

A SOCIO-PHILOSOPHICAL MODEL FOR FORMING IDEOLOGICAL IMMUNITY IN MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL

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Abstract: The article develops a socio-philosophical model for forming ideological immunity in military service personnel against destructive influences in cyberspace. It identifies a "protection gap": military protective resources operate in real space, while destructive influence occurs in virtual space, which the serviceman enters individually. The model rests on inoculation theory, the social-cognitive approach, and the three-component structure of ideological immunity (cognitive, axiological, behavioural). Empirical testing ($N = 271$) showed that category of service does not predetermine immunity level, so differentiation proceeds by individual level and by service category. The model comprises four circuits (diagnostic, cognitive, axiological, behavioural), operates cyclically, and is implemented through institutional, methodological and personnel lines, including a four-module programme based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle.

Keywords: ideological immunity, military service personnel, cyberspace, destructive ideological influence, inoculation theory, protection gap

Destructive ideological influences disseminated through cyberspace have become one of the direct sources of threat to national security. Military service personnel occupy a contradictory position within this process: on the one hand, the military environment possesses powerful resources that protect the individual; on the other, it is precisely the serviceman who constitutes a target of high value for destructive actors.

The source of this contradiction lies in the fact that the protective mechanisms of the military environment -collective cohesion, discipline, direct educational communication -operate in real space, whereas destructive influence is exercised in virtual space. A serviceman who enters cyberspace through a mobile device during personal time temporarily leaves the protective field of the military collective. The present study designates this situation by the notion of the “protection gap”.

The model rests upon three propositions. The first is inoculation theory: the most effective way of protecting a person against the erosion of conviction is not to keep them away from counter-arguments but to acquaint them with those arguments under controlled conditions and to teach them to formulate a refutation [1]. The application of the theory in the digital environment has been experimentally confirmed [2].

The second is the social-cognitive approach: the translation of knowledge and conviction into practical action is mediated by the individual's belief in their own capability [3]. A conclusion follows: teaching the recognition of destructive content is not sufficient -the skill of acting and the confidence to act must also be formed.

The third is the three-component structure of ideological immunity (cognitive, axiological, behavioural) [4]. Empirical research ($N = 271$) has shown that the correlation between the components is significant yet below 0.60 ($r = 0.255-0.325$; $p < 0.001$), which confirms that treating them as distinct components is justified.

The most important decision in constructing the model concerns the criterion by which educational influence is to be differentiated. Differentiation by category of service was initially substantiated on theoretical grounds. Empirical testing, however, did not confirm this hypothesis: in

three of the four indicators no statistically significant difference between categories was established, and the effect size remained within the range 0.007–0.018. The result was identical under both parametric and non-parametric tests.

The result does not imply that the category of service is irrelevant as such: it determines the serviceman's regime of digital activity and the arrangements for participation in educational events. It does show, however, that the category does not predetermine the level of ideological immunity - within one and the same category there are individuals of both high and low levels.

On this basis a two-dimensional scheme of differentiation is adopted. Substantive differentiation proceeds by level of immunity, that is, at the level of the individual. Organisational differentiation proceeds by category of service: the form, duration and timing of activities are adapted to the service regime of the given category.

The model comprises four circuits, each designed to counter a particular stage within the five-stage model of destructive influence.

Table 1.

Circuits of the model

Circuit	Function	Stage	Principal instrument
Diagnostic	Measuring the level of immunity	initial assessment	standardised questionnaire
Cognitive	Skill of information analysis	stages 1–2	case analysis, practical exercise
Axiological	Consolidating value orientations	stage 3	discussion, national history
Behavioural	Mastering the algorithm of action	stages 4–5	simulation, reporting channel

The centre of gravity lies within the cognitive circuit, since the most effective point of preventive intervention falls within the first two stages: after the third stage, eliminating the influence becomes considerably more difficult. The behavioural circuit serves as the final line of defence, and its effectiveness depends upon the resource of collective cohesion [5].

The model operates cyclically: diagnosis, content matched to level, repeated diagnosis and adjustment. An important methodological condition applies -assignment to a group is carried out not by the integral index but only after each of the three components has been assessed separately, since two servicemen with an identical integral indicator may have entirely different weak points.

A serviceman of high level is not excluded from educational work but is turned into a trusted source of information among peers. This decision responds to the disjunction of the communication model: in place of vertical-monological transmission, a horizontal channel of influence is activated.

According to the survey results, 97.0 per cent of respondents had encountered destructive content within the preceding six months. At the same time only 43.5 per cent reported it to a specialist, while 28.0 per cent disregarded it. The most widespread reaction -deleting the content (50.2 per cent) -is an individual action unconnected with the collective; collective forms of response account for 23.2 per cent. This confirms the condition of the protection gap empirically.

Attitudes towards forms of educational work support the methodological choices of the model: the two most frequently preferred forms -interactive discussion (33.2 per cent) and practical exercise (31.7 per cent) -are dialogical in character, while the traditional lecture occupies third place.

The model is applied in practice along three lines. The institutional line involves clarifying the doctrinal status of ideological protection for the conditions of cyberspace and interpreting digital literacy as a defence competence. The methodological line involves conducting at least half of all

activities in dialogical form and applying the diagnostic instrument twice a year; an essential condition is that the results be used solely for planning educational work and not for appraising servicemen. The personnel line involves regularly updating the digital competence of specialists and forming a peer network within each unit.

A four-module programme is proposed for military educational institutions: theoretical-methodological, media-analytical, axiological and practical-behavioural. Three technologies of delivery -case analysis, simulation and peer discussion -are applied sequentially in accordance with D.A. Kolb’s cycle of experiential learning [6]. Implementation of the programme requires the prior preparation of the teaching staff as a mandatory condition.

The effectiveness of the model is assessed by four criteria: the dynamics of growth in the integral index of immunity; a reduction in the proportion of servicemen at the low level; an increase in the frequency of reporting to a specialist; and the subjective assessment of the usefulness of activities. The principal rule is that assessment must consider the dynamics of the immunity indicators rather than the number of events conducted.

The general logic of the model is as follows: the traditional protective resources of the military environment -collective cohesion, the consciousness of duty, value orientations -are not discarded but transferred into the field of the serviceman’s digital activity. The formation of a peer network constitutes the practical mechanism of this transfer.

The novelty of the model lies in two respects: it interprets ideological immunity as a measurable construct and thereby makes it possible to plan educational work on the basis of measurement results; and it carries out differentiation according to an indicator at the level of the individual rather than of the group.

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