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Andragogical determinants of officer-leader's professionalization in lifelong learning

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Abstract

Relevance. The development of cooperation between NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) nations and their strategic partners, planned transition to the NATO standards of armed forces training require the priority of continuous professional development, and military leadership. It is no coincidence that the strategic goals of the Ukrainian defence reform include defence forces professionalization, armed forces manning with professionally trained, high moral standards of service members who are capable to solve comprehensive military professional tasks and lead military units in a changeable environment. The latter capability justifies the actuality of this topic to make military pedagogical theory more profound and renewal of academic practice of military specialists training considering modern realities and prospects of armed forces development.

Purpose. The article is devoted to professionalization of experienced officer and characterization of military leader training.

Methodology. The study employs a mixed-method approach, utilizing both theoretical analyses (review of literature and synthesis of concepts) and empirical methods (questionnaires and expert evaluations). This methodology provides a comprehensive view of the adult learning processes applicable to military leadership training.

Results. Findings indicate that adult learning principles, particularly andragogy, significantly impact the professional development of officers. The research identifies key psychological and pedagogical conditions that foster effective military leadership, including the need for a supportive educational environment and the alignment of training methods with adult learning characteristics.

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Conclusions. The study concludes that integrating andragogy into military training programs significantly enhances the professionalization of officer-leaders. It advocates for educational strategies that are responsive to the adult learners' needs, emphasizing flexibility, self-directed learning, and practical application. Future research should further explore andragogical principles specific to military contexts to refine these training processes.

Keywords: leadership capabilities; experienced officer-leader; education; military andragogical process; military andragogy.

Introduction

Considering the dialectic character of the andragogical process, which makes current the objective and subjective factors of the officer's professionalization in lifelong learning, it is highly important to ensure the integrity of their influence on personality of the military leader. Positive achievements should be strengthened and developed by joint efforts of all interested parties, particularly, by providing favourable service conditions, scientific organizations of students' self-education, practice, and researches. In order to suppress negative personal qualities it is necessary to support students using andragogy such as briefing, consultations, discussion of problems, training, etc. The andragogy founders worked with idea of stimulation of adult cognitive independence, advantages of self-education and practical experience, and new knowledge gaining difficulties. Thus, M.S. Knowles [1] in his book "The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy" explains the technological effectiveness of the andragogical process and defines its phases such as 1) creation of a favourable environment for adult learning, 2) creation of organizational structure for joint planning, 3) diagnostics of learning needs, 4) formation of directions and learning goals, 5) development of learning actions forms, 6) realization of learning actions, 7) re-diagnosing learning needs, and 8) results assessment.

The scientists focused on interest to andragogical parameters of modern professional education prove the actuality of special researches in this sphere. A good example is the article by M.L. Birzer [2] "The theory of andragogy applied to police training" discovering the andragogical aspects of police personnel learning and proving that "the andragogical model has been widely adapted in a variety of programs – from individual courses at entry level of education to total programs of in-service education, human resources development, continuing professional education...". L.C. Blondy [3] insists on importance of andragogy for establishment of effective adult learning system, ensuring open access to lifelong professional learning in information society. According to the American scientist from the Michigan University, "andragogy should be used as a starting point for approaching the adult online learning environment".

B.J. Bowe *et al.* [4] proposed a present-day idea of adult involvement in modern information technologies and resources, especially, Wikis use during cooperative education establishment. Meanwhile, the article authors considered all students as adult ones regardless the specifics such as relevant professional experience, personal achievements in professional life, strong learning motivation, self-education desire, etc. We guess it is inappropriate to set equal andragogical and student-centred approaches, levelling of consistency and continuity

principles in lifelong professional learning as both student and experienced specialist considerably differ by their age specifics, life and professional achievements, and worldviews and need different conditions for their professionalization.

A. Motlhabane & M. Dichaba [5] stress the priority of andragogical approach to organization of postgraduate practical training of academics when the most effective forms and methods of adult learning are modelling of practical forms in school laboratories, mutual learning, and role games. However, it is doubtful to implement andragogy within school pedagogical practice, set equal didactic principles and adult learning principles.

K.D. McCauley *et al.* [6] consider the andragogical approach as the basis for focused leadership training of business representatives and managers helping to actualize adult age specifics (self-assessment, experience, readiness to learn, learning orientation, motivation, and necessity to know) for acquiring of leadership behaviour basis, combining of leadership theory and practical gaps.

Indonesian scientists Rismiyanto *et al.* [7] warn of absolutization of andragogical approach for all higher education students stressing the educators should learn thoroughly students' age specifics, compare their own and their learners' orientation in order to arrange the learning environment accordingly, "educators need to be informed about the concept of learning orientation. Educators who appreciate the importance of this concept and know how to use it would choose to find out the learning orientation of their learner from the very beginning. Educators should also learn their own orientation, which would allow them to make a comparison between their own and their learners' orientation, giving them the opportunity to build realistic expectations and arrange the learning environment accordingly".

The effectiveness of adult learning on the basis of the competency approach depends on compliance with a number of conditions, among which M. Navarre Cleary & C. Breathnach [8] identified the following: faculty and staff grounded in adult learning theory and practice; first enrolment experiences focused on developing the adult learners' self-confidence in being and becoming a competent «learner»; explicit instruction in a variety of lifelong learning strategies; multiple prompts across the curriculum for reflection in and on practice, so that students are always being called upon to connect theory and practice. And, not only flexible pacing, but also flexible pathways, so that learners have both clear structures and meaningful opportunities to customize their degree.

S. Charungkattikul & J. Henschke [9] emphasize the need to create a favorable environment for the development of independence in adult students, rethink the role of the teacher in the organization of the andragogical

process: "...teacher is aware of the career opportunities that will be available in the coming years for their students, and are always advocating towards forward thinking and planning to ensure all students will not be left behind".

J.H. Wilson [10] outlines the priority of adult education technologization through implementation of modern innovations such as IT-technologies, blockchain, artificial intelligence. Within massive socio-cultural changes D.P. Peltz & A.C. Clemons [11] prefer multicultural andragogy and transformative learning. It should be noted that the environmental approach to adult learning is deemed to be prospective which, according to developers of three-factor multicultural andragogical model for transformative learning (TMATL), determine the actuality of further researches of this problem within different environments, such as military, intercultural, and generations.

S. Kheang [12] focuses on development of andragogy and transformative learning connection. The American scientist (North Carolina State University) proves this problem solving will allow achieving integrity and multidimensionality in andragogical process study, enriching adult learning methods, "as a result, adult educators would begin to recognize the value of incorporate more creative modes of inquiry into their practice".

M. Azmi & F.P. Noer Angrainy [13] outlined four aspects to be considered during implementation of andragogical approach in teaching and while developing English speaking skills such as independent learning, students learning experience, learning readiness, and transfer from subject-oriented to result-oriented learning. Meanwhile, the absence of English professional communication practical experience of bachelor's degree students, lack of motivation during first years, gradual foreign language learning was not considered for lifelong learning.

A.O. Vitchenko & V.I. Osodlo [14], A.O. Vitchenko [15] research how to define and develop leadership skills of military specialists of different ages, design leaders' models based on job analysis, critically assess the modern military pedagogical practice related to low level of academic liberty of students, lack of learning independence, lack of learners' responsibility for results of self-education in military high schools. However, the andragogical learning aspects of experienced military leaders in professional lifelong learning is not sufficiently studied.

Materials and Methods

We have used the system of research methods such as theoretical (analysis of resources, synthesis of scientific statements, comparison and summarization of empirical data) and empirical (questionnaires and expert evaluation method) within the defined aim and tasks. Developed questionnaires have provided empirical information. In our opinion, the professionalization of the modern officer-leader is a complex process of persistent quantitative and qualitative changes, agreed personal and professional changes, subordinated to strengthening and developing the leadership stance, establishment of more effective military unit command, and successful tasks assigned accomplishment. The effectiveness of professionalization

depends on understanding of adult new specifics, taxonomy of leadership skills of the modern military leader.

The article is devoted to specifics of professionalization of an experienced officer, defining andragogical aspects of his/her leadership training as military leader. The following tasks were solved to achieve the defined aim: to discover the present and approaches to adult learning in lifelong learning system; to analyze age specifics and psychological aspects of senior old officers; to draw typological portrait of the modern officer-leader, specify his/her professionalization conditions based on current empirical data; to clarify the leading andragogical aspects of lifelong learning of the military leader.

On the basis of the conducted analysis of adult age features it was proved that in the period of adulthood intellectual activity reaches the highest indicators, the steady kernel of the self-concept of the officer is formed. The traditional educational system does not contribute to the consolidation and developing of positive innovations of military leaders, in particular, the desire for self-affirmation and the manifestation of leadership qualities. The latter necessitates the subordination of the educational process in higher military school to andragogical determinants regarding the professionalization of experienced officers in the context of continuing education: status nature of education; focus on achieving joint success in education and integrated educational goals; revealing and development of leadership qualities; consideration of personal achievements and experience, interests, and prospects of career growth; leading role of subjectivity and focus on realization of individual learning path; developmental learning in a multifunctional educational environment; and perceptivity of subjects to new didactic principles (interactivity, dialogue, partnership, gender equality, etc.).

The observance of formulated psychological and pedagogical conditions in higher military school (favourable psychological climate, trust-based relations, consideration of students' characteristics, interests, and needs, etc.) will contribute to increase of effectiveness of the military andragogical process, activation of the officer's professional development.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of special study has proved the adults have some specifics in intellectual development and activation of mental skills. The adults successfully fulfil reproductive tasks in line with accuracy, consistency, reasoning within regulated conditions (convergent thinking), as well as capability to provide new ideas, enrich experience by means of novelties and innovations, be creative (divergent thinking). It is not coincidence that the representatives of developmental psychology underscore that "during adolescent period and within different creative forms the intellectual activity reaches the highest development level», the following thinking develops actively such as practical thinking (the high point at the age between 31 and 32, 34 and 35), theoretical thinking (32) and imaginary thinking (33, 35 and 39); and the most important personal adulting skills include flexibility, structural approach, and dialectical thinking" [16].

During adulting phase the officer's self-identity is formed which is manifested by feeling of honour, dignity and military duty, devotion to high ideals of people's service, his freedom and independence defence; self-identification and self-actualization, openness to new experience, optimism and reasoning, responsibility, moderated attitude to subordinates based on insistence and respect, and growth of moral self-attitude and attitude to environment. According to psychologists, "young officers (under 30 years old – remarked by authors) have increased "reactivity", are stress-sensible, have more negative emotions, are anxious and less life-satisfied..." [17]. They have "high emotional intelligence, low self-assessment, hostility, inherent danger, frequent mood change" while the adults are observed the decrease of neuroticism, have congruence "with age officers move towards introversion justified by the increase of intrapsychological activity and demonstrates their social activity decrease, immersion in themselves, in self-identity that is perceived as more significant than the environment" [17]. It is worth to

consider the conclusion made by V.I. Osodlo [17] that young and adult officers are capable to obey the group needs when 30-40 years old "differ by a sort of independence..., wish to protect their interests, achieve planned tasks, and sometimes, "challenge" the environment to protect own individuality".

Based on the long observations it was defined the dialectical character of adult officers development influenced by both external (service and professional activities, interaction with social environment) and internal factors (self-awareness, self-perception, amateurism, self-education, self-reflection, and self-assessment) in the National Defence University of Ukraine named after Ivan Cherniakhovskyi. The relations between positive and negative personal new specifics (Table 1), which were revealed during experimental study, have proved the inconsistency of traditional knowledge oriented learning system with needs of adult learners, prospects of their personal and professional development.

Table 1. Comparaative characteristics of new specifics of adult officers (30-40 years old)

Positive new specifics	Negative new specifics
Experience	stereotypes
Reflexivity	scepticism
restraint, caution	indecisiveness, reluctance
balance, predictability of actions and deeds	conservatism, biased attitude to innovation
activity, transformative nature of professional activity, effective professionalism	conformism, introversion
self-sufficiency, desire for self-affirmation, self-realization, successful activity	concentration on own success, carrier growth, domination of egoistic interests and strives
Flexibility	distrust to subordinates, desire of excessive care of them, intrusion of own opinion (voluntarism)
stability in relations	assurance, categoricity, zero tolerance, non-flexibility
sensibility to concurrent environment, strive to leadership, motivation to permanent increase of professionalism through self-education, practical activities, business communications with successful colleagues	absolutization of own practical experience, reduction of science and theoretical knowledge interest, scientific relativism
selectiveness in contacts and communication	normalization, narrativeness in cooperation and communication with subordinates

In order to learn professiographic portrait of the modern officer-leader we have conducted the empirical study with involvement of experts (group of highly qualified scientists, educators, military high schools commandants –

27 persons), as well as cadets and last year students (29 persons). According to the questionnaire they had to rank the list of leadership skills according to importance for the modern officer; the results are provide din the Table 2.

Table 2. Results of typological portrait of the modern officer-leader during empirical study

Standardized list of skills	Expert ranked list	Cadets and students ranked list
Competence	Morality, spirituality	Successfulness
Communicability	Experience	Competence
Degree of discipline	Successfulness	Experience
Experience	Degree of discipline	Creativity
Sociability	Competence	Flexibility
Courage, bravery	Creativity	Adaptability
Successfulness	Sociability	Sociability
Flexibility	Carefulness	Carefulness
Carefulness	Sincerity, openness	Degree of discipline
Justice	Courage, bravery	Communicability
Sincerity, openness	Communicability	Courage, bravery
Honesty	Justice	Justice
Adaptability	Honesty	Honesty
Morality, spirituality	Flexibility	Morality, spirituality
Creativity	Adaptability	Sincerity, openness

The respondents had to name three principal leadership skills they want to develop in themselves and in their chiefs (commanders), as well as three traits preventing formation

of leadership position within military. Their responses were summed up and presented in the Table 3.

Table 3. Gradation of officer’s leadership skills, “expected/undesirable” (in % of total quantity of provided advantages)

Groups	Officer’s leadership skills	
	expected (+)	undesirable (-)
Experts	Morality, spirituality – 86 Experience – 82 Successfulness – 74	Perfectionism – 81 Unprincipledness – 76 Faintness – 72
Cadets, students	Success – 82 Competence – 79 Experience – 71	Helplessness – 84 Formalism – 76 Pretence – 69

The adult achievements influence drastically axiological dimensions of the modern officer life, determine the value attitude to education, which provide wide opportunities for self-actualization, self-development and self-improvement. Awareness of importance of new knowledge, progressive military experience and armed struggle forms result in reflexion of military leader concerning problems and needs, problem solving identification, search of more effective forms, approaches, and means of self-education. It requires development of andragogical determinants for professionalization of the modern officer-leader within lifelong learning.

The status of officer-leader depending on the level of his/her previous education, title, authority in military environment, career ambitions, etc. plays a leading role in andragogical process [18; 19]. The status character of experienced military leader education is presented by his desire of increased activity and independence, consultations and remote feedback, and soft methodic maintenance. The student’s status of higher military school is completed by self-reflection, increased requirements to his/her personal and qualities based on one of the fundamental principles of military andragogy, “the more respect to personality of the military, the more requirements to him/her”.

The key criteria of officer-leader evaluation are successfulness, authority, and professionalism. Thus, the professional training of military leader should be based on the idea of joint success, be in line with integral educational tasks, be designed for revealing and developing the officer’s leadership capacity considering his/her previous achievements and experience, personal and professional interests, and prospects of career growth. The officer’s successful professional development directly depends on gaining new experience (life, service, military professional) and systematic theoretical learning, practical training, and probation in the future position [20; 21].

A student, who as an equal participant (subject) is involved in formation of common goals, choice of appropriate educational and professional content and its learning, diagnostics of professional training effectiveness, compliance with requirements to military leader, play a key role in formation of the andragogical process. It influences the role of officer’s consciousness and self-awareness, his/her honesty and responsibility, capability to develop own learning path, forecast future needs and

prospects of professional development, and focus on fruitful self-education and self-improvement [22; 23].

Service and professional activities of modern military leader are featured by high level of saturation, stress, dynamics, which require due moderation, working ability, comprehensive knowledge, creativity, flexibility, and innovative approach to managerial decision-making, capability to respond to changeably combat situation in a rapid manner and act more decisively, work out and steal a match on enemy. The advanced and developmental character, problems, variability of educational and cognitive actions, emphasis on the forms, methods and means of training in the andragogical process in the higher military school will prepare an officer for it [24; 25].

Leadership capacity of the experience officer is developed in the andragogical process due to comprehensive polifunctional educational environment consisting of different models of interpersonal role relations, activities and communications with representatives of civil military management such as senior commanders, experts, colleagues, subordinates, educators and scientists, public representatives, mass media, etc [26; 27]. In opposition to traditional learning based on transfer of ready knowledge from educator to student, the educational professional training of the experienced officer-leader is comprehensive, interactive, and active.

Based on the D. Kolb’s model, training a cyclic model of experienced officers for the andragogical process of a military higher school is developed (Figure 1), which consists of four stages of educational and cognitive activity:

- 1) reconstruction – actualization of the service, military-professional, combat experience acquired by the officers, comparison of different views and approaches;
- 2) reflection – identification of contradictions, problems analysing, establishing causal relationships;
- 3) interiorization – the search for effective ways and approaches to solving existing problems, learning new knowledge, working on an updated theoretical basis of improved or innovative management solutions, flexible algorithms (countermeasures), etc.;
- 4) exteriorization – a practical solution to the problems based on acquired knowledge, proven solutions (algorithms), enrichment of experience in managing troops in the process of applying more effective methods and means of armed struggle.

The effectiveness of the andragogical process is achieved by subjects' learning cooperation and partnership in different forms and context such as educational and cognitive, scientific research, service and professional, etc. The educators' and students' psychological desire to

achieve common success through flexible individual educational path, unity, and interrelation of personal and collective, normative and additional, traditional and innovative in learning.

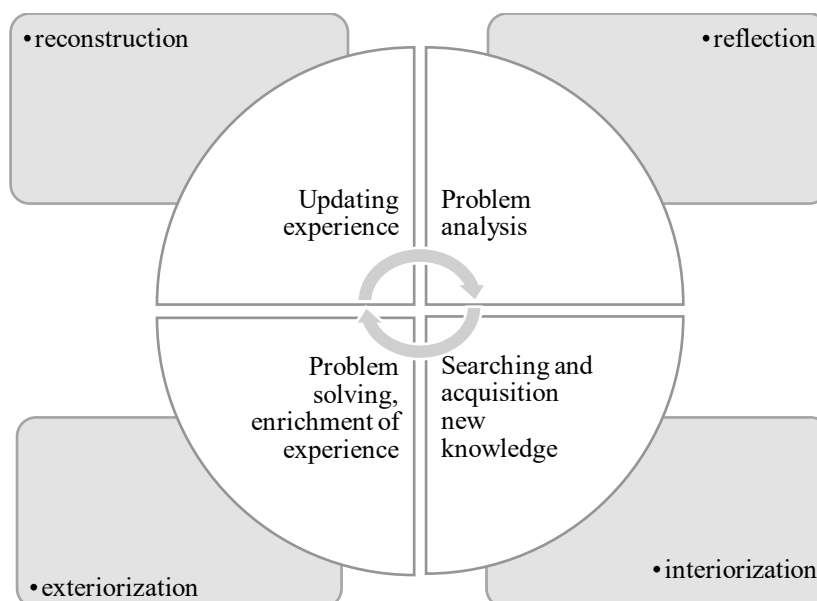


Figure 1. Cyclical model of training of experienced officers in the andragogical process of higher military educational institution

The directiveness of military pedagogical process should be changed by new principles and approaches to organization of adult learning, including personal orientation, flexibility and unique character of the educational path, interactivity, dialogue, partnership, and gender equality [28; 29]. The democratic European values in military andragogical process require complying with a range of psychological pedagogic conditions:

- 1) favourable psychological climate in military environment;
- 2) trust-based interpersonal relations;
- 3) consideration of students' individual, gender features, interests, and needs;
- 4) respect and increased interest to personal experience of officers-students;
- 5) learning and self-education, training and self-training, development and self-development motivation of students;
- 6) officer's personal sense of innovations;
- 7) natural combination of traditions and innovations, collectivism and individual needs, competitiveness and mutual support, mutual assistance in educational process;
- 8) priority of students' self-education;
- 9) students' personal responsibility for effectiveness of own educational and professional training;
- 10) students' involvement in self-actualization and self-evaluation, awareness of their own importance in the implementation of educational goals;
- 11) striving for professional growth and self-improvement;
- 12) effective feedback between subjects of educational interaction, immediate control and stimulation of students' educational achievements.

Discussions concerning issues related to delimitation of educational systems and approaches to different age

students' education are going on. Based on comparison of two learning models – pedagogical and andragogical – S.I. Zmeyov [30] defined that the basic difference is in the active role played by an adult student in organization of the educational process. The scientist concluded that “andragogical learning principles, in opposition to pedagogical ones, justify and state this activity as (primarily) of both student and educator”. However, this statement does not clarify the “main difference” between didactic and andragogical principles, stressed by the author of the monograph “Andragogy: basic theory and technologies of adult education”. Firstly, the subject-subjective approach in modern education rejects any superiority or privilege, is based on equal relations between educators (mentors and tutors) and pupils, each of whom should be ready for dialogue, partnership, and cooperation. Instead of promulgation of autonomy and self-sufficiency of the adult student, which can sometimes provoke undesired violations in organization of the andragogical process, negatively affect its results (relativistic attitude to theoretical learning, one-sidedness and categorical judgments, absolutization of own experience), it is worth to work out optimal ways and methods of organizing the educational environment with the creation of favourable psychological and pedagogical conditions for learning, communication, cooperation, and development of educational and professional knowledge.

The tendency to present the andragogical process as completely different from the previous stage of training by all its components such as goals, content, methods, forms and means, results, seems to be wrong. Since continuing education is implemented on the principles of sequence and lifelong learning, it is important to ensure an organic transition of an adult to more productive, integrated types and forms of educational and professional activities, to

create conditions for personal and professional growth by gradually expanding the educational space of adult learners, ways of communication, mastering innovative knowledge, gaining best practices, mastering flexible patterns of behaviour, etc.

The practical orientation of adult education, the subordination of the andragogical process to meeting the needs and solving the problems that an adult student faces in his/her own life and professional activity remains debatable. The dependence of education successfulness on student's practical experience, activation of available personal and professional problems realized through principles of education relation to life and problems is doubtless. Meanwhile, we should not forget about the danger of a simplified pragmatic-utilitarian approach to learning, which eliminates the fundamental nature of higher education, its developmental and long-term orientation. Since the effectiveness of the andragogical process in higher military school depends on a well-thought-out, balanced, scientifically sound approach to the organization of educational and professional training of experienced officers, the system of andragogical principles needs to be developed.

Conclusions

Based on the age features analysis of the adult it is found out that in the period of adulthood the intellectual activity reaches the highest indicators, thinking becomes more flexible, structured and dialectical. In adulthood, a stable core of the officer's self-concept is formed, which is manifested in the growth of consciousness, independence, purposefulness of personal actions and deeds, the desire for self-affirmation and leadership, but is not fully facilitated

by the traditional training system. The latter necessitates the subordination of the educational process in higher military school to the leading scientific guidelines (andragogical determinants) on the professionalization of experienced officers in continuing education: the status of learning, focus on achieving mutual success in learning, integrated educational goals taking into account personal achievements and experience, interests, career prospects; the leading role of subjectivity and focus on the implementation of individual educational trajectory; developmental learning in a multifunctional educational environment; receptivity of subjects to new didactic principles (interactivity, dialogue, partnership, gender equality, etc.). Adherence to the formulated psychological and pedagogical conditions in higher military school (favorable psychological climate, trusting interpersonal relations, taking into account the peculiarities, interests and needs of students, etc.) will increase the efficiency of the military andragogical process and intensify the professional development of the officer-leader.

The proposed research does not cover all aspects of the scientific problem, the prospects for further development of which are seen in the identification of specific andragogical principles of training, designing a model of a holistic military andragogical process, identifying the most effective ways and approaches to educational training of officer in lifelong learning.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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Андрагогічні детермінанти професіоналізації офіцера-лідера в умовах навчання впродовж життя

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Анотація

Актуальність. Розвиток співробітництва між країнами-членами НАТО та їх стратегічними партнерами, запланований перехід на стандарти підготовки збройних сил НАТО вимагають пріоритетності безперервного професійного розвитку та військового лідерства. Не випадково стратегічними цілями оборонної реформи України є професіоналізація збройних сил, комплектування Збройних Сил професійно підготовленими, з високими моральними якостями військовослужбовцями, здатними вирішувати складні військово-професійні завдання та здійснювати керівництво військовими підрозділами в умовах мінливого зовнішнього середовища. Останнє зумовлює актуальність теми дослідження, спрямованої на поглиблення військово-педагогічної теорії та оновлення навчальної практики підготовки військових фахівців з урахуванням сучасних реалій і перспектив розвитку збройних сил.

Мета. Стаття присвячена професіоналізації досвідченого офіцера та характеристиці підготовки військового лідера.

Методологія. У дослідженні використано змішаний підхід, що включає як теоретичний аналіз (огляд літератури і синтез концепцій), так і емпіричні методи (анкетування та експертні оцінки). Ця методологія забезпечує комплексний погляд на процеси навчання дорослих, застосовні до підготовки військового лідерства.

Результати. Результати дослідження свідчать, що принципи навчання дорослих, зокрема андрагогіка, суттєво впливають на професійний розвиток офіцерів. Дослідження визначає ключові психолого-педагогічні умови, які сприяють ефективному військовому лідерству, включаючи необхідність створення сприятливого освітнього середовища та приведення методів навчання у відповідність до особливостей навчання дорослих.

Висновки. У дослідженні зроблено висновок, що інтеграція андрагогіки у програми військової підготовки значно підвищує професіоналізм офіцерів-лідерів. Воно виступає за освітні стратегії, які відповідають потребам дорослих слухачів, наголошуючи на гнучкості, самокерованому навчанні і практичному застосуванні. Майбутні дослідження мають і надалі вивчати андрагогічні принципи, специфічні для військового контексту, щоб удосконалити ці навчальні процеси.

Ключові слова: лідерські якості; досвідчений офіцер-лідер; освіта; військово-андрагогічний процес; військова андрагогіка.