 11% of students pointed to scientific self-realization, underlining their interest in developing research and

academic competencies, while 10% stressed the significance of integration into the university environment.

For another 10% of respondents, personal motivation was linked to the development of responsibility, diligence, and leadership skills, while 8% referred to self-realization of personal abilities as a core motive. Smaller proportions mentioned peer recognition (6%), the growth of professional vocation (6%), and the maintenance of authority among peers (7%). These findings demonstrate that academic learning is perceived in diverse ways by students, who are able to identify the features of effective learning, although they do not always manage to consistently implement them.

The second item of the questionnaire addressed future prospects, asking: “What opportunities does higher education provide for you?”. The distribution of responses to this item is presented in Figure 4.

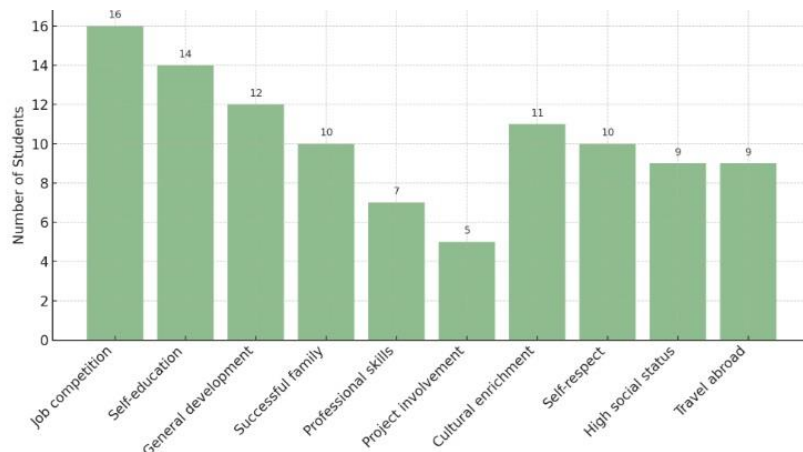


Figure 4. Future Opportunities Identified by Military Students

Referring to the data presented in the figure above, competition for securing a job (16%) emerges as the most significant motivating factor for military students. This finding is closely tied to the fact that, unlike other higher education institutions where job allocation may be largely formal, in military education the assignment of professional positions is directly dependent on the students' cumulative academic performance across the study years. Ranking second, with a difference of three percentage points, is self-instruction (13%), followed by general development (11%). Other relevant motives include self-respect (10.45%), achieving a high social status (10%), and the opportunity to travel abroad as part of one's future professional

role (9%). These results highlight the central role of motivation in the learning activity, demonstrating the goals students seek to achieve through education, while also underscoring that the effectiveness of learning depends on the personal meaning each individual attributes to these objectives.

The results obtained for the item “What behavioral changes does university education provoke in you?” are presented in Figure 5.

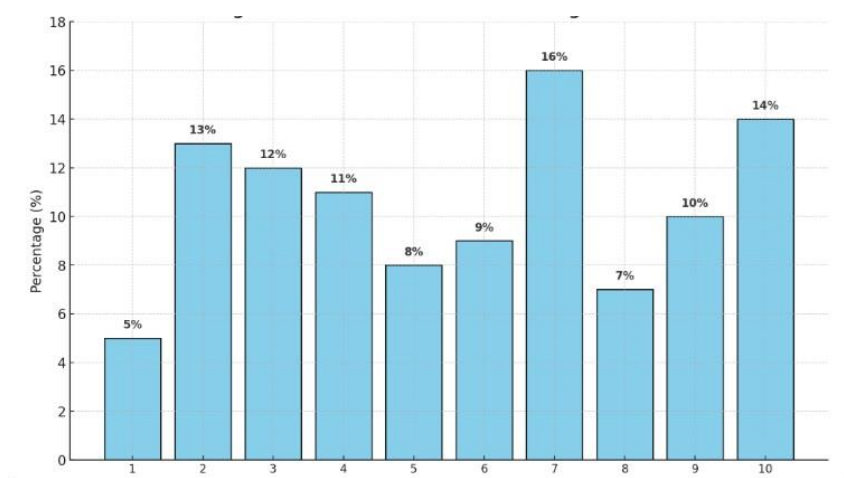


Figure 5. Behavioral Dimension of Learning Motivation

Analyzing Figure 5, which addresses the item “What behavioral changes does university education provoke in you?”, the most significant responses were: Ensuring success in future professional activity (15.45%) and Formation of moral values (15%). Other notable aspects included Development of discipline and Cooperation in university learning with peers (11% each). These findings highlight the strong influence of the military environment, which leaves its imprint on students’ behavior and attitudes. The data suggest that military students are fully aware of the importance of behavior in the learning process throughout higher education.

The next item, “How is the development of the cognitive sphere manifested in students?”, revealed the following responses, which are illustrated in Figure 6.

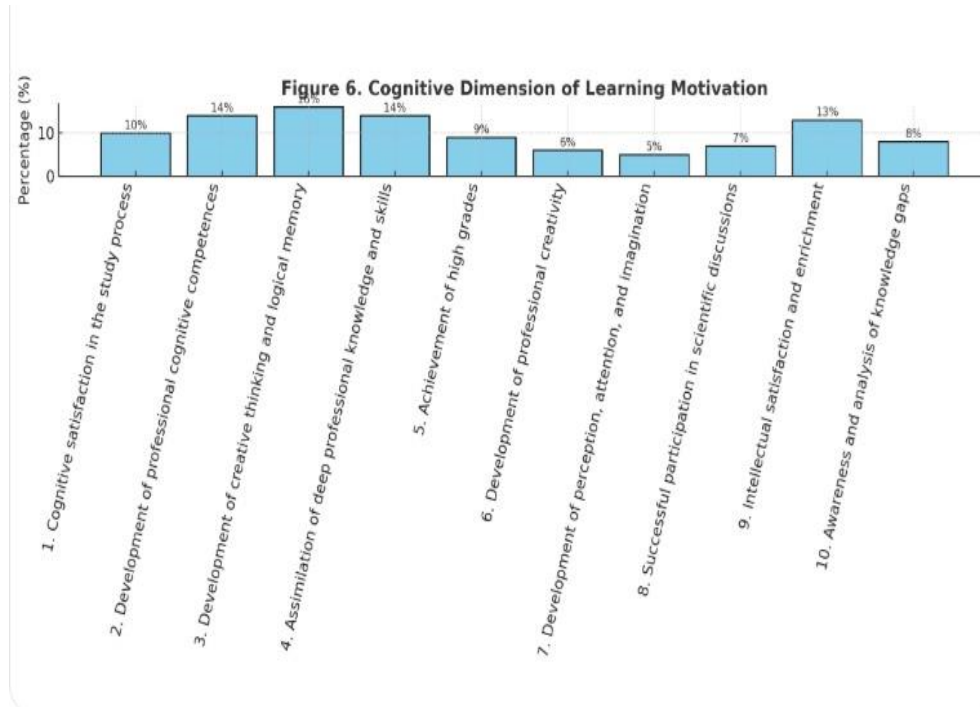


Figure 6. Cognitive Dimension of Learning Motivation

Analyzing Figure 6, which illustrates the cognitive dimension of learning motivation, the most frequent response was development of creative thinking and logical memory (16%), followed closely by assimilation of professional knowledge and skills (14%) and development of professional cognitive competences (14%). These results reflect the emphasis placed by military students on acquiring and consolidating deep professional knowledge while simultaneously strengthening their cognitive abilities.

Other significant motives include intellectual satisfaction and enrichment (13%) and cognitive satisfaction in the study process (10%), which highlight the intrinsic value students attribute to learning. Less frequent, but still relevant, are motives such as achievement of high grades (9%), awareness and analysis of knowledge gaps (8%), and successful participation in scientific discussions (7%). Lower percentages were recorded for development of professional creativity (6%) and development of perception, attention, and imagination (5%).

Overall, these findings suggest that military students' cognitive motivation is not limited to immediate academic outcomes, but extends to broader intellectual goals,

such as creativity, critical thinking, and the pursuit of professional excellence. Analyzing the dynamics of these dimensions of learning motivation throughout the entire study program, we observe that their structure changes from year to year, with different motives becoming priorities within each dimension. Thus, in the first year, alongside the desired career—which consistently remains in first place throughout all years of study—learning is primarily driven by personal motives such as maintaining personal authority within the student group and achieving success in academic performance. In the second year, these are replaced by motives such as integration into the university environment and self-realization in the scientific field. In the third year, the most prominent motives shift toward life fulfillment and continued academic success, while in the fourth year, professional success and the development of responsibility, diligence, and leadership qualities become central, as they are essential for the professional activity students are about to enter. The growth of professional vocation, as a core element of motivational structure and the focus of this study, is particularly significant in the first two years, decreases in intensity in the third year, and resurfaces with greater strength in the final year of study. The data are illustrated in the figure below.

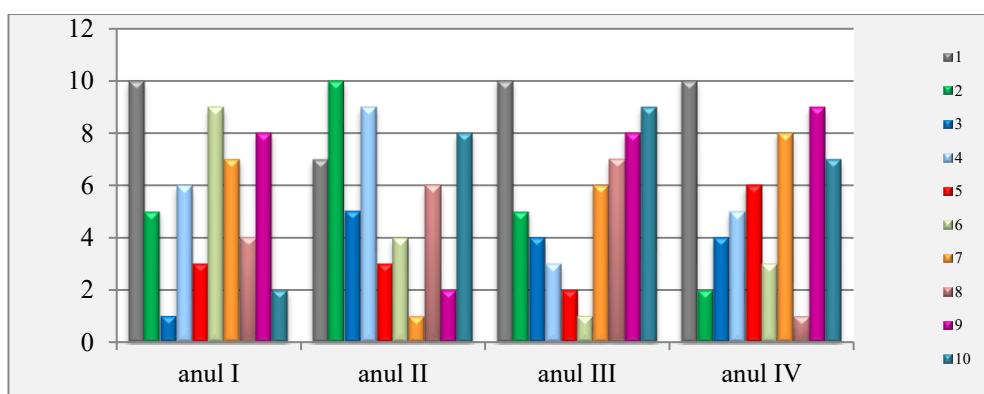


Figure 7. Personal dimension of learning motivation by year of study

1. Desired career; 2. Integration into the university environment; 3. Gaining the respect of others; 4. Self-realization in the scientific field; 5. Growth of professional vocation; 6. Maintaining personal authority within the student community; 7. Development of responsibility, diligence, and leadership qualities; 8. Self-realization of personal potential; 9. Success in professional education; 10. Fulfillment in life

Regarding the socio-cultural dimension of learning motivation and the dynamics of motives throughout the four years of study, we observe distinct patterns. For first-year students, international travel opportunities and self-respect represent major

interests. In the second year, the dominant motives shift toward competition for securing a job and self-instruction. By the third year, general development and the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills become priorities. In the fourth year, competition for employment once again takes precedence, alongside the aspiration for a higher social status. The motive that is of particular interest to us—the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills—shows fluctuating importance: it gains weight during the intermediate years but becomes practically insignificant by the final year of study, as illustrated in Figure 8.

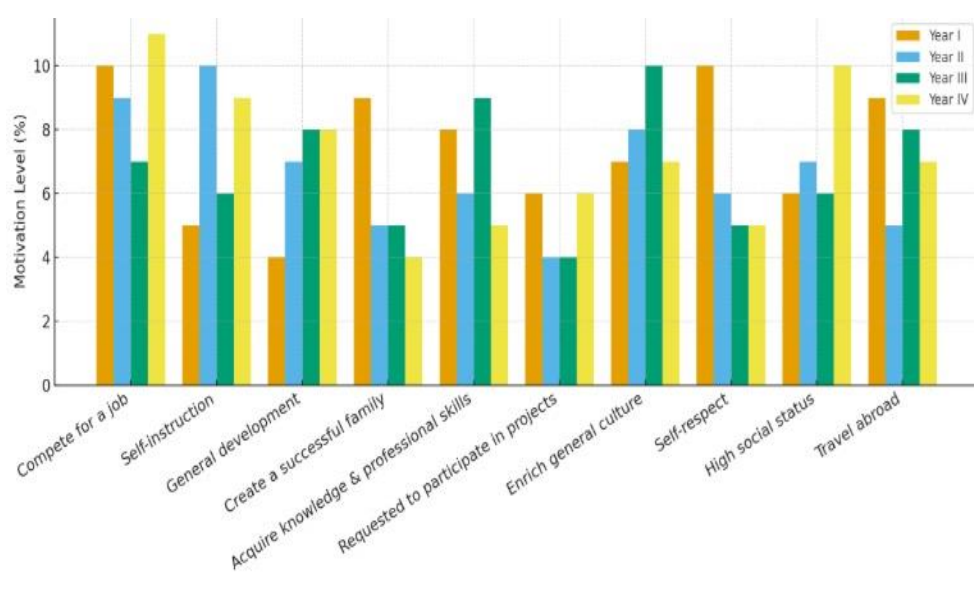


Figure 8. Socio-cultural dimension of learning motivation by year of study

Analysis of Figure 8 reveals the dynamics of the socio-cultural dimension of learning motivation across the four years of study. In the first year, students show the greatest interest in international travel and self-respect. By the second year, priorities shift toward competing for employment and self-instruction, reflecting the growing awareness of academic and professional demands. In the third year, motives such as general development and the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills become more prominent, while in the fourth year the competition for a job once again becomes the dominant factor, accompanied by the aspiration for high social status.

The motive most relevant to our study—the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills—demonstrates an inconsistent trajectory: it gains importance during the middle years of study but becomes nearly insignificant in the final year. This

fluctuation suggests that socio-cultural influences shape the motivational structure differently at each stage of military training.

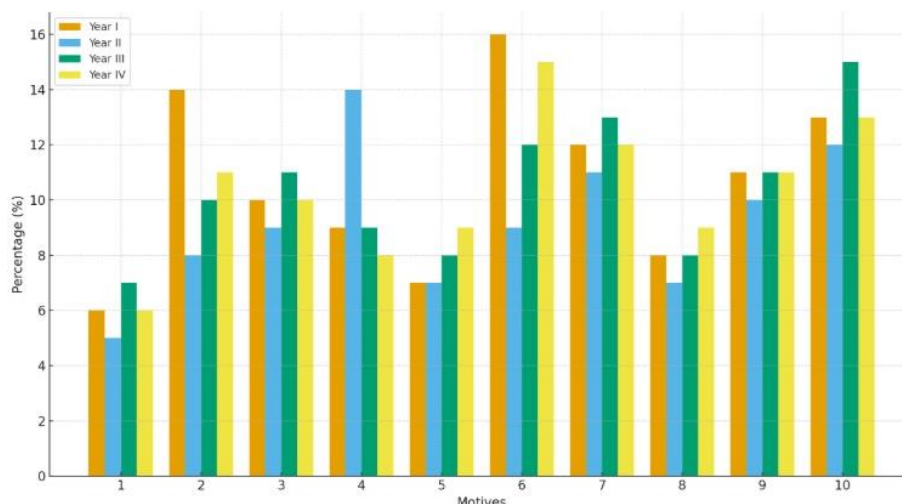


Figure 9. Behavioral Dimension of Learning Motivation by Year of Study

1. Adaptation to student life; 2. Acquisition of professional competences; 3. Development of discipline; 4. Engagement in university learning activities; 5. Development of organizational and dormitory life skills; 6. Meeting pedagogical requirements; 7. Formation of moral values; 8. Integration into the social community of student youth; 9. Cooperation in university learning with peers; 10. Ensuring success in future professional activity

The variation of motives across years of study within the behavioral dimension is illustrated in Figure 9. The histogram data show clearly that meeting pedagogical requirements represents the primary motive in the first year of study. Although its importance decreases by almost half in the second year, it regains the leading position in the fourth year. Interestingly, engagement in university learning activities emerges as a priority in the second year, rather than in the first year as one might have expected.

In the third year, the most significant motive becomes ensuring success in future professional activity, a trend that gradually strengthened throughout the previous years. By the final year, however, this motive yields precedence back to meeting pedagogical requirements.

Regarding the professionally oriented motives within this group, two stand out. The first, acquiring professional competences, fluctuates over the years, reaching its highest level in the first year and its lowest in the second. The second, ensuring

success in future professional activity, increases steadily year by year, achieving its peak in the third year. These dynamics reflect the evolving balance between academic expectations and professional aspirations in the behavioral structure of learning motivation.

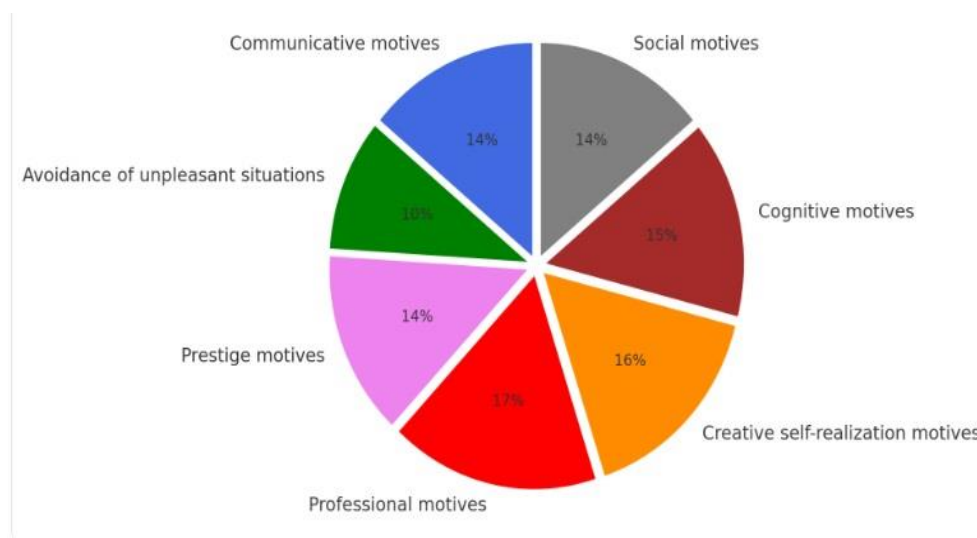


Figure 10. Distribution of learning motives among military students

The data presented in the figure indicate that professional motives (17%) are predominant, followed by creative self-realization (16%) and cognitive motives (15%). This combination of motives is particularly favorable for the learning process, as it unfolds against a positive emotional background. The nuanced expression of creative self-realization motives can further facilitate problem-solving and the accomplishment of non-standard, innovative tasks required of military students. The moderate percentages of social, communicative, and prestige motives additionally highlight the constructive and supportive atmosphere of the educational process. Overall, this distribution reflects the general profile of learning motivation among military students.

4. Findings and Results

The empirical results reveal a dynamic structure of learning motivation among military students, shaped by both personal and professional factors, and subject to notable variation across years of study.

At the global level, the dominant motive for enrolling in the Military Academy is the acquisition of knowledge (43%), followed by the desire to obtain a diploma (30%) and, to a lesser extent, the assimilation of the chosen profession (27%). This indicates that, while students appreciate the value of professional training, their initial orientation is strongly linked to intellectual curiosity and the formal recognition of higher education.

When analyzing the evolution of motives throughout the four years of study, clear shifts emerge. In the personal dimension, career aspirations remain consistently the most influential factor, but they are accompanied in the first year by motives such as maintaining personal authority and achieving success in higher education. In subsequent years, these are gradually replaced by integration into the university environment, self-realization in scientific activities, and ultimately by responsibility, diligence, and leadership qualities, which become increasingly relevant as students approach graduation.

In the socio-cultural dimension, motives also fluctuate. For first-year students, self-respect and opportunities for travel abroad are central. In the second year, competition for securing employment and self-instruction dominate, while in the third year students are more concerned with general development and the acquisition of professional skills. By the fourth year, employment competition regains priority, alongside the aspiration for higher social status.

Behavioral motives are characterized by a gradual reconfiguration. In the first year, fulfilling pedagogical requirements is the primary driver, but this decreases sharply in the second year, only to regain primacy in the fourth year. Surprisingly, integration into academic learning activities is more salient in the second year than in the first. Professional-related motives, such as mastering competencies and ensuring future professional success, display different trajectories: the former peaks in the first year, while the latter grows steadily across all years, reaching its maximum in the third year.

Cognitive motives reflect satisfaction with the study process, the development of professional competencies, and the assimilation of deep knowledge. These are complemented by the pursuit of high grades, intellectual enrichment, and active participation in scientific debates. Students also report significant gains in creativity, logical memory, and self-awareness, highlighting the multifaceted role of cognitive processes in shaping professional identity.

Finally, the synthesis of motivational profiles (Fig. 11) confirms that professional motives (17%) prevail, closely followed by creative self-realization (16%) and cognitive motives (15%). Social, communicative, and prestige-related motives, although present at moderate levels, contribute to a supportive educational environment. This distribution reflects a motivational architecture favorable to effective learning, characterized by both stability (career-oriented aspirations) and dynamic adaptation to psychosocial developmental stages across the academic cycle.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study emphasize the complexity of professional learning motivation among military students, revealing a dynamic interplay between personal aspirations, socio-cultural factors, cognitive processes, and professional identity formation. These results align with classic and contemporary perspectives on motivation, which describe it as a multidimensional construct shaped by both individual development and the social environment (Bandura, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978).

One of the most consistent outcomes observed is the centrality of career-oriented goals across all years of study. This persistence confirms previous research suggesting that, in contexts where education is strongly linked to professional integration, career motives tend to dominate the motivational structure (Bozhovich, 2004; Zlate, 2000). At the same time, the fluctuations in secondary motives—such as self-respect, authority within the peer group, or intellectual enrichment—reflect the adaptive character of motivation, which evolves in accordance with psychosocial developmental stages.

The prevalence of professional motives, combined with creative self-realization and cognitive interests, indicates a generally favorable motivational background for military higher education. Studies on professional identity formation in young adults support this pattern, showing that when personal goals are meaningfully aligned with academic tasks, learning is perceived as purposeful and engaging (Leontiev, 1978; Neacșu, 2010). In this context, the fact that students progressively value responsibility, diligence, and leadership qualities towards the end of their studies underscores the integrative role of the military environment, which reinforces discipline, teamwork, and role clarity.

Equally important is the socio-cultural dimension, where motives such as employment competition and social status gain prominence in the later years. This reflects broader societal expectations, where higher education is often seen as both a means of social mobility and a guarantee of professional stability (Miclea, 1995; Mitrofan, 2004). Interestingly, motives related to travel abroad or prestige, while present, remain secondary, which suggests that for these students the pragmatic and professional aspects of learning outweigh symbolic recognition.

The cognitive dimension further highlights the significance of intellectual satisfaction and the acquisition of deep, profession-related knowledge. This is consistent with findings from research conducted in Moldova (Guțu & Negură, 2015; Poștan, 2018), which emphasize that intellectual curiosity and self-understanding are key drivers of academic persistence. The present results extend these insights by showing that military students combine these cognitive interests with practical concerns about future professional performance, thereby reinforcing the applied nature of their education.

Taken together, the study suggests that military students' learning motivation is not static but evolves through a developmental trajectory: from initial enthusiasm for knowledge and belonging, to pragmatic concerns with status and employment, and finally to a focus on responsibility and professional excellence. This progression mirrors theoretical models of motivational development, where external and social motives gradually integrate with internalized values and professional commitments (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

6. General Conclusion

The empirical study conducted among students of the "Alexandru cel Bun" Military Academy highlights the central role of learning motivation as a key determinant of academic success and professional development. The analysis revealed that the dominant motive for enrolling in the academy is the accumulation of knowledge, reflecting students' intrinsic desire to learn, to broaden their horizons, and to become well-rounded individuals. Obtaining a university diploma ranked second, while the least prevalent motive was the assimilation of professional knowledge aimed at mastering the chosen field and becoming a specialist.

Learning motivation emerged as the primary axis of academic achievement, encompassing a broad constellation of personal factors that direct, organize, and

sustain students' learning efforts. These motives manifest across four dimensions—personal, behavioral, socio-cultural, and cognitive—each carrying specific weight at different stages of the educational trajectory. The study confirmed that the structure of dominant motives shifts throughout the four years of study, with personal and communicative motives being particularly strong during the first year, professional motives gaining prominence in the second year, and creative self-realization motives peaking in the final year of study.

The analysis also indicated that students in their first year display the highest levels of learning motivation across all scales, followed by those in their final year, while second-year students show moderate levels and third-year students are comparatively the least motivated. This fluctuation underscores the developmental dynamics of motivation, which evolves in response to both personal maturation and the challenges of academic and military training.

Overall, the results highlight the predominance of professional and cognitive motives, a combination that fosters a positive emotional background for study. The nuanced expression of creative self-realization motives plays a particularly important role in sustaining curiosity, enhancing intellectual engagement, and facilitating the development of critical thinking. Furthermore, professional motives exhibit distinct patterns: vocational interest is most salient in the first two years, declines in the third year, and reemerges strongly in the fourth; mastery of professional skills fluctuates, with its peak in the first year and lowest level in the second; while the motive of ensuring success in future professional activity steadily increases, reaching its maximum in the third year.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that motivation for learning among military students is dynamic, multidimensional, and deeply intertwined with both personal aspirations and the demands of the professional training context. By acknowledging these patterns, military higher education can design interventions that strengthen and balance motivational factors, ensuring that students remain engaged, resilient, and professionally prepared throughout their academic journey.

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