Organizational identification, commitment and orientations of professional military personnel

Organizaciona identifikacija, predanost i orijentacije profesionalnih vojnih lica

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Abstract

Background/Aim. All military organizations seek such employees who will advocate for the organization's mission and act responsibly in the direction of achieving the objectives of operational and working groups to which they belong. Accordingly, the primary task of the military organization management is not only the cultivation of the members who would be committed to the organization, but also the officers and soldiers who identify with the organizational mission. The aim of this study was to examine differences in organizational identification, commitment to the organization and organizational orientations of the professional military personnel and employees in service and administrative activities. **Methods**. The research sample consisted of 450 respondents, of whom 150 were professional soldiers, 150 civilian employees in the service sector and 150 employees in the civil sector in administration. For statistical analysis of the data, the analysis of variance and canonical discriminant analysis were used. **Results**. Professional military personnel was characterized by a high degree of both organizational commitment and organizational identification, compared with employees in the civil sector - service and administrative activities. Through the process of canonical discriminant analysis, it was found that the professional military personnel are different from the other personnel in the sense that they identify with their colleagues and they feel a high degree of loyalty to the military organization, as key aspects of organizational identification. In addition, professional military personnel have pronounced affective commitment to the organization. **Conclusion**. Human resources are the key and the essential factor of advantage in the context of strong competitiveness in the field of military defense's reality. Given that they are more adaptable and flexible, compared with the technological and structural resources, a high degree of experienced similarity with the other members of the organization, pronounced loyalty and affective commitment to the organization, to a large extent guarantee new successes and the progress of the military organization.

Key words:
military personnel; psychology, military; administrative personnel; organization and administration; surveys and questionnaires; psychology; job satisfaction.

Apstrakt

Uvod/Cilj. Sve vojne organizacije traže takve zaposlene koji će se zalagati za misiju organizacije i delovati odgovorno u smeru postizanja ciljeva operativnih i radnih grupa kojima pripadaju. U skladu s tim, primarni zadatak menadžmenta vojnih organizacija nije samo formiranje pripadnika koji bi bili posvećeni organizaciji već i oficira i vojnika koji se identifikuju sa organizacionom misijom. Cilj istraživanja bio je da se ispita postojanje razlika u organizacionoj identifikaciji, predanosti organizaciji i organizacionim orijentacijama kod profesionalnih vojnih lica i lica zaposlenih u uslužnim i administrativnim delatnostima. **Metode**. Uzorak istraživanja činilo je ukupno 450 ispitanika – 150 profesionalnih pripadnika vojske, 150 zaposlenih u civilnom sektoru na uslužnim poslovima i 150 zaposlenih u civilnom sektoru na administrativnim poslovima. Za statističku obradu podataka korišćene su analiza varijanse i kanonička diskriminativna analiza. **Rezultati**. Profesionalna vojna lica odlikovao je visok stepen kako organizacione predanosti tako i organizacione identifikacije u poređenju sa zaposlenima u civilnom sektoru na uslužnim i administrativnim delatnostima. Kroz postupak kanoničke diskriminacione analize utvrđeno je da je profesionalna vojna lica od ostalih razlikovao visok stepen doživljaja sličnosti sa kolegama i visok stepen lojalnosti vojnoj organizaciji, kao ključnim aspektima organizacione identifikacije. Uz to, profesionalna vojna lica imala

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su izraženiju afektivnu privrženost organizaciji. **Zaključak**. Ljudski resursi predstavljaju ključ i glavni faktor konkurentske prednosti u kontekstu snažne konkurentnosti na polju vojno-odbrambene realnosti. S obzirom na to da su oni adaptibilniji i fleksibilniji, u poređenju sa tehnološko-strukturalnim resursima, visok stepen doživljaja sličnosti sa ostalim pripadnicima organizacije, izražena lojalnost i afektivna predanost organizaciji, u do-

broj meri garantuju nove uspehe i napredak vojne organizacije.

Introduction

Human resources and their potentials are becoming the main factor of competitiveness and organizational performance, and they have to be addressed with great attention and interest [1].

The works of some authors stress the importance of the selection of the employees who are a part of the army of a country. These employees would have a high degree of organizational identification because that is certainly a way to act in the direction of strengthening the commitment of military professionals [2].

According to the theory of social identity, organizational identification is a form of social identification where employees see themselves as a member of a certain social entity – in this case, the organization in which one is employed. Identification of the employees with the organization is important for the more one identifies with the organization, the more they think and act in accordance with the perspective and objectives of the organization [3]. This point of view in supported by numerous studies is which the need of the organization to be, in some way, supported by the employees' organizational identification is emphasized [4–9] because their positive or negative effects may affect the performance of the organization.

Organizational identification has long been recognized as a critical construct which is of a great importance to the organizational behaviour, because it can have an impact on both the satisfaction of employees and their efficiency at work [10–14]. Moreover, organizational identity has been proven to be a vital factor of organizational life.

The findings of Mael and Ashforth [2] indicate that the highlighted organizational identification with the members of an army is not necessarily related to the length of their service, the success in their career or to general satisfaction with the assigned position. As theorists of social identity [15] have pointed out, simply a "deployment" in the sector of the given organization can lead to the almost immediate appearance of strengthening the expression of identification with the group in which one is being allotted. The results of the research by Mael and Ashfort [2] suggest that one of the most important factors of a prominent organizational identification is actually the existence of congruence between personal interests and organizational activities.

A military unit is an organized and unified social group with a specific social function, with strict subordination in relationships, where members of the collective feel a social and psychological connection with the unit when the collective interests regard as their own interests [16, 17]. All military organizations seek such employees who will advocate for the

organization's mission and act responsibly in the direction of achieving the objectives of operational and working groups to which they belong. Accordingly, the primary task of the management of a military organization is not only the cultivation of the members who would be committed to the organization, but also of the officers and soldiers who identify with the organizational mission. Employees who are committed to the organization believe that the organization is a good place to work, do not search another workplace in a new organization, they have developed positive effects towards the organization, and believe that there are no better alternatives in other working organizations that would meet their needs [18, 19]. In comparison with that, the individuals who "identify" with their organizations build self-images that are in harmony with the image of the organization and its values [20–23]. In accordance with this is also the fact that when individuals adopt values and goals of the organization, they develop a premise in the process of decision-making that is complementary to the goals and values-based premises that the organization constructs [22, 24]. From the perspective of a commander as a kind of manager, identification represents some sort of advantage for the organization since it ensures that the employees make decisions which are in the best possible interest for the organization, even in the absence of supervision [25]. Mael and Alderks [26] examined the organizational identification with regard to the military effectiveness during a combat of the military personnel. Their findings indicate that organizational identification, cohesion and motivation with a task are directly related to the combat performances and success in a battle.

That the concept of organizational identification is of importance for the functioning of military structures is pointed out through a wide range of literature. Thus, Little et al. [27] state that organizational identification is similar to team spirit, and it refers to the sense of creating a tactical unit. In this direction, Wilkes and Krebs [28] indicate that it is of a cardinal importance for the military organization to form some kind of awareness about the pride that derives from belonging to a given group, or a sense of common (shared) purpose and destiny.

Organizational identification occurs when, in the process of decision making, a person in one or more of his or her organizational roles perceives and understands that the organizational values or interests are relevant in the evaluation of alternatives in the decision-making process [22]. These authors distinguish three aspects in organizational identification: a sense of belonging (a feeling of solidarity or membership) – a strong sense of attachment or emotional attracting

related to organizational membership, but also pride in being a part of the organization; loyalty to the organization and enthusiasm tied to organizational goals; and identification with colleagues – observed similarity related to the common characteristics, and also having respect for the common (shared) values or goals. According to Simon [25], when individuals adopt the values and goals of an organization, they develop a premise in decision-making processes that are complementary to the goals and values which are based on the premise that sets the organization.

Organizational commitment can be determined by a certain degree of wishes and needs and obligations that an individual feels towards the organization he/she works for. Allen and Meyer [29–31] distinguish 3 components of organizational commitment: affective commitment exists when an employee wants to remain in the organization because of the emotional attachment; normative commitment stems from feelings of obligation of the employee to remain in the organization because of the incentives given or favors done (salaries and training); commitment through staying in the organization refers to the notion that there are accumulated benefits that could be lost if one leaves the organization (friends in the workplace, benefits specific to a particular organization). Researches show that people who are committed to the organization generate positive contributions to the organization, and above all manifest lower expression of absenteeism (absence from work) and through more pronounced working performance than the people who are not committed [32–36].

The organizational orientation of employees – Presthus [37] explicated the theory of organizational orientation as a form of explaining fundamental differences in the way the employees of organizations approach their jobs. The organization not only affects the behavior of its members, it also affects the formation of their permanent attitudes, values and interests. Presthus [37] assumes that this orientation can result in employees having different orientations towards their work as such, work motivation, job satisfaction and in the ways in which employees interact with their colleagues, superiors and subordinates [37]. Presthus [37] came to the conclusion that there are 3 main "personal styles" (orientations of the employees) in an average organization, but this orientation can be applied to almost any organization. At the top of the organizational pyramids are those who want to rise in the hierarchy. They react positively to the bureaucratic structure and succeed in such an environment. The second group consists of the majority of the non-aligned "indifferent" for whom the work of just a means to achieve goals outside of work. The third group is a minority consisting of ambivalent people. They neither give up their demands for progress, nor accept a disciplined role in order to achieve those goals.

The aim of this study is to examine whether there are differences in the intensity of organizational identification and its aspects between the professional military personnel and employees in the civil service sector and administrative sector. The second aim was to examine whether professional military personnel may be discriminated against individuals employed in the civilian sector on the administrative service positions, based on the intensity of organizational identification, commitment, and organizational orientation.

Methods

The research sample

The research sample consisted of 450 respondents, 150 were employed in the military service – professional members of the military, 150 employed in the civilian service sector and 150 employed in the civil sector in administration. A sample from military service includes professional military personnel in the category of officers, noncommissioned officers and professional soldiers and it is not proportionally distributed because the method of appropriate choices was opted for.

The instruments of research and statistical analysis

Organizational identification of employees was measured using the scale of organizational identification (Organizational Identification Questionnaire [20–22]). The scale had the following subscales, that measured the following aspects of organizational identification: the feeling of belonging, loyalty and identification.

To measure the intensity of organizational commitment Alen-Meyer's organizational commitment questionnaire was used (Organizational Commitment Scale Allen and Mayer [29–31]), which had the following subscales, for measuring the following aspects of organizational commitment: affective commitment, staying in the organization commitment and normative commitment.

To measure the intensity of organizational orientations an organizational orientation questionnaire was used [38].

The reliability of the instruments used has been proven through the research process: the value of Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire by which organizational identification was measured was 0.860; for the questionnaire by which organizational commitment was measured it was 0.865; while the Cronbach alpha for the questionnaires measuring organizational orientation was ranging from 0.876 for a questionnaire by which the expression of ambivalent orientation was measured to 0.803 for the questionnaire which measured indifferent organizational orientation, and Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire which measured the orientation towards the advancement in the hierarchy of the organization was 0.818. From these findings, it can be concluded that all the questionnaires used had satisfactory reliability.

All statistical analyses were performed in SPSS 20.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, Illinois) statistical package. The results are presented as frequency, percent and mean. The ANOVA (F-test) was used to compare the groups of respondents. Discriminant analysis was used to discriminate different groups of respondents based on their level of organizational identification, commitment, and organizational orientations. All p-values of 0.05 or less were considered significant.

Results

The findings indicate that there were differences in the intensity of organizational identification and its aspects

between professional soldiers and the people who were employed on service and administrative positions in civil sector (Table 1).

Professional soldiers had the highest scores on the scale of organizational identification - the total score (M = 48.00; $p < 0.01$), as well as on the scale that measures identification with colleagues (M = 18.98; $p < 0.01$) in comparison to the employees in civil service and administrative sectors, thus making this difference statistically significant. It should be remarked that professional military personnel had a more prominent aspect of organizational identification related to loyalty (M = 15.37; $p > 0.05$) in relation to the employees in the service and administrative sectors, although this difference has not at the level of statistical significance (Table 1).

The results of the analysis (Table 1) showed that professional military personnel had not only more pronounced affective aspect (M = 12.67; $p < 0.01$) of organizational commitment, but also the normative aspect (M = 20.40; $p <$

tment – total score, compared to those employed in civil service and administrative sectors, but this difference was not a statistically significant.

With a view to checking whether the professional military personnel may be discriminated against the employees of the civil sector on the basis of components of organizational identification, commitment, and organizational orientation, we applied the method of canonical discriminant analysis (Table 2).

Applying canonical discriminant analysis 2 functions that discriminated different groups of employees were signed out. The results showed that on the basis of organizational identification, organizational commitment and organizational orientation of employees was possible to discriminate well against members of the military profession with a canonical correlation of 0.393 forklifts. Specifically, in Table 3 it can be seen that the first allocated function was a characteristic of professional military personnel. In particular, on the nega-

Table 1

Organizational identification, commitment and orientation among professional army staff and workforce in service/administrative jobs

Characteristics	Type of employement (job)			F	p
	Professional army staff	Workforce in service jobs	Workforce in administrative jobs		
Organizational identification					
feeling of membership	13.6267	13.9333	13.1000	2.640	0.072
lojality	15.3867	14.9067	14.5733	2.067	0.128
perceptions of shared characteristics	18.9867	18.7067	17.0067	17.512	0.000
general score	48.0000	47.5467	44.6800	6.407	0.003
Organizational commitment					
affective	12.6667	12.1400	11.4467	6.275	0.002
continuance	14.5133	14.3600	15.0600	1.536	0.216
normative	20.4067	19.1333	18.0400	7.384	0.001
general score	47.0600	46.1600	44.5467	2.395	0.092
Organizational orientation					
upward mobile	39.4333	40.120	38.4867	3.198	0.042
ambivalent	18.8867	20.0800	21.8400	6.612	0.001
indifferent	23.4200	24.8000	25.4400	3.605	0.028

F – test; $p < 0.05$ considered significant.

Table 2

χ^2 of canonical discriminant functions

Function	Eigenvalue	Canonical R	Wilks	χ^2	Df	p
1	0.182	0.393	0.760	121.57	18	0.000
2	0.132	0.318	0.899	47.32	8	0.000

Df – degrees of freedom.

Table 3

Functions at group centroids of canonical discriminant functions

Type of employment (job)	Function I	Function II
Professional army staff	0.579	- 0.131
Workforce engaged in service jobs	- 0.145	0.459
Workforce engaged in administrative jobs	- 0.433	- 0.329

* **Unstandardized canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means.**

0.01) compared to the employees in civil service and administrative sectors. It is evident that the professional members of the military had the most emphasized organizational commi-

tive side of the discriminant functions were the employed in the civil sector, while the positive pole was characterized by professional members of the army.

Table 4 shows the matrix structure of isolated discriminatory functions. As it can be seen from the Table 4 belonging to professional military service was best defined by the experience of similarity (identification) and loyalty, as 2 aspects of organizational identification, a high score on the affective commitment and low expression of commitment staying-in-organization commitment, as 2 dimensions of organizational commitment and the absence of ambivalent and indifferent organizational identification.

The second discriminatory function discriminated well the employees in the service sector against the rest of respondents, whereby the pronounced normative commitment and organizational orientation towards the advancement in the hierarchy are the key variables on the basis of whose intensity discrimination can be made.

Especially appealing was the finding (Table 5) that with the given model belonging to and engagement in the professional military service can be accurately predicted with 55%.

In other words, the presence of high identification with colleagues from a military organization, high loyalty, and high affective commitment to the military organization, as well as low intensity of staying-in-the-organization commitment and the lack of ambiguous and indifferent organizational orientation, all of which were highly desirable attributes of the employees, provided a very good basis on which, in more than a half of the cases, can be accurately estimated that an individual is a member of professional military service.

Discussion

The military organization of each country, especially its structure, organization, and functioning, is undoubtedly important for stability, security and prosperity of the entire society. Technological equipment and structural components of the military organization are certainly important in terms of defining its strength and power, but human resources themselves are undoubtedly the key of competitive advantages in the light of the contemporary trends, not only in the environment and the region but also in the global socio-cultural trends. These trends are supported by the statements

Table 4

Structure matrix of canonical discriminant functions

Variables	I function	p
Perceptions of shared characteristics (aspect of OI)	0. 527*	< 0.05
Continuance commitment	-0.387*	< 0.05
Organizational orientation_ambivalent	-0.387*	< 0.05
Organizational orientation _indifferent	-0.297*	< 0.05
Loyalty (aspect of OI)	0.223*	< 0.05
Affecitve commitment	0.194*	< 0.05
	II function	
Normative commitment	0.406*	< 0.05
Organizational orientation_upward mobile	0.332*	< 0.05

*Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions; OI – organizational identification.

Table 5

Classification results – canonical discriminat analysis

Type of job	Predicted group membership			Total
	Workforce in service jobs	Workforce in administrative jobs	Professional army staff	
Original count (%)				
workforce in service jobs	79	42	29	150
workforce in administrative jobs	43	81	26	150
professional army staff	36	27	87	150
workforce in service jobs	52.7	28.0	19.3	100.0
workforce in administrative jobs	28.7	54.0	17.3	100.0
professional army staff	24.0	18.0	58.0	100.0
Cross-validated count (%)				
workforce in service jobs	74	47	29	150
workforce in administrative jobs	44	76	30	150
professional army staff	37	30	83	150
workforce in service jobs	49.3	31.3	19.3	100.0
workforce in administrative jobs	29.3	50.7	20.0	100.0
professional army staff	24.7	20.0	55.3	100.0

of different foreign, but as well as, national authors and researchers [1, 2].

Through the research conducted and presented in this article, it was tested to what extent the organizational identification, organizational commitment and organizational orientations present in professional military personnel in comparison to the personnel employed in the civil sector, as well as whether it is possible, the basis of these variables, to discriminate professional military personnel against the employees in civil service and administrative sectors.

The results showed that professional military personnel are characterized by a high degree of both organizational commitment and organizational identification, compared to the employees in the civil sector - service and administrative activities. Especially through the process of canonical discriminatory analysis, it was concluded that professional military personnel are characterized by a high level of identification with colleagues and a high degree of loyalty to the military organization, as key aspects of organizational identification. In addition, professional military personnel have a strong affective commitment to the organization, and on the other hand, not so prominent commitment to staying in the organization. These findings are clearly intriguing if we bear in mind that it is a precisely affective commitment that represents the desire of an individual to remain in the organization because of his/her emotional attachment and identification with organizational goals and values. On the other hand, by the commitment to stay in the organization actually explicates the employee's awareness of the price of leaving the organization, that is, the perception that there are accumulated investments on the side of the organization that could be lost if one leaves the organization (benefits – salaries, promotion, social networks, and contacts, etc, specific to a particular organization). Exactly this kind of results underpin each other, bearing in mind that identification with colleagues – as an aspect of organizational identification – is actually a perceived similarity related to the common characteristics with the other members of the military organization, and in addition to, respect for the common (shared, or military organization's) values or goals [14, 20, 21] and expressed loyalty to the organization and enthusiasm tied to the organizational goals. In line with this is also the fact that professional military personnel have low ambivalent commitment to the organization – which in fact is characterized by a lack of orientation of the organizational system as such, so the need "not to play the role for the organization" but "to play the role for the personal preferences and goals", which frequently leads to the discrepancy between an individual employee and the organization. In addition, it is extremely suitable that the indifferent organizational orientation is not a characteristic of the professional military personnel, because it is characterized by a low level of identification and low expectations of an employee from the organization, and thus frequent "avoiding" to participate in the achievement of organizational goals, values, and norms.

Conclusion

The high degree of affective organizational commitment, but also pronounced organizational identification in terms of identifying with other members of the army and loyalty to the military organizational values and goals are an apparent basis upon which, in the forthcoming period, a stable, and above all, powerful military organization can be built and developed, considering that exactly the human resources are the key and essential factor of the competitive advantage in context of strong competitiveness in the field of military defense reality. If taken into account that human resources are more adaptable and flexible, compared to technological structural resources, exactly they can be a crucial factor of the success and progress of the military organization in the conditions of more frequent necessity for changes, innovations and adapting to turbulent and intense global social circumstances.

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