

## Advanced Situation Awareness: Perspectives Toward Enhancing Future Officers' Psychological Resilience Under Perceived Stress Contexts

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This study aimed to ascertain the extent to which military identity envisages military performance in the Lithuanian military. The study involved cadets from the Lithuanian Military Academy and investigated whether military achievements and attitudes – which were evaluated by military skills, general military competence, and organisational commitment – can be predicted on the basis of military identity. The study hypotheses are tested using the statistical software package SPSS v29 and Hayes's (2022) PROCESS macro program (version 3.5). This study provides a better understanding of the relationship by showing that education and psychological cadet training have unique value. It finds that what is extremely positive is an overall effect of psychological resilience that influences the perceived military performance of the cadets. Furthermore, the modelling results enhance our understanding of military identity role and are likely to be useful for the future military officers' professional development.

*Keywords:* Human capital, military organization, future officers, military preparedness, reliability, structural equation modelling, multidimensional database.

### 1. Introduction

With military personnel being engaged in challenging and formidable situations, it is feasible to discern several emotional and cognitive determinants. The Armed Forces are assigned to conduct a variety of missions and tasks carried out by the postmodern military in a constantly changing operational environment Colvin (2014).

It raises high demands on the soldiers to operate in an unknown environment under conditions of high operational tempo where traditional military training is no longer sufficient. Any combat environment according Williams-Bell et al. (2022) presupposes that one possesses emotional and psychological, physical and cognitive strength, which in turn causes a considerable amount of stress even to the full-fledged soldiers. Furthermore, Bekesiene et al. (2022) showed that perceived stress can reduce the effectiveness of soldiers. Therefore, a postmodern warrior must understand the strategic environment and be

prepared to act not only within the framework of his national identity. In addition, soldiers must be physically, emotionally, and mentally strong, motivated, and ready to perform under difficult conditions. Johansen (2015) concluded that dealing with modern threats, soldiers are bound to also acquire highly cultivated resilience skills that will enable them to remain alive in the most dire circumstances and adroitly conduct a military operation under unpredictable conditions. Unconventional future conflicts are likely to assume an unorthodox stance on how to utilize the human capital in warfare alongside technological breakthroughs. The development and efficient use of human capital has become a part of military preparedness. Moreover, soldiers undergo major changes in military operations, and certain transformations occurring in military identity can influence areas of military performance. Before new selection and education procedures, it is very important to measure both military identity and expertise. This may be an expedient contribution

to the development of future military officers. Therefore, it emerges that there is a need to conduct more extensive research related to the development and application of human capital in a military institution.

This research uses Hayes' PROCESS macro to validate resilience as psychology action linked variable effect on cadets as future officers' military performance and identity by parallel mediation modelling. Ultimately, we aimed to determine the prevailing characteristics that can enhance our understanding of military identity role and are likely to be useful for effective strategic human resource management in military organisation, and especially for the future military officers' professional development.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

Following the classical theories of Huntington (1957), Janowitz (1960), and Mosko (1977), it can be argued that the concept of military identity rooted in military sociology was investigated and evaluated in a normative position (e.g., ethos, attitudes, principles, and drive). Nevertheless, following Evetts (2003) insights, the researchers have some disagreements on how to explain military identity, how to evaluate it, and how it affects members of the military organization. Johansen et al. (2014) presented Norwegian military identity as a multidimensional paradigm, encompassing idealism, professionalism, warriorism, and individualism. Considering the fact that professionalism and warriorism are very similar in terms of their concepts, researchers usually focus on three aspects of military identity - idealism, professionalism, and individualism.

### 2.1. Idealism

Theoretically and hypothetically, the construct of idealism closely matches institutional military values, that were outlined and defined by Moskos' et al. (2000). Franke et al. (2009) and Laberg et al. (2005) empirically evaluated the features of idealism by using both single items and scales. Also, such researchers as Ben-Dor et al. (2007) and Griffith (2008) after completing investigations provided evidence that traditional values (i.e., idealism) are important as a motivation to serve and as a potential predictor of military effectiveness and performance.

### 2.2. Professionalism

When talking about soldier's professionalism, we can follow Huntington (1957) conceptualization and characterize this feature by three aspects: (1) the expeditionary ethos can be explained as the need and preparedness between military employees to take part in international joint operations; (2) the operational ethos can be explained as instrumental attention, with emphasizing on operations, in the specific expansion of combat skills; (3) the peer ethos that can be characterized as motivation to serve founded by team cohesion and war buddy friendship slightly than on a need to serve a superior reason. The presented characteristics and concept of military professionalism are similar to Wong et al. (2002) findings. Moreover, according to Wong (2005), a soldier can be generally defined as a person skillful in fighting or battle. However, Moore et al. (1990) hypothesized that a soldier's professionalism can be defined by important differences such as motives that are linked to a specific desire to be involved in warfare, or to prefer war as an independent way of lifestyle, rather than choose other life goals. The Characteristics of military professionalism of US officers and West Point cadets were judged by Franke et al. (2009) and Laberg et al. (2005) evaluated the Norwegian soldiers. In conclusion, it can be said that the concept of a soldier's professionalism can be presented as an attitude towards war, a desire to fight in a war or a battle, and to feel a certain personal satisfaction.

### 2.3. Individualism

Regarding the individualism of the soldier, we can say that it is related to egocentrism and selfishness, what soldiers think about salary, working conditions, and personal rights in the Armed Forces. Johansen et al. (2013a) showed that individualism also includes a search for self-fulfillment, challenges, and possibilities. Huntington (1957) called for a professional soldier, self-sacrificing, responsible, and serving the public good. Moskos (1977; 1986) has argued that the transition to an all-volunteer force has caused a tendency for military service to be observed more as a regular occupation than a mission. Also, Johansen et al. (2013b) called a soldier's individualism a threat to operational identity, but as well Johansen et al. (2013a) argued that the need for self-fulfillment might be required in the

complex and changeable military tasks of today. However, most traits of individualism would be focused on the attitude of the soldiers to the issues of wages and personal rights because their work is a routine job. Such standards might affect the decision to volunteer for military service.

**2.4. Organisational commitment**

Organizational commitment is a psychological state that has a significant effect on the probability that employees will stay with an organization. Between military employees, organizational commitment is predictive of several essential outcomes, including reemployment intentions, job routine, morale, and perceived readiness. Following Booth-Kewley et al. (2017) it can be stated that because of the unique challenges and experiences associated with military service, organizational commitment may be even more important in the military than in the civilian population.

**2.5. Resilience**

In the overall background, resilience denotes the capability of individuals to familiarize themselves with major adversities to preserve good mental and physical well-being. The resilience paradigm has evolved over the past decades from a stable, trait-oriented approach to a process or outcome-oriented approach. Zhao et al. (2020), Smaliukienė et al. (2023) recently agreed on the complexity of the term and consider resilience to be a dynamic process that leads to health, adaptation, and positive working. Researchers and experts have paid close consideration to define the concept of resilience. Salanova et al. (2018), Kanapeckaitė et al. (2022) argue that resilience has become vital in all measures of human well-being demonstrating personal or organizational psychology.

**2.6. Study Hypotheses**

Military personnel can face difficult situations. Therefore, identifying resilience and loyalty in cadets may positively impact the prospects for strengthening the psychological resilience of future officers in the context of stress and help improve military resilience training programs. So, this research focus was the examination of direct and indirect effects of resilience according raised hypotheses:

Hypothesis H1: Cadets' psychological resilience can be directly associated with their military performance.

Hypotheses H2a-d: Cadets' psychological resilience can be associated with their military identity and commitment to military organisation.

Hypotheses H3a-d: Cadets' military identity (ME1, ME2, and ME3), and commitment (ME4) can significantly mediate the relation between psychological resilience and military performance.

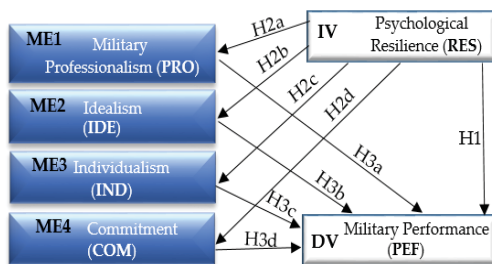


Fig. 1. Theoretical model for study analysis. The direct (H1, H2a, H2b, H2c, and H2d) and indirect (H3a, H3b, H3c, and H3d) effects were examined. The independent variable (IV) psychological resilience (RES) and dependent variable (DV) Military Performance (PEF). The mediated variables of military identity ME1 – military professionalism (PRO), ME2 – Idealism (IDE), and ME3 – Individualism (IND); ME4 – organisational commitment (COM).

**3. Study Methodology**

**3.1. Participants**

Students from a Lithuanian military academy served as participants in the research. A total of 104 cadets were selected for participation. This included 80 males (77 percent) and 24 females (23 percent). The average age of cadets was twenty-two years ( $\pm SD = 1,199$ ). The greatest amount of cadets had no previous military experience. Moreover, it must be mention, that students at the Lithuanian Military Academy in general are comparable with those of other NATO nations in relations of age, military experience, and rank.

**3.2. Ethics**

All participants were provided with detailed information about the study and measures taken to ensure participant confidentiality. The cadets were informed that the data will be stored at the

Lithuanian Military Academy (LMA), and the anonymous results can later be used for scientific research. Participation was voluntary, and all participants provided verbal informed consent before participating in the study. The research procedures, data collection, storage and distribution were carried out in accordance with the valid legislation regulating research ethics procedures.

### 3.3. Measurements

#### 3.3.1. Military Identity

Military identity of cadets was measured by means of the Military Professional Identity Scale (MPIS) provided by Johansen et al. (2013a). The questionnaire includes 33 items that can be divided into three subscales: (1) 12-item operational identity scale questions are focused on the importance of military skills and war experience; (2) 11-item idealism scale questions are concentrated on the importance of protection of Lithuanian territory, values and interests; (3) 10-item individualism scale are concentrated on the importance of salary, working environments, individual rights, opportunities and challenges. The cadets responded to a five-point Likert scale from 1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree". The calculated Cronbach's alpha for professionalism was 0.857, for idealism was 0.819, and for individualism, 0.747.

#### 3.3.2. Organizational commitment

Cadets' commitment was evaluated by using the short form of the organizational commitment questionnaire Richard et al. (1979) which included 9 items assessed by five-point Likert scale from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree". This helped to identify the degree to which a cadets value the organization (Military Academy), and how strongly they wish to maintain organizational membership with Lithuanian army. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.879.

#### 3.3.3. Resilience

Psychological resilience (PRE) effects military readiness and is vital to managing with physiological stressors throughout military tasks. The psychological resilience of the cadets was measured by 25 items of the Connor-Davidson (2003) resilience scale. The cadets' responses

were evaluated by five-point Likert scale from negative point 0="Not true at all" to highly positive point 4="True nearly all the time". The final score was indicated by the sum of the responses on each of ten items, and the highest sum of scores indicated the highest level of resilience. The calculated Cronbach's alpha was 0.925.

### 3.4. Modelling Analysis Methodology

As preliminary data analysis the mean and standard deviations for the interval measured variables and the percentages for the collected demographic characteristics were computed. The relationships among variables were weighed by Pearson's bivariate correlation and strength of these connections was classified.

The scales of study constructs were assessed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the convergence validity was measured to confirm the theoretical model. Furthermore, discriminant validity and confidence intervals were chosen to disclose evidence of discriminant validity between two constructs. Following Mule (2019), Bekesiene et al. (2022) the mediating effects were tested by bias-corrected bootstrap method.

Few steps were taken to test the hypothesis of the mediation model: (1) the direct relationships between two variables were tested, the psychological resilience (RES) as independent variable (IV) was regressed to PEF as dependent variable (Hypothesis H1); (2) RES as an independent variable was regressed to all four mediators (Hypotheses H2a-d); (3) mediation as indirect effect of RES using parallel mediation model was tested. The Hayes's (2022) PROCESS macro program specific macro-model 4 was chosen and mediation effects were established by using multiple variables simultaneously. The designed model includes six components: the psychological resilience (RES) as independent variable (IV), Military Performance (PEF) as dependent variable (DV) and the four mediated variables: ME1 – military professionalism (PRO), ME2 – Idealism (IDE), ME3 – Individualism (IND), and ME4 –organisational commitment (COM). The mediation effects were confirmed using a 95% confidence interval values by obtaining 5000 bootstrap samples using the biased corrected method to increase power and maintain sensible control for type 1 error rates.

In the current study, a modelling analysis was performed using SPSS 29v with macro PROCESS v3.5 as an additional possibility for data analysis.

#### 4. Empirical Study Results

##### 4.1. Preliminary Analysis

The connections were assessed by Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive analysis was focused on mean and standard deviations of interval variables. The computation results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficients and descriptive analysis results.

Variable	Correlations					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>1:PRO</b>	--					--
<b>2:IDE</b>	0.28**	--				
<b>3:IND</b>	-0.21*	0.03	--			
<b>4:PEF</b>	0.62**	0.28**	-0.13	--		
<b>5:COM</b>	0.47**	0.24*	-0.11	0.54**	--	
<b>6:RES</b>	0.60**	0.39**	-0.18	0.53**	0.55**	--
<b>M</b>	3.90	3.53	3.12	4.10	3.67	3.83
<b>SD</b>	0.76	0.61	0.70	0.72	0.87	0.63

Note: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). M= Means; SD= standard deviations.

In addition, before measurement of causal relationships the constructs of latent variables were evaluated. The discriminant validity evaluation was performed to ensure that subjects are truly different from each other. Assessment indicated that all constructs can be included in the study model. Also, was identified that the resilience of cadets was positively and highly linked with their professionalism (RES and PRO,  $r = 0.60$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) which represents the that more resilient cadets may relate to a specific desire or drive to engage in combat or to a preference for war as a self-contained way; resilience is highly connected with military performance (RES and PEF,  $r = 0.53$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This relationship outcome characterizes the cadet's ability to show his competences in the military trainings and how resilience can affect his achievements. Similarly, a positive and highly statistically significant relationship was observed between the military performance and professionalism (PEF and PRO,

$r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the organisational commitment shows strong link with military professionalism (COM and PRO,  $r = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and performance (COM and PEF,  $r = 0.54$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) how strongly cadets wish to maintain Military Academy and Lithuanian army membership.

##### 4.2. Mediation Modelling Results

###### 4.2.1. Direct effects testing results

How psychological resilience (RES) effects five study variables military performance (PEF), military professionalism (PRO), idealism (IDE), individualism (IND), and organisational commitment (COM) was evaluated according to the hypotheses pointed out after comprehensive literature review (H1 and H2a-d, Fig. 1). The detailed description of established regression models that were focused on hypothesis H2a-2d testing are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The psychological resilience effects on cadets' identity and commitment to military organisation following the regression models' results.

	Description	Coeff.	LLCI	ULCI
Model 1 (H2a)	Constant	1.109***	0.366	1.852
	RES→ PRO	0.729***	0.490	0.828
	<b>R</b>	<b>R-sq</b>	<b>MSE</b>	<b>F</b>
	0.599	0.359	0.378	57.084
Model 2 (H2b)	Constant	2.074***	1.398	2.749
	RES→ IDE	0.379***	0.205	0.553
	<b>R</b>	<b>R-sq</b>	<b>MSE</b>	<b>F</b>
	0.390	0.154	0.312	18.637
Model 3 (H2c)	Constant	3.903***	3.070	4.735
	RES→ IND	-0.203*	-0.417	-0.011
	<b>R</b>	<b>R-sq</b>	<b>MSE</b>	<b>F</b>
	0.283	0.080	0.474	3.534
Model 4 (H2d)	Constant	0.730	-0.152	1.612
	RES→ COM	0.767***	0.540	0.994
	<b>R</b>	<b>R-sq</b>	<b>MSE</b>	<b>F</b>
	0.553	0.306	0.532	44.881

Notes: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; Model 1= outcome variable PRO; Model 2= outcome variable IDE; Model 3= outcome variable IND; Model 4= outcome variable COM; R= correlation coeff., R-

sq=Correlation coeff. in square. LLCI=Lower bound of 95% confidence interval; ULCI= Upper bound of 95% confidence interval.

Conducted modelling results showed the high statistically significant and positive effect of the psychological resilience (RES) on study variables and let us to confirm hypotheses H2a-f: Cadets' psychological resilience can be associated with their military identity and commitment to military organisation. The psychological resilience effects are tested separately for each variable and are presented as independent models: Model 1 evaluated RES effect on PRO,  $\beta = 0.729$ ,  $t = 7.555$ ,  $p < 0.01$  (see Model 1 (H2a), Table 2); Model 2 – RES effect on IDE,  $\beta = 0.379$ ,  $t = 4.317$ ,  $p < 0.001$ (see Model 2 (H2b), Table 2); Model 3 – RES effect on IND,  $\beta = -0.203$ ,  $t = -1.880$ ,  $p < 0.05$  (see Model 3 (H2c), Table 2); Model 4 – RES effect on COM,  $\beta = 0.767$ ,  $t = 6.699$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (see Model 4 (H2d), Table 2). The statistical significance of all characterized models is evidenced by correlation coefficients (R), correlation coefficients in square (R-sq), and F tests statistics. Additionally, the lower bound (LLCI) and upper bound (ULCI) of 95% confidence interval was used to show the independent variables significance to the model. In addition, modelling analysis was conducted to test how five independent variables (RES, PRO, IDE, IND, and COM) can predict the cadets' military performance, dependent variable PEF (see Model 5, Table 3).

Table 3. Regression model parameters with outcome variable military performance.

Variables in Model 5	Coeff.	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.033	0.064	2.002
RES	0.145	-0.090	0.379
PRO	0.377***	0.200	0.554
IDE	0.063	-0.126	0.253
IND	0.006	-0.149	0.161
COM	0.217***	0.070	0.364
R	R-sq	MSE	F
0.686	0.471	0.286	17.460

Notes: \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*\*p<0.001; R= correlation coeff., R-sq=Correlation coeff. in square. LLCI=Lower bound of 95% confidence interval; ULCI= Upper bound of 95% confidence interval.

The direct effect of psychological resilience on military performance was evaluated by Model 5. Unfortunately, the conducted analysis result didn't demonstrate the statistically significant effect,  $\beta = 0.145$ ,  $t = 1.225$ ,  $p = 0.224$  (see Hypothesis H1, Table 3). The detailed description of bootstrap results for regression model parameters with PEF as result variable are accessible in Table 3.

The obtained modelling results suggest that the cadets' military performance (PEF) can be significantly predicted by two variables, such as military professionalism (PRO),  $\beta = 0.377$ ,  $t = 4.231$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and organisational commitment (COM),  $\beta = 0.217$ ,  $t = 2.921$ ,  $p < 0.001$  (see Model 5, Table 3). Also, the direct effect of psychological resilience (RES) on military performance (PEF) was proved as insignificant ( $\beta = 0.145$ ,  $t = 1.225$ ,  $p = 0.224$ ) by Model 5 (see Table3). This finding let us to reject the H1. It seems, that cadets' psychological resilience can't be directly associated with their military performance. This result shows the complexity of psychological resilience aspects. Additionally, the unstandardized coefficients as modelling results are presented schematically in Figure 2.

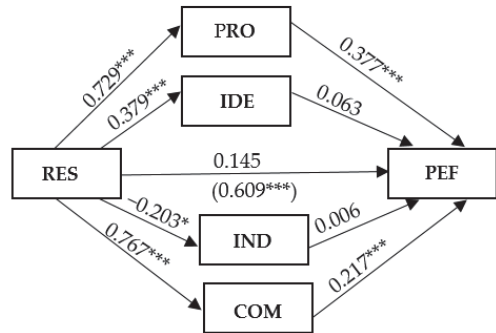


Fig. 2. The parallel mediation modelling results. to present the four variables and psychological resilience in the relationship between resilience (RES) and cadets' military performance (PEF). The mediated variables cadets' military identity: ME1 – military professionalism (PRO), ME2 – idealism (IDE), and ME3 – individualism (IND); ME4 – organisational commitment (COM). All coefficients are unstandardized. The total effect of psychological resilience is shown in parentheses. Study results represents cadets' (N = 104) achievements after conducted military training. Statistical significance of coefficients' is specified by \*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

**4.2.2. Parallel mediation effects testing results**

As was mention in research methodology section, the specific macro-model 4 of PROCESS v3.5 was chosen with psychological resilience (RES) as the independent variable, the military performance (PEF) as an outcome variable, and four mediators: ME1 – military professionalism (PRO), ME2 – idealism (IDE), and ME3 – individualism (IND); ME4 – organisational commitment (COM).

The total, direct and indirect effects evaluated by designed model, that represents the value of four factors (three of military identity and one of organisational commitment) on the relationship among psychological resilience and military performance are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary for parallel mediation with total, direct and indirect effects description in designed model.

Pathways	Estim. Effects (β)	Bootstrapped CI (95%) LLCI ULCI	
<b>Total effect of IV on DV</b>			
RES →PEF	0.609***	0.419	0.798
<b>Direct effect of IV on DV (H1)</b>			
RES →PEF	0.145	-0.090	0.379
<b>Indirect effect of IV on DV</b>			
RES → PRO→PEF	0.275***	0.119	0.430
RES → IDE→ PEF	0.024	-0.048	0.109
RES → IND → PEF	-0.001	-0.050	0.035
RES → COM → PEF	0.166***	0.065	0.292
<b>Total</b>	0.464	0.271	0.678

Notes: IV=RES; DV=PEF; H1= hypothesis H1; statistical significance results \*\*\*p < 0.001.

In this case we evaluated the indirect effects by parallel mediation analysis that let us to demonstrate the impact of psychological resilience on cadets’ performance (PEF) through four mediators. Conducted analysis showed the significant indirect effect of psychological resilience on the military performance through military professionalism (β = 0.275, BootSE = 0.079, 95% CI (0.119, 0.430)). Also, this mediation effect (RES→PRO→PEF) showed high significance and accounted to be 59.3% of the total indirect effect in the hypothesised model. Consequently, the organisational commitment mediated the relationship between psychological

resilience and PEF (COM, β = 0.166, BootSE = 0.059, 95% CI (0.065, 0.292)). The mediation effect for mediator COM (RES → COM → PEF) was 35.8% of the total indirect effect.

Modelling results proved that psychological resilience didn’t show the indirect effect on cadets’ military performance through two mediators: ME2 – idealism (IDE, β = 0.024, BootSE = 0.039, 95% CI (- 0.048, 0.109); ME3 – individualism (IND, β = -0.001, BootSE = 0.020, 95% CI (-0.050, 0.035)).

**5. Conclusions**

Study results encourage the evidence that the psychological resilience of cadets has significant indirect positive consequences for the military identity and performance. Estimated indirect effects through military professionalism, and organizational commitment suggest that psychological resilience affects the cadets’ achievements in military training. Furthermore, these two mediators could be considered the main causes that are likely to be useful for effective strategic human resource management in military organizations, and especially for future military officers’ professional development. This study also indicated that individualism has significantly negative effects on military competence and organizational commitment. Despite the fact that this study mainly focused on how military identity can predict the attitude of Lithuanian cadets towards the military profession and the desire to continue their career in the Lithuanian army, the general conclusions can be important and applicable to cadets from other countries.

Finally, as a first step toward founding the relationship between military identity and performance among cadets as future officers, these results are hopeful and should motivate future related research.

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