

MILITARY ADVISORS TEAMS MISSION READINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT METHODS

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Abstract: *To meet the verification requirements of the Enforcement Principle, every training organization may verify the results of the conducted training. Our research hypothesis is that by implementation of the proper self-assessment methods the final results of the military advisors mission training could be more objective, than by using the “classical” assessment methodology containing only the marks of the combat training instructors. Some research results of the military advisors teams’ mission readiness level are presented in the following paper.*

Keywords: mission readiness, self-assessment methods

Introduction

In accordance with the declared political commitments Bulgarian Armed Forces support the ISAF operation in Afghanistan involving 4 Military Advisor Teams (MATs).

The mission training of the Bulgarian MATs was held in the PSO Training Centre in Vassil Levski National Military University, Veliko Tarnovo.

For future development of the MATs mission training the importance of the self-assessment methods was analyzed as an important measuring tool in the mission readiness evaluation process, giving the military advisors the opportunities to share their opinion on certain essential factors of the combat training process.

For this purpose MATs mission readiness self-assessment methods have been developed and applied in the MATs operational and mission readiness final evaluation process.

The author’s research hypothesis is that by implementation of the proper self-assessment methods the final results of the military advisors mission training could be more

objective, than by using the classical assessment methodology containing only the marks of the MATs combat training instructors.

1. Self-assessment methods main characteristics

1.1. Research methods design

The design of the proposed research methods suggests that data be collected by survey. To achieve the purpose of the research, the author has developed a topical questionnaire to gather the information from the respondents. The questionnaire consists of 4 parts:

Part I. Personal data;

Part II. Scales for measuring the respondents’ marks;

Part III. Dynamic matrix;

Part IV. Respondents’ proposals for future MATs training development.

The first part contains personal data of the respondents - gender, age, rank, position, number of missions, duration of military service and gives the opportunity to determine the separating variables in the results analysis.

The second part of the questionnaire consists of fifty statements referring to five scales measuring the specific training components. Each of the 5 research scales contains ten statements, scoring from 1 to 5, thus giving opportunities for more precise analysis of the gathered data and more detailed self-assessment values.

The analysis of the collected data obtained from the survey is carried out by using of the results processing key.

The third part of the questionnaire includes a consensus matrix method for evaluation of the required MATs joint tactical operations capabilities.

The fourth part of the questionnaire consists of open positions for the respondents recommendations referring to the future improvement of the MATs training process.

At the end of the MATs training in Vassil

Levski National Military University the developed self-assessment methods have been implemented in the final assessment of the four MATs, planned for participation in ISAF Operation.

1.2. Research main purpose

The main purpose of the research of the developed self-assessment methods is to gather actual and objective information from the respondents, providing opportunities for comparing with the marks given by the assessment commission.

The proposed research methods are flexible and dynamic and can be modified for other future research, in accordance with the specific research needs.

The description of the developed scales is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Research scales

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Scales</i>	<i>Description of the scales</i>
1.	Tmis	Level of mission Training
2.	Emis	Equipment and armament adequacy to the MATs mission tasks
3.	Pmis	Level of Planning process knowledge
4.	Ipls	Implementation of the planning software
5.	Kins	Level of MATs instructors competence

2. Research results analysis

The survey study includes the opinion of officers, sergeants and soldiers from the four MATs, planned for participation in ISAF.

The total number of the respondents is Nr=71 (from 85 nominated), which represents 60.35% of all MAT personnel.

The amount of respondents meets the requirements of sufficiency in experimental studies (Nr>17%) and determines the representativeness of the survey study results.

Data from the first part can be used to identify possible variables – by gender - men or women, by category of military

service - officers, sergeants and soldiers, by functional competence - advisers and force protection, by professional experience in missions - military personnel without experience in missions or participation in one mission, and personnel involved in two or more missions.

The above mentioned variables allow for using the method of expert evaluation by individual criteria as various expert groups are involved in the analysis of the results of different scales.

For the analysis of the collected data from the following scales: T_{mis} “Level of mission Training“, E_{mis} “Equipment and armament adequacy to the MATs mission tasks” and

K_{ins} “Level of MATs instructors competence” the opinion of the personnel, that has been involved in 2 or more missions can be given priority, having in mind that they have already gone through pre-mission training two or more times, and this is at least the third such training for each of them.

Analyzing the results obtained by the P_{mis} and I_{pls} scales, the following variable - F_{sv} (Functional competence) – can be used for determining the respective expert group, having in mind that the tactical planning process is one of the main military advisors tasks.

Table 2: Research subscales

<i>Scales</i>	<i>T_{mis}</i>	<i>E_{mis}</i>	<i>P_{mis}</i>	<i>I_{pls}</i>	<i>K_{ins}</i>	<i>S</i>
<i>Subscales</i>	T _{man}	E _{man}	P _{man}	I _{man}	K _{man}	S _{sv}
	T _{wom}	E _{wom}	P _{wom}	I _{wom}	K _{wom}	S _{sv}
	T _{off}	E _{off}	P _{off}	I _{off}	K _{off}	C _{sv}
	T _{nco}	E _{nco}	P _{nco}	I _{nco}	K _{nco}	C _{sv}
	T _{sol}	E _{sol}	P _{sol}	I _{sol}	K _{sol}	C _{sv} /F _{sv}
	T _{adv}	E _{adv}	P _{adv}	I _{adv}	K _{adv}	F _{sv}
	T _{exp}	E _{exp}	P _{exp}	I _{exp}	K _{exp}	M _{exp}
	T _{con}	E _{con}	P _{con}	I _{con}	K _{con}	M _{exp}

The variable C_{sv} (Category variable) can serve as comparative analysis research tool of the opinions of the different military respondent target groups – officers, NCOs and soldiers, thus defining the current level of their professional competence. If necessary other variables can be used for constructing subscales in accordance with the objectives of the research as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 presents the distribution of the scales into subscales, referring to different S variables (Split variables) – by gender S_{sv} (Gender), by category C_{sv} (Category), by functional competence F_{sv} (Functional competence) and by mission experience M_{exp} (Mission Experience).

The S_{sv} variable distributes the respondents as men 66 (82,5%) and women 5 (100%), as the ratio of the assigned personnel is 5 women to 80 men.

This split variable facilitates the analysis of the different scales interrelations and helps reveal the significant differences in some aspects.

Figure 1 and Table 3 present the distribution of the survey results by applying S_{sv} variable.

Using the T_{mis} variable has led to the conclusion that the self-assessment value of both male and female respondents is “very good” as the results distribution between men and women is $T_{man}=42.68$ and $T_{wom}=42.20$. The close values of this self-assessment show that due to their training they have overcome psychological gender-based differences and have achieved similar attitudes to the mission training criteria. A deeper analysis shows that this result is a good team work indicator, especially if the results obtained by the other scales are similar.

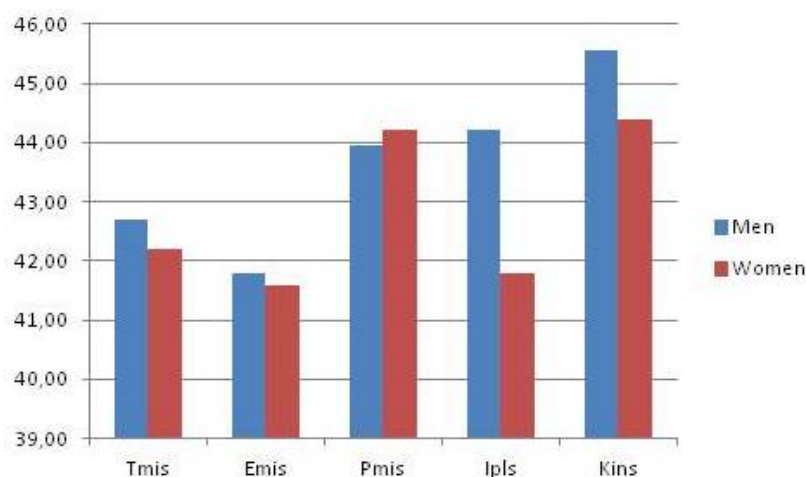


Figure 1: Results distribution by gender (Scv min=10; max=50)

Table 3 Results distribution by gender

Scales	Men	Women
Tmis	42,68	42,20
Emis	41,80	41,60
Pmis	43,95	44,20
Ipls	44,23	41,80
Kins	45,56	44,40

The E_{mis} results are as follows: men $E_{man}=41.80$ and women $=41.60$. The lower E_{wom} values are caused by the fact that the current combat clothing and equipment used are still with a unified design, inappropriate for the female personnel. In the Bulgarian Armed Forces the implementation of special body armor and uniforms design for women is still not a fact, which causes discomfort in the daily duties.

The overall assessment according to this scale by men and women is “very good” as it shows the necessity of the individual equipment development as well as new

types of small arms, relevant to the specifics of the MATs professional tasks.

By analyzing the results obtained by the following scales P_{mis} ($P_{man}= 43.95$; $P_{wom}=44.20$) and I_{pls} ($I_{man}=44.23$; $I_{wom}=41.80$), the self-assessment of the planning process awareness and the implementation of the tactical planning software can be estimated.

The overall “very good” assessment according to I_{pls} scale partly support the starting hypothesis of the research, namely that the MATs training optimization is possible by the implementation of cutting edge computer software.

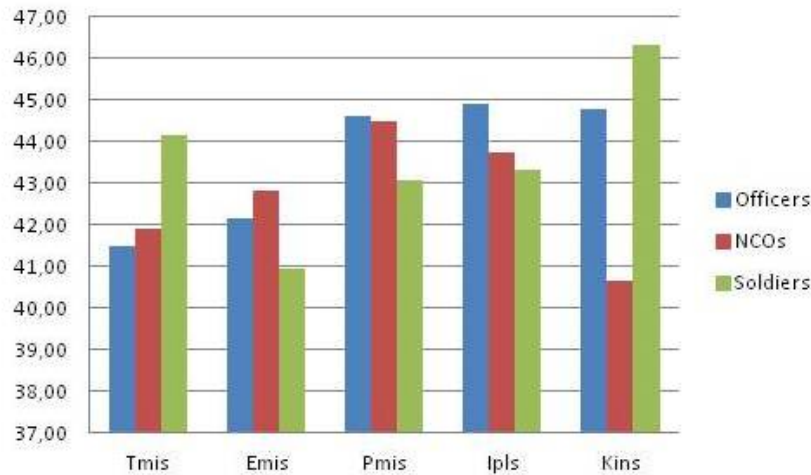


Figure 2: Scales scoring values by category of military service (Csv min=10; max=50)

Table 4 Results distribution by Csv (Csv min=10; max=50)

Scales	Officers	NCOs	Soldiers
<i>Tmis</i>	41,47	41,92	44,17
<i>Emis</i>	42,17	42,83	40,97
<i>Pmis</i>	44,63	44,50	43,07
<i>Ipls</i>	44,90	43,75	43,31
<i>Kins</i>	44,77	40,67	46,31

Results distribution by scale “category of service” shows the differences in the opinions of the respondent officers, NCOs and soldiers. The number of officers - 30 represents 42% of the respondent group, the NCOs are 12 (16.80%) and the soldiers - 29 (41.20%).

The results obtained from the different scales provide the opportunity to compare the opinions of the different categories of personnel and show the interrelations of the essential mission training components.

Figure 2 and Table 4 clearly show the difference in the respondent categories opinions.

The T_{mis} scale value of officers self-assessment - $T_{off}=41.47$ is similar to this of NCOs - $T_{nco}=41.92$, whereas the soldiers' self-assessment value is $T_{sol}=44.17$, which is close to “excellent”. The overall “very good” assessment of all 3 categories of respondents demonstrates the more critical attitude of officers and NCOs, as compared to the soldiers' self-assessment. This is

probably due to their professional qualification and experience, as well to the specifics of their military professional duties.

The scope of the soldiers' tasks in the pre-mission training is significantly smaller with respect to their functional tasks in the MATs. In accordance with the broad spectrum of officers' and NCOs' tasks it is logical that they are more demanding in the self-assessment of their own abilities.

The comparative analysis of the P_{mis} and I_{pls} scales values proves the usefulness of the specialized tactical planning software, according to all respondent categories.

Officers' self-assessment of tactical planning awareness is $P_{off}=44.63$, the NCOs' is $P_{nco}=44.50$ and the soldiers' is $P_{sol}=43.07$.

In relation to the characteristics of different categories of servicemen, the results logically show higher values for officers and NCOs who play a key role in the planning process.

According to Ipls scale, the overall assessment of all categories of servicemen is "very good applicability" of the tactical planning software with the respective values of Ioff = 44.90, Inco = 43.75 and Isol = 43.31. This is another proof of the hypothesis of the mission training optimization by using cutting edge software, evaluated by all respondent categories.

Conclusions

In conclusion we can underline that the proposed self-assessment methods are effective and give relevant results which,

compared to the certification commission evaluation, contribute to the more objective final overall assessment of the MATs mission readiness.

The final results of this survey study confirmed the starting hypothesis and demonstrated that the classical assessment methodology can be improved with the proposed self-assessment methods.

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