

COUNSELING NEEDS OF THE MILITARY STUDENTS - LANDMARKS FOR COUNSELING PROGRAM OFFERED BY ACADEMY

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Abstract: *This paper brings up a topical issue of higher education, student counseling, addressing this specific activity in the context of military educational environment. Starting from some theoretical explanations and conceptual clarifications in the educational counseling field, the paper lists several principles, counseling techniques and tools considered by experts to be effective. Some characteristics of military university are further detailed in terms of its dual determination: the academic and military environment. The subjects of investigation are military students, which are addressed related to their future profession as officers, both at individual as well as the group level. The data processed after a questionnaire administration reveal some sensitive issues that stand out in the whole of educational counseling needs of the students and require specific educational counseling. The main purpose of this survey is to identify the milestone of develop an educational counseling program in the military academy, that meets the utmost military students needs of counseling.*

Keywords: *educational counseling, group counseling, counseling needs, military students*

1. Introduction

From the perspective of the person-centered approach theory of Carl Rogers, Ion Dumitru describes the counseling as “the action of support and credit a person as being able to assume their own personal development, to prevent various disturbances and psychological dysfunctions, to develop their own strategies for solve problems, develop a positive self-image, to form proper attitude towards others and to value their own personality resources”¹³.

Counseling is one of the essential components of the way in which universities implement a student-centered formative process, in order to highlight the different types of students and their abilities, to respond to the community needs and to provide competent people for social and professional life. Through the steps involved, counseling facilitate the people effort to deal more effectively with stressors and tasks of daily life, thus contributing to the establishment of well-being and improving the quality of life. An important feature of counseling is the concern for prevention of the problems that might hinder the development and normal functioning of the person. The prevention strategy consists in identifying the risk groups and situations and acting on them before they have a negative impact and trigger personal or group crisis.

The specialized literature mentions the main categories of counseling, depending on the nature of subjects that are covered, such as: *psychological counseling, educational counseling, career counseling*. In the psychology of commonsense, *psychological counseling* is done routinely by persons from the entourage, which are subjectively invests by subject with trust, with some qualities and skills. In fact only a psychologist can make authentic, consciously and responsibly counseling, based on professional competences acquired. The content of *educational counseling* varies depending on the age of the subject and on the context in which he cross the various forms of education, the topics coming from psycho-pedagogical, vocational or

¹³ I. A. Dumitru, *Consiliere psihopedagogică*, Editura Polirom, 2008, p. 73

aptitudinal field. On the other hand, *career counseling* means "the process of full compatibilization between resources, requirements, aspirations, values and interests of an individual, and the real offer of education, training and socio-professional integration."¹⁴

Educational counseling activities involve a formative approach focused on harnessing the capacities and availabilities of the person. Essential task of the educational counselor "is not to teach, but rather to help people to solve problems on their own concerning educational matters"¹⁵, ensuring thereby the development of the personality. At this point a learning process of appropriate attitudes and behaviors going on, and that is effective for solving problems a person face on and make optimal decisions, achieving functional balance, psychological comfort and feeling of self accomplishment.

Educational or psycho-pedagogical counseling is a type of counseling that aims at the same time, psychological and pedagogical objectives, based on a psycho-educational model of training and development of human personality. It aims "customers acquiring/learning how to modify cognitions and behaviors to adapt to requests, to manage their emotional experiences and solve their internal conflicts, to improve their relationships with others, to make decisions and take responsibility, that is, in summary, to acquire healthy life skills, reaching optimum performance of self"¹⁶.

Fundamental purpose of counseling is the optimal psycho-social functioning of person or group. Following the statement of Ovidiu Pânișoară, this goal can be achieved by reaching aims of counseling process as:

a) *Promoting health and well being*

Refers to optimal functioning of the human in terms of somatic, physiological, mental, emotional, social and spiritual matters. Health of a person is not conditioned by the absence of disease and dysfunction, but refers to a complex and multidimensional process, in which subjective well being is central.

b) *Personal development*

Refers to self-knowledge, self image, responsible decision-making capacity, harmonious interpersonal relationships, stress management, effective learning techniques, creative attitudes, realistic vocational options.

c) *Prevention*

It focuses on preventing negative emotional mood, self-distrust, risk behaviors, learning disabilities, social inadaptability, psychosomatic dysfunctions and crisis situations.

Analyzing the main goals of counseling, Adriana Băban states that, according to documents elaborated by the World Health Organization, "well being" of individual is given by the following interlinked elements¹⁷: (1) *self-acceptance* (positive attitude toward themselves, acceptance of personal strengths and weaknesses, positive perception of past and future experiences); (2) *positive relationships with the others* (trust in people, sociability, intimacy, need to give and receive affection, empathic attitude); (3) *autonomy* (independence, determination, resistance to peer pressure, evaluation after personal standards, lack of excessive concern about others expectations and evaluations); (4) *control* (sense of competence and personal control on the tasks, creating opportunities for valuing personal needs, choices in accordance with own values); (5) *meaning and purpose of life* (goals medium and long-lasting, positive experience of the past, the joy of the present and the relevance of the future, curiosity); (6) *personal development* (opening towards new experiences, sense of valuing its own potential,

¹⁴ M. Jigău (coord.), *Consilierea carierei adulților*, Institutul de Științe ale Educației, București, 2003, p.7, online: http://www.mevoc.net/publik/4Adult_Career_Counselling.pdf

¹⁵ Idem, *Consilierea carierei*, Editura Sigma, București, 2001, p.16

¹⁶ Ibidem, p.14

¹⁷ A. Băban (coord.), *Consiliere educațională*, Imprimeria Ardealului, Cluj Napoca, 2001, p.18

capacity of self-reflection, self-perception of positive change, feeling of own efficiency, flexibility, creativity, the need of constructive challenges).

Moreover, the quality and efficiency of education are closely linked with psychological peculiarities (psycho-individual and psychosocial, relational) of persons involved, so we can say that the success in an activity is determined by how each person converts the educational influences to their own purchases, with remarkable effects in terms of training and personality development. The principles underlying the true educational counseling, or relationship that is established between the student who needs or require counseling on the one hand, and the person (specialist or not) who provide counseling, on the other hand, are the follows: pedagogical optimism, mutual confidence, following the evolution of the counseled person, forwarded by counsel of information and experience, orientation, adaptation, integration of the subject of counseling. Since educational counseling activity is carried out deliberately and consciously programmed, developed with groups of students, following an official time schedule, as is the case in the military academy, the persons responsible for these activities acquire the role of counselor for students. These educational counselors should consider the importance and implications of these activities over the military students and take the responsibility for repercussions.

Among the group counseling techniques with high success rate, authors mention: playful character activities, discussions and debates, completing worksheets and self-assessment scales, watching videos and commenting on them, completion of tests¹⁸ and images, making collages and posters etc.

Adriana Băban¹⁹ suggests some ways to intervene in order to solve possible problems in the individual or group counseling activities.

PROBLEMS	SOLUTIONS		RESULTS
Who? ...	Possible:	Consequences:	Conclusions:
What? ...	1. ...	1.
Where? ...	2. ...	2. ...	
	3. ...	3. ...	

Table 1: Worksheet for counseling activity

Counseling techniques mentioned above are applicable through specific procedures that can be combined and adapted by counselor according to the subject addressed and the specific context. The category of counseling procedures detailed by the author mentioned before included the following: *reflection* (expressing in words, by the counselor, of affective and cognitive states of the subject, in a common language, to help him realize his particular condition), *argumentation* (awareness of the problem, identifying strong evidence, coordinating the judgment of subject toward rational and simple arguments), *drawing* (graphic expression of emotional state), *the list of problems* (hierarchy of problem), *the list of solutions* (identifying several types of action), *active listening* (eye contact with the subject, neutral language, without using terms as good-bad or right-wrong), *empathy of counselor* (short and clear answers, focus of attention on the subject messages, using an appropriate voices, avoidance stereotype answers), *unconditional acceptance* (counselor not acting on objective reality as it should be, but on subjective reality, on the way of thinking, beliefs and behavior of subjects), *congruence* (correspondence between thoughts, beliefs and personal values of the counselor, on the one hand and his behavior on the other), *paraphrasing* (rewording the messages in order to clarify its

¹⁸ A. Neculau, *26 de teste pentru cunoașterea celuiilalt*, Editura Polirom, 2010, p. 58.

¹⁹ A. Băban (coord.), *Consiliere educațională*, Imprimeria Ardealului, Cluj Napoca, 2001, p.112

essential aspects and to avoid subjective interpretation designed by counselor), *summarization* (relative concluding with the aim of clarifying the stage reached by the counseling process and establishing the next phases), *feed-back* (positive, specific and concrete, focused on the behavior, offered by the counselor immediately after the discussion).

Educational advisor has not pre-established solutions whose success is guaranteed unconditionally, on the contrary, in a given situation, it helps the person during the counseling process to find alone the best solution for solving their own problems.

2. The general framework of educational counseling of military students

Military students operate in a strong individualized environment in society that requires to a great extent their adaptive resources. In this context, adapting to the lifestyle, to the requirements of the educational process and to military missions is not only a matter of physical and mental balance for each individual, but also a social act. From the way it is designed this phenomenon in the context of a military activities arising a series of practical measures concerning the application of psychological and pedagogical knowledge and skills, as well as counseling for dealing with the educational process in the army. Adapting to the military means, at the individual level, the way in which each student is integrated in the social space of the barracks (academy) or training field; in relation to the pace of military training and utilitarian activities; in incorporate into units and subunits which it belongs, in the military hierarchy and values of the organization.

The need for rapid and effective adaptation of military students, as well as the severity of the consequences, in the case of failure to adapt, requires finding ways for preventive and ameliorative intervention for the purposes of facilitating student - military environment relationship, especially because it is easier to prevent a malfunction than to correct it after it has occurred. Vasile Armașu²⁰ believes that although failure to adapt in the military environment is not a social issue, its consequences not exceeding affected groups and individuals, usually there are difficulties of adjustment for the people that faced such an environment the first time. These difficulties are expressed through frustration, alterations in behavior, tension, stress and so on, marked by a series of crises outward symptoms and aggressive excito-motor behavior, depression, violations of regulations, lack of discipline, poor performance at work etc.

Specialists have found also the increase of the adaptability coefficient, in the case of prioritization of the adaptive structures related to different areas of military environment, such as²¹:

- order and discipline;
- materials and living conditions;
- military service dysfunctions;
- deprivations imposed;
- knowledge of arms and military equipment;
- physical and psychical effort;
- interpersonal and hierarchical relationships.

Factors involved in the adaptation process and also the complexity of this process make not be possible to provide universally valid solutions to this matter, especially since military environment may be at the same time an excellent framework in which individuals achieve personal maturity (true “school of manhood”, as traditional), but also a source of tension and frustration, sometimes solved by a behavior harmful to himself and those around him. On the

²⁰ V. Armașu, *Dimensiunile sociologice ale adaptării la mediul militar*, în „Spirit Militar Modern”, nr. 6/2000

²¹ I. Radu-Tomșa, *Psihologie militară. Eul, imaginea de sine și comportamentul în luptă*, Editura Academiei de Înalte Studii Militare, București, 1999

other hand, the academic studies lay the foundations of psychological training of future officers for participating in missions in the theaters. Analyzing major psychiatric disorders associated with armed conflict, C.M. Macovei believes that “it is necessary to displace attention and concern of specialists toward mental health component of the services provided to the military”²², since “inner experience of a soldier directly or indirectly involved in a terrifying event is extended well beyond time when this event ended”²³.

Summarizing the assertions of Octavian Tartar, adaptation to military environment is a unitary process, aimed at three main aspects²⁴:

- *physical* and *physiological* - the ability to withstand all kinds of strictness and privations, strenuous trainings, aggressiveness, to compliance a rigorous program, a long lasting physical effort, heavy requests in any weather conditions, terrain, day/night, lack of food and appropriate clothing etc.

- *psychological* – forming skills for specific military activities (handling weapons and military equipment), capabilities to give up personal freedom and subordinate to superiors, capacity to control impulses, fear, emotions etc.

- *social* - leaving by the individual of its regular universe: family, friends, etc. and integration into an imposed community, which requires full and continuous participation, promoting other value structures, which are sometimes in contradiction to value system of the civil society, that the student was familiar.

In order to help support the students in the process of adaptation, in order to facilitate their access to useful information in the academic community and in order to establish a closer and less formal relationship between students and teaching staff or academic leadership, over the past three years were organized the counseling activities for group of students. This educational counseling activity, called *tutoring*, was formally established in military academy, and takes place weekly for 30 minutes, after a set schedule. For each group of students was assigned a tutor among teachers (military or civilian) or officers which are not teachers, but auxiliary teaching staff.

But in the military academy longer are a lot of people who assume responsibilities and tasks that can be cataloged, to a greater or lesser extent, as educational counseling for students, even if these people were not formally invested with this kind of duties. Things usually happen spontaneously, students calling for counseling people who they had developed closer relationships over time or those they respect and give them confidence in the ability to provide counseling in various situations. From the category of such persons, which contributes to the “well-being” of students in military academy, are part the following: military and civilian teachers, tutors of student groups, military psychologist, military priest, commanding officers of military students, graduated students responsible for platoons of young students from lower years of study and, of course, all colleagues. Each of these persons meets at a time the role of adviser to the military students on various issues, psychological, educational or strictly professional matter. We shall present some aspects of the activity of the specified persons, matters which highlights them as possible counselors of military students.

Military psychologist has the responsibility to objectively assess the psychological condition of individuals or military groups, in order to foster well being of military, to anticipate and prevent potential psychological crises, to indicate the optimal actions to recover the psychical capacity and to contribute to overcoming the psychological dysfunctions that occurred.

²² C.M. Macovei, *Consecințe psihologice postcombat ale războiului modern*, în M. Pateșan, C.M. Macovei, „Confruntarea civilizațiilor în teatrele de operații internaționale”, Editura Academiei Forțelor Terestre, Sibiu, 2013, p.32

²³ Ibidem p. 35

²⁴ O. Tătar (coord.), *Perspective contemporane în didactica învățământului superior*, Editura Academiei Forțelor Terestre, Sibiu, 2003.

”The task of psychological counselor is to teach the person/group to adopt new behavioral strategies, to valorize their potential, to develop new attitudes and adaptive behavior”²⁵.

In the literature dedicated to the issue of training future officers to become leaders in the military organization, says that “to be a leader, a commander appreciated by subordinate implies: to prove a broader general culture, and also knowledge in military specialty, to be worship, to have prestige, authority, to be empathic, modest, honorable man, demanding, self-confident and confident in subordinates, to have the ability to recognize their own mistakes, to have the power to fight with their own weaknesses, to know, recognize and defeat them”.²⁶ By his statute, *the commander* must be able to form teams, but also to cultivate individualities, to supervise and motivate their subordinates’ actions. Pedagogical and psychological training of the officer is essential in leadership and for support this assertion may be listed a series of desirable aspects of an officer personality such as²⁷:

- Readiness to understand person as it really is, not as he would like to be;
- Sharing with the subordinate both their joys and failures;
- Close relationship to subordinates, but without falling into familiarity, detachment as needed to maintain a good relationship, but also the prestige of leader;
- Avoidance of duplicity: overly polite with superiors and excessively harsh with subordinates.

Because of their personal qualities and daily formal and informal activities, and because they show availability for communication, empathy and involvement in solving problems faced by military, officers are often required to counsel the subordinates. In the military academy, students often require the support of officers, of their directly commanders, in order to overcome the difficulties of adapting to the military, the lack of family and friends, the activities with high physical and mental stress, and preparation for activities characterized by uncertainty and risk, specific to the modern battlefield.

Spiritual assistance provided by the *military priest* has not only religious implications, but also is a permanent formation in the field of human values, both in the light of ethics and Christianity. As Sebastian Şebu says, “Nowadays our army attaches great importance to the priest in any military structure, allowing him to assume the role of spiritual counselor”²⁸. The mission of the priest in the military, both in peacetime and in wartime, is to provide the religious life of all categories of staff, by religious service and pastoral activity at individual and collective level. Priest is expected to initiate activities or programs with religious character, ethical and social, to stimulate the responsibility of military, their care for others and to prevent acts of immorality or insubordination. In addition, calling the most intimate spiritual resources of military, correlated with the religious message, military priest can prevent or diminish states of depression (created by the separation of military from their family and society) and any deviant behavior caused by high requests and stress.

Regarding educational counseling of students, conducted by *military or civilian teachers*, the formal expression of this activity is conducted mostly in the classroom, with groups of students, under the name mentioned above, *tutoring*. The successful implementation of this initiative in the academy requires a rigorous pedagogical foundation and a judicious selection of military and civilian teachers who can fulfill this kind of responsibilities. Not any officer or any civilian teacher can be an effective counselor, at least not for any student who requires counseling. We support the need of conscious and authentic tutoring, as an activity complementary to formal education of students. Teachers responsible for advising student

²⁵ S. Sava, R. Paloş, D. Ungureanu, *Educația adulților*, Editura Polirom, 2007, p. 57

²⁶ M. Cosma *Formarea ofițerului modern*, Editura Academiei Forțelor Terestre, Sibiu, 2006, p.61

²⁷ O. Tătar, *Etică și deontologie militară*, Editura. Academiei Trupelor de Uscat, Sibiu, 2000, p.68

²⁸ S. Şebu, M. Opreş, D. Opreş, *Metodica predării religiei*, Ed. Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2000, p.17

groups can guide and support students in its efforts of adaptation and integration in military academia by establishing open communication and good relationship with them, by showing willingness to find out the problems faced by students, by facilitating the relationship of students with staff from various structures, by sharing personal and professional experience.

Educational counseling of military students is a special relationship between teacher and student, developed with the aim of helping the latter. Although psychological approach is used in pedagogical counseling, the teacher is first and foremost teacher, so educator and manager of the group of students. Thus, counseling is a secondary tool in hand, heart and mind of the teacher, for developing educational demarches that are their responsibilities. During the initial training for the military profession and professional skills achieving process, military students may face obstacles related to the military environment, in which they live and develop in the present, but also to the social environment of origin or to itself. Therefore, educational counseling activities can address individuals or groups of students, depending on the subject and the context created.

Military group may be described as the social framework in which people with this profession forms and affirms its personality. Interpersonal relationships, cooperation and competition in activities often raise problems whose solution depends on efficiency of work and on psychological comfort of participants. Therefore, military need help, support and guidance not only as individuals, in personalized way, but also as members of a social group to which dynamics contributes to the building the personality of each. "Unproblematic networking with other and collaboration during professional activities can be also supported by educational counseling group, which aims valorization of the sanogenetic potential of the group"²⁹. This potential is determined by the existing social climate and atmosphere, based on equality and socio-emotional support that its members can give it to each other.

3. Methodology and results

On the theoretical basis the above, the present study has the following objectives: to identify students' perceptions about the counseling activities offered in academy; to identify and prioritize the counseling needs of military students for each of the main categories of counseling mentioned in the literature: psychological, career and educational. This kind of investigative approach is the first step mandatory in order to develop a program of group counseling for students of Land Forces Academy, depending on the counseling needs identified.

Will present next the results of a survey based on questionnaire. Investigated population consists of military students who studied undergraduate in Land Forces Academy from Sibiu between February and April 2013. Research sample consists of 120 students, girls and boys from all three years of study (out of 630 students) and it is representative, being constituted by simple random sampling. The questionnaire used as data collection instrument consists of 22 closed items, some with choice answer, and some opinion questions, with answers graded on the Likert-type scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". After data collection and primary processing with statistical methods have been obtained some results, which are presented synthetic.

First we will present the students' perception regarding counseling activities offered in the academy, as are reflected in responses to specific items.

Persons from AFT to which military students would request advices, if they would face problematic situations:

²⁹ I. A. Dumitru, *Consiliere psihopedagogică*, Editura Polirom, 2008, p.158.

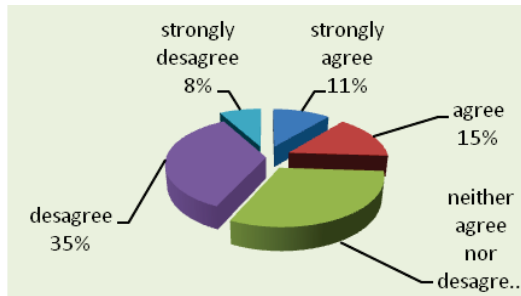


Figure no. 1. The officially assigned tutor

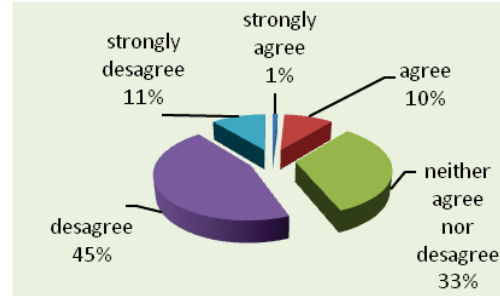


Figure no.2. The psychologist of academy

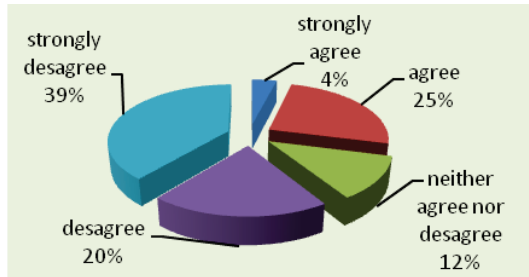


Figure no. 3 The military priest

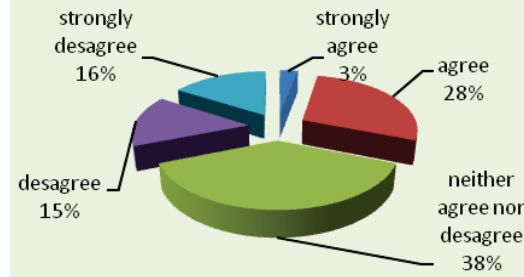


Figure no. 4. A civilian or a military teacher, other than the tutor

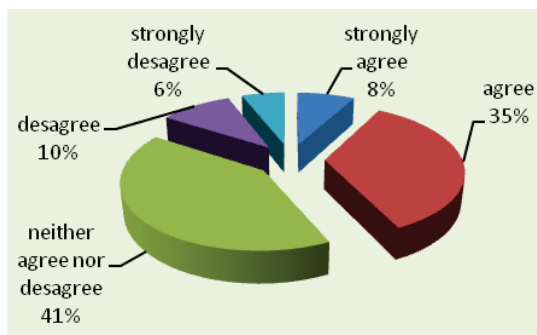


Figure no. 5. A military commander

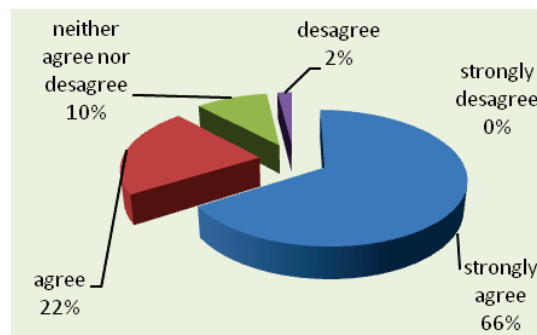


Figure no. 6. A colleague

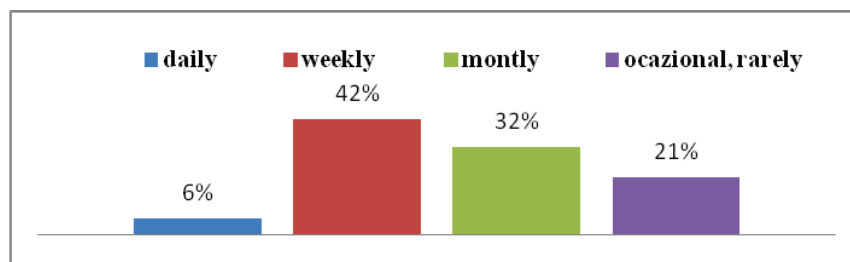


Figure no.7. Frequency of request for counseling

Other students' opinions about the counseling are shown in the graphs below.

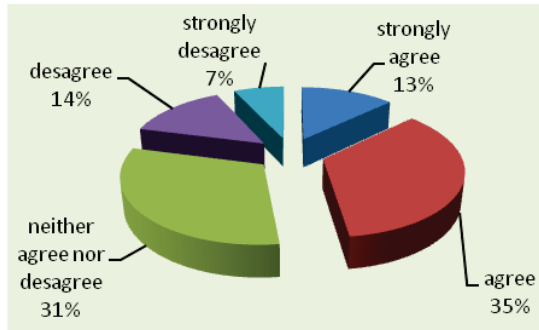


Fig.no.8. It is necessary to setup weekly tutoring for each group of students

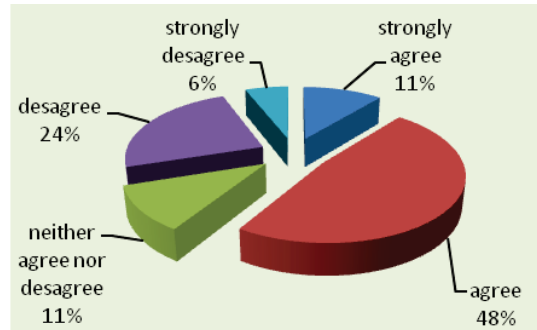


Fig.no.9. Group counseling is as useful as individual counseling because military students' problems are typically

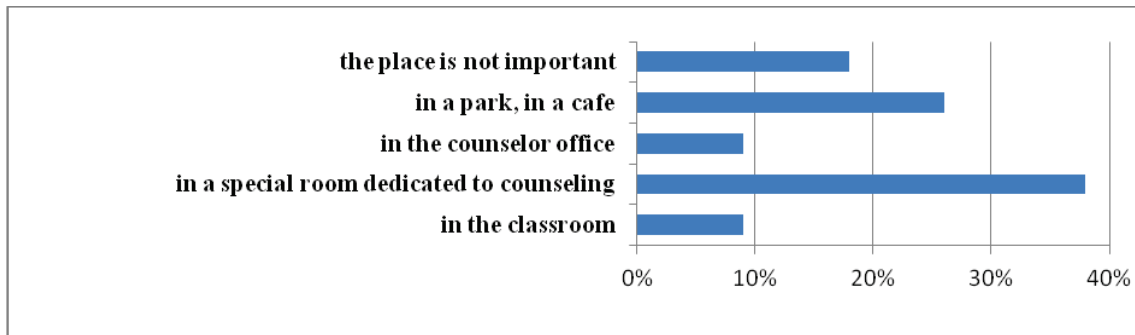


Figure no.10. Location where counseling should take place

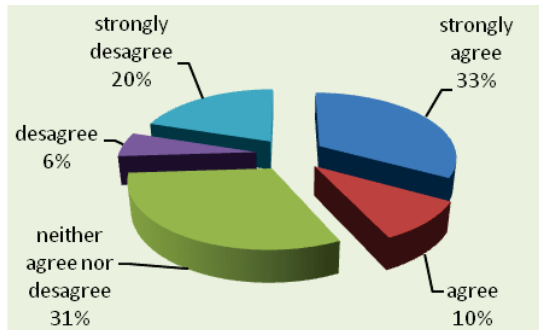


Fig.no.11. Overall, the tutoring organized in military academy meet expectations/needs of students

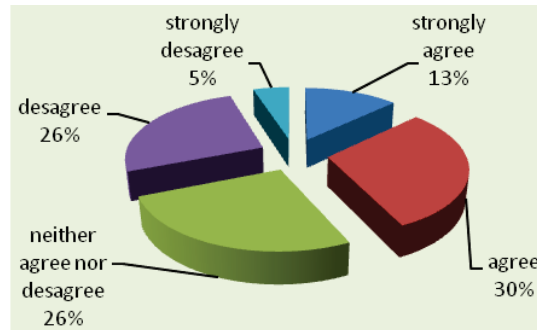


Fig.no.12. The relationship between students and tutor is friendly, open, based on trust

The most significant effects or outcomes of tutoring activities mentioned by students and ranked in order of frequency are:

- more information, better understanding how things work in academy;
- identification of a trustworthy person, willing to find out student problems;
- identification of a person willing to provide support for solving problems;
- better understanding colleagues;
- better understanding own person.

Counseling needs of students were grouped around the main areas of counseling and ranked according to the scores obtained.

In order of importance granted by students, topics of interest for the group counseling sessions belonging to the following categories:

- career and professional counseling;
- psychological counseling;
- educational counseling.

According to the scores obtained, topics considered important to be addressed in a group session in the field of career counseling are:

- career plan;
- international military missions;
- moral profile of the officer;
- teamwork;
- professional stress.

Topics considered by students being important to be addressed in a group session in the field of psychological counseling are:

- effective communication methods and techniques;
- developing skills;
- emotional control and self-control;
- discrimination;
- resistance to manipulation.

In the field of educational counseling, topics that obtained highest scores, according to students' opinion are:

- effective learning techniques;
- time management;
- academic standards;
- Lifelong Learning;
- moral education of the military.

4. Conclusions and discussions

Following processing and interpretation of the survey results, we can see that in situations where they need advice, the academy students call to a great extent to the advice of colleagues, medium call to group tutor and relatively rare to their military commanders. A total unfavorable image, in terms of counseling potential, have other people involved in, like the psychologist, priest, and teachers who are not tutors to those groups. The students answers indicate that group tutors are not very well perceived as having counseling abilities, although their rank is the second; his score is much lower than the score of "a colleague". It is known that the "body spirit" and the camaraderie specific of military groups positively influence students' interrelations. These assure the increasing of mutual trust and contribute to the psychological balance, but we still noticed that students avoid some people from which might expect a genuine counseling, in a professional manner. Hence the need to make a meaningful analysis of the situation by the management team, pursuing both those features of the persons and characteristics of the activities mentioned before, for adopting some measures to improve the situation and to enhance for these persons the role of counselor for military students.

Independent samples T-test indicated no significant differences between the answers of students from the three years of study in respect of their favorite people to ask for advice. In this regard are also no differences between boys and girls.

Regarding the organization in academy a weekly tutoring sessions after a set time, this practice is considered useful by students, both in terms of frequency and in terms of the extent to which it meet their expectations. However, the classroom is perceived as an inappropriate

location for carrying out counseling, probably because it is automatically associated with teaching activities. Students and teachers feel constrained by their usual professional roles of educator-educated, and that cannot be ignored altogether. But counseling activity requires a relationship based on other roles and functions and compliance with other principles than school. Therefore students like the idea of carrying out a counseling session not in the classroom, but in a dedicated room or even outside the school, in a space where they can better manifest itself. Percentage of students from the III year is higher than those from I or II year who would like to conduct meetings with tutors outside the academy.

The fact that a third of investigated students perceive the relationship with tutors as close, open, trusting, and another third of the students disagree with this characterization has several possible explanations: part of the tutors do not know exactly what to do in this position and have a superficial approach of tutoring; part of the tutors have not the necessary attributes to carry out this activity; by implementing a random distribution of tutors can occur incompatibility between them and students. On the other hand, even if the students state that topics of interest and problems faced by are similar in military environment, however, group counseling is less oriented to individuals, hence the polarized opinions of students. The informative dimension of tutoring is very valuable, because of the easy access for students to information related to academics, coming from reliable sources. A positive assessment received the availability of tutors to listen the students' problems and their involvement in solving them. It is remarkable, finally, students' positive perceptions in respect of some elements from counseling field. It was, in fact, the main reason of management team for implementing mandatory tutoring in academy.

T-test for independent samples showed differences in the perception between girls and boys in respect of the relationship with the tutor, the girls having in a greater extent the opinion that the relationship with the tutor is open and friendly. Therefore, in order to improve the quality of tutoring activities, one of the key elements is the awareness of boys' expectations and concern to meet these expectations.

Counseling needs identified in the survey indicated high scores of topics in the career counseling area, with clear focus on specific elements of the military profession (international missions, officers' moral profile etc.). Definitely the tutors from among officers are much more experienced to address these issues than civilian's tutors. This deficiency is a possible causal explanation of students less favorable perception of tutoring, since there are topics of general interest that cannot be discussed due to the lack of competence of the tutors. On the other hand, issues related to psychological counseling or educational counseling is more accessible to all tutors, and addressing them could be very appropriate for students' expectations.

Also in terms of psychological counseling needs, independent samples T test for boys and girls show that girls give a greater importance to discrimination issues. It's about the perception of belonging to a disadvantaged group, minority group of girls in the whole military student population, composed 86% of boys. In case this particular issue it is not known and explicitly addressed, it may become a problem that affects directly and indirectly academic success and well-being of students.

In conclusion, an initiative with ameliorative purpose would be a training session, led by a professional counselor, bringing together tutors and other people from the academy that can perform in different contexts as advisers. The purpose of this training session would be awareness the participants of the significance and the implications of counseling activities and to provide them some ideas and suggestions for tackling activities with students. For some topics indicated by students as being interesting, attendance at tutoring activities of experienced officers, particularly those who have participated in international missions, is also of great importance. For application in the tutoring of a group counseling program, tailored to the needs of military students identified at counseling, is necessary to develop an activity plan, after the all specific requirements of career counseling, psychological counseling and educational counseling.

This counseling program will be the subject to a further study, because it requires the development of an initial version that needs to be experimentally applied, and subsequently improved, according to outputs. Good practices, outcomes achieved, successes and failures shall be discussed afterwards and analyzed during the meetings with tutors, so these activities to increase qualitatively and become an authentic support for academy students.

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