

THE INFLUENCE OF JOB SATISFACTION IN MILITARY SERVICE AS A FACTOR FOR ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE IN A VUCA/BANI ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: *This report examines job satisfaction in the military service of the Bulgarian Armed Forces as a key factor for organizational resilience. In the contemporary environment, characterized by the VUCA and BANI models, job satisfaction has become increasingly important for the stability, adaptability, and effective functioning of military organizations. The analysis is based on data from two representative sociological studies among military personnel in Bulgaria, conducted in 2017 and 2025. The data were collected through direct anonymous surveys of two independent samples, each comprising approximately 1,500 respondents, using a standardized questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The results indicate an increasing level of satisfaction regarding job security, remuneration, training, career development, and the safeguarding of civil rights. Social and organizational factors, including relations within units and with direct commanders, remain stable, indicating sustained internal cohesion. Material and technical support remains the lowest-rated aspect of service. The findings emphasize the importance of job satisfaction as a factor for organizational resilience and the effectiveness of the armed forces. In the transition from a VUCA to a BANI environment, this resilience depends not only on structural and resource-related factors but also on human capital engagement and adaptability within the military organization.*

Keywords: sociological study, military personnel, organizational resilience, human capital, armed forces

1. Introduction

Human resource management represents a complex managerial activity, driven by the simultaneous functioning of the system within both internal and external environments characterized by a high degree of dynamics and uncertainty. In this context, job satisfaction in military service emerges as a key factor for organizational resilience and the effective functioning of the armed forces.

Job satisfaction is associated with higher professional performance, increased organizational commitment, and lower staff turnover [1]. It represents a multidimensional construct shaped by both internal and external factors, which

influences the resilience and effectiveness of the defence system. At the same time, job satisfaction is a key element in human capital management [2], and its study provides opportunities for improving organizational policies and enhancing the effectiveness of managerial decision-making. In this regard, human resource management in the armed forces is directly linked to ensuring defence capabilities and the resilience of the national security system in the face of various types of external threats [3].

The study of job satisfaction in the military environment requires an integrative approach that combines general theoretical models with the specific characteristics of

the military organization, such as its hierarchical structure, high degree of regulation, and the importance of collective identity.

2. Theoretical approaches

In the scientific literature, job satisfaction is primarily examined within the field of social psychology as a result of the interaction between individual attitudes and the characteristics of the work environment.

The classical theoretical approaches provide different explanations for the formation of job satisfaction. Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory distinguishes two groups of factors—hygiene factors (working conditions, salary, job security, and interpersonal relations) and motivating factors (achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for development), which together shape the overall level of satisfaction of individuals within an organization [4].

According to Abraham Maslow's hierarchical model, human needs are arranged in specific levels, and job satisfaction depends on the extent to which the work environment succeeds in meeting these needs [5].

John Stacey Adams' approach is related to individuals' subjective perceptions of equity within an organization. According to his theory, job satisfaction depends on the balance between effort and rewards received, as well as on comparisons with other members of the organization [6].

The theoretical approaches presented do not exhaust the complexity of job satisfaction, given its specific organizational characteristics.

Military service is characterized by a strict hierarchical structure, a high degree of regulation, and specific requirements for discipline, responsibility, and readiness to act under conditions of risk and uncertainty. The specific features of the military organization indicate that the job satisfaction of military personnel cannot be explained solely through universal theoretical models,

but requires consideration of specific factors such as organizational culture, leadership, sense of duty, and collective identity.

In this regard, specialized theoretical and empirical studies focused on the military context are of particular importance for the analysis, as they adapt and further develop general concepts of job satisfaction to the specific features of the military profession.

Among the most significant conceptual frameworks is the theory of organizational commitment developed by John Meyer and Natalie Allen [7]. In the military profession, normative commitment is of particular importance, as it is based on a sense of duty, moral responsibility, and loyalty to the institution, which contribute to maintaining a stable level of job satisfaction in conditions of high uncertainty.

Theories of military leadership also hold a significant place, according to which the leader plays a key role in shaping the motivation, morale, and job satisfaction of subordinates through inspiration, personal example, and the building of trust. Within the framework of the concepts of James Burns and Bernard Bass, transformational leaders create a sense of meaning and significance in the tasks performed, which is particularly important in conditions of uncertainty and dynamic change [8, 9].

Analyses from the research of Philip Podsakoff and co-authors further confirm that transformational leadership has a positive impact on job satisfaction and group behavior, contributing to increased organizational effectiveness [10].

Military-specific approaches also include models of combat cohesion, which emphasize the importance of interpersonal relationships, trust, and a shared mission as key factors for effectiveness and satisfaction in conditions of risk and uncertainty [11], as well as concepts of psychological resilience, which address the ability of military personnel to cope with stress in extreme and uncertain conditions [12].

In the contemporary security environment, classical and military-specific approaches

are complemented by the VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) and BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, Incomprehensible) conceptual models, which emphasize the increasing unpredictability of the operational environment and the heightened requirements for adaptability and psychological resilience of military personnel. In this context, job satisfaction in military service is established as an important aspect of the concept of organizational resilience. It emphasizes not only the dependence of resilience on structural factors, but also on the satisfaction of human capital under conditions of stress and uncertainty [13].

Based on the theoretical review, the following research hypothesis is formulated: an increase in job satisfaction in military service leads to strengthening the organizational resilience of the military organization. These theoretical perspectives jointly form an integrated analytical framework for understanding job satisfaction in the military context.

3. Methodology

The analysis is based on data collected through direct anonymous surveys conducted on two independent representative samples, each including approximately 1,500 military personnel. The research instrument includes a standardized questionnaire with items measuring the level of satisfaction with various aspects of military service, which are assessed using a five-point Likert scale.

The components examined include social relations in the work environment, interaction with the direct command staff, remuneration, job security, opportunities for training and career development, regulatory framework, health and material support, as well as perceptions of the social prestige of the military profession.

For the purposes of the analysis, job satisfaction in military service is operationalized as a complex construct

formed by the aforementioned indicators. The comparative analysis between 2017 and 2025 enables the tracking of changes in satisfaction levels and the identification of trends in the development of the organizational environment.

Organizational resilience is interpreted indirectly through the structure of job satisfaction, assuming that stable and improving evaluations across key indicators reflect an increased capacity of the military organization to function effectively and adaptively in a dynamic security environment.

The analytical method is descriptive-comparative, and the results are interpreted within the context of the contemporary conceptual frameworks of VUCA and BANI.

4. Results and discussion

The analysis of the results of military personnel's evaluations of their job satisfaction with the components of military service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria is presented in Table 1.

Military personnel report the highest levels of satisfaction with relations with colleagues (3.97), interaction with their direct commander (3.78), and job security (3.57). These results indicate a relatively high level of stability in the social environment and well-established relationships within the structures of the military organization, which function as an important factor in maintaining the motivation and effectiveness of personnel.

Moderate levels of satisfaction are recorded for remuneration (3.35), opportunities for training and qualification (3.17), safeguarding of civil rights (3.12), career development (3.08), medical care provision (3.06), working conditions (3.05), the regulatory framework (3.02), and the social prestige of the military profession (2.99). These results indicate a moderate level of institutional and organizational support and suggest the need for measures to improve key aspects of military service, in order to enhance stability and reduce personnel turnover.

Table 1 Military Personnel Evaluations of the Level of Job Satisfaction in Military Service

Components of Military Personnel Job Satisfaction in Military Service	Mean score 2017	Mean score 2025
Relations with Colleagues	4.02	3.97
Workplace Relations with Your Direct Supervisor/Commander	3.74	3.78
Sense of Job Security and Stability	3.11	3.57
Remuneration for Your Work	2.27	3.35
Opportunities for Training and Qualification	2.94	3.17
Safeguarding of Your Civil Rights	2.76	3.12
Opportunities for Career Development	2.92	3.08
Medical Care Provision	2.75	3.06
Health and Safety Conditions in the Work Environment	2.73	3.05
Regulatory Framework Governing Military Service	2.74	3.02
Social Prestige of the Military Profession	2.78	2.99
Armament and Equipment in the Military Unit/Formation	2.35	2.55
Clothing and Equipment	2.11	2.32

Note: Rating scale: 1 – “completely dissatisfied”, 2 – “highly dissatisfied”, 3 – “moderately satisfied”, 4 – “highly satisfied”, 5 – “completely satisfied”

The lowest level of satisfaction is recorded in the material and technical aspects of service—clothing and equipment (2.32), as well as armament and equipment (2.55), which indicates the presence of structural limitations affecting perceived effectiveness and the conditions for performing official duties.

The comparative analysis for the period 2017–2025 shows a positive trend across all examined components of military service. The most significant increase is observed in the sense of job security (from 3.11 to 3.57) and remuneration (from 2.27 to 3.35), which indicates increased confidence in stability and improved financial conditions of service. Positive changes are also recorded in indicators such as training, career development, and safeguarding of civil rights.

Despite the reported improvement, material and technical factors remain at the lowest levels, highlighting the need for targeted measures to modernize military formations. This imbalance between the social-organizational and resource components of

job satisfaction identifies a key area for managerial intervention.

In the context of the formulated hypothesis, the results confirm that an increase in job satisfaction in military service is associated with strengthening organizational resilience. High values in social interactions and the positive trend in job security and remuneration indicate that the human factor plays a leading role in the stability and adaptability of the military organization. At the same time, limitations in material and technical support may act as an impeding factor in the full realization of this potential, especially in conditions of a dynamic and uncertain environment.

The results can also be interpreted through the lens of classical motivational theories, as the improvement in remuneration and job security confirms the importance of hygiene factors in stabilizing the organizational environment. High ratings for relations within the collective and with direct supervisors highlight the role of leadership and group cohesion as key elements of internal resilience. In the context of the

transition from a VUCA to a BANI environment, these social factors perform a compensatory function in relation to limitations in material and technical support. Despite the positive trend, the persistently low evaluations in the resource component indicate a potential risk to long-term organizational resilience.

5. Conclusions

This study confirms the importance of job satisfaction in military service as a key factor for the organizational resilience of the military organization.

The analysis of empirical data for the period 2017–2025 demonstrates a sustained positive trend in the main components of job satisfaction, with the highest values remaining in social relations, alongside a significant improvement in job security and remuneration.

At the same time, the results reveal a persistent imbalance between the social-organizational and material-technical factors of service, with the latter remaining at the lowest levels of satisfaction. This indicates the need for targeted managerial measures aimed at modernizing the resource base and improving working conditions.

Although the comparative analysis indicates a positive trend, there are areas requiring further development, which suggests the

need for the implementation of consistent policies to enhance job satisfaction and strengthen the long-term organizational resilience of the armed forces.

6. Recommendations

Based on the analysis, the following recommendation can be formulated:

- Modernization of the material and technical base, including the improvement of clothing, equipment, and armament.
- Further development of the income policy and implementation of motivational incentives as key factors for stabilizing human capital.
- Expansion of opportunities for training, qualification, and career development with the aim of enhancing adaptability and the long-term commitment of military personnel within the organization.
- Promotion and development of leadership skills among the command staff as a factor in strengthening trust and cohesion.
- Ensuring continuous monitoring of the components of military service for timely identification of problem areas and the adoption of managerial measures to address them.

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