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ANALYSIS OF FACTORS DETERMINING THE COMPETENCE OF GUARDS

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ABSTRACT

It is actual to elucidate the contribution of each factor to the professional competence of guards and the influence of these factors on their superior's appraisal. Therefore we hypothesize that assessment of the contribution of the guard's personal features into his professional competence and their influence on their appraisal by superiors will be helpful in staffing private security services and improving their working qualities. The object of the current study was the psychobiological and professional factors determining the professional competence of a security worker. The aim of the work was to establish the role of separate factors determining the professional competence of security workers, as well as to study the professional competence of security workers in formativeness of superior's appraisal and psychobiological factors, qualitative indices and their analysis. The study subject was 118 security workers and their four direct superiors.

Factor analysis applied for competence assessment of security workers has shown that in internal appraisal (of summarized identified variables) the highest value belongs to psychic qualities (22%) as well as age and physical development (20%), followed by physical preparedness (16%), professional activity (15%), theoretical and practical preparedness (14%) and fighting abilities (13%). The (external) appraisal by security service superiors, when only the observation and questioning methods are applied, are not sufficiently informative and reliable. The factor of theoretical and practical preparedness has been found to have a similar weight both in external and internal appraisal, however, a number of factors, such as psychic qualities, physical preparedness and fighting abilities, in internal and external appraisal have a cardinaly opposite value.

Keywords: security service, competence, factors.

INTRODUCTION

In the profession classificatory of the Republic of Lithuania (1999), the profession of a security worker is numbered among the fifth group of services and trade workers and police officials are ascribed to the zero groups of armed services. Security is characterized as prevention of all kinds of losses due to various reasons (*Apsaugos valdymas: mokymo kursų medžiaga*, 1999).

The purpose of private security service is to guard the client's property and life (Nowicki, 1999). The variety and quality of the available

security services depends not only on the market demand, but also on the qualification and competence of security staff. The human factor in the field of safeguarding is of decisive significance. G. Dessler (2001) maintains that in today's super competitive world it is mostly competent workers — “human resources” — and not machinery or computers that predetermine the competitive advantage of a firm. The commercial success of all business subjects depends first of all on its staff. A. P. Sudoplatov, S. V. Lekazev (Судоплатов, Лекарев, 2001) write that the three

fourths of all losses of an enterprise's result from wrong activities of its workers, and keeping the enterprise's secrets 80 % depends on a proper selection, distribution, training and education.

Thus, one of the core tasks in managing the staff is selection and employment of reliable and perspective individuals, as losses caused to poor workers are greater than those caused by external threats. A scientific problem arises whose personal features influence the professional competence of a security worker. S. Dadelo (2004) proposed to classify personal features of guards into theoretical and practical preparedness. Professional activity, psychic qualities, age and physical development, physical preparedness and fighting abilities as the basic components of professional competence.

It is **actual** to elucidate the contribution of each factor to the professional competence of guards and the influence of these factors on their superior's appraisal. Therefore we **hypothesize** that assessment of the contribution of the guard's personal features into his professional competence and their influence on their appraisal by superiors will be helpful in staffing private security services and improving their working qualities.

The **object** of the current study was the psychobiological and professional factors determining the professional competence of a security worker. The **aim** of the work was to establish the role of separate factors determining the professional competence of security workers, as well as to study the professional competence of security workers in formativeness of superior's appraisal and psychobiological factors, qualitative indices and their analysis.

The study subject was 118 security workers and their four direct superiors.

METHODS

In 2003, 118 workers from a private security service and their four direct superiors were tested. Upon analyzing the guard's professional competence, as well as their psychic, biological, fighting and physical preparedness parameters, a scheme of grouping the indices influencing the guard's professional competence into separate factors was elaborated (Fig. 1).

The scheme served as the basis for studying six basic parameters influencing the guard's professional competence.

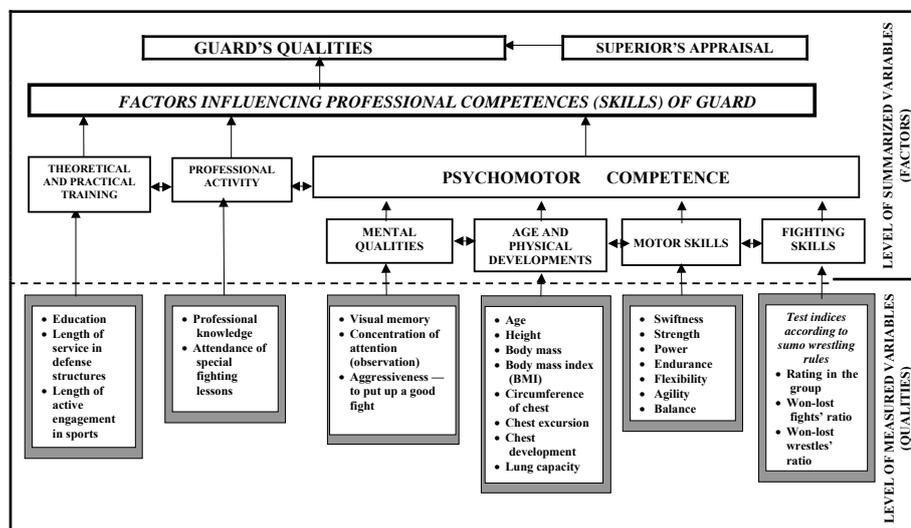
The factor of theoretical preparedness consists of three parameters: education, evaluated in points (1 — secondary, 2 — special secondary, 3 — college, 4 — unfinished higher, 5 — higher); working the period of experience in security structures, evaluated in months; active going in for sports, assessed in years.

The factor of professional activity consists of two parameters: professional knowledge (assessed by a special test, evaluated according to wrong answers) and special fight training attendance (assessed as the number of attended lessons).

The factor of psychic qualities consists of two parameters: visual memory according to A. Sizanov's test of memory for numbers (2000); attention concentration was tested by A. Sizanov's test of number layout (2000); R. M. Kalina's KS-M picture test (1997) was used to assess fighting aggressiveness.

The factor of age and physical development consists of age (assessed in years) and the main measured and calculated indices of physical development (Drozdowski, 1988; Skernevičius et al., 2004).

Fig. 1. Factors predetermining professional in guards



The physical preparedness factor was calculated according to the development of separate physical qualities (Skernevičius et al., 2004).

The fighting ability factor consists of test indices according to sumo wrestling rules (Syska, 2005).

The superior's appraisal of their subordinates was assessed using the method proposed by A. Sakalas (1998).

The data were processed by methods of mathematical statistics (Stupnicki, 2000; Gonestas, Strielčiūnas, 2003). The contribution of separate factor was assessed using Roman Stupnicki's EKOR. 2002 software (calculation of multiple correlations with the contribution of qualities).

RESULTS

Statistical calculations of the studied factors (of internal assessment) have shown that the factor of psychic qualities contributes most significantly to the professional competence of a security worker (22%) (Fig. 2.), followed by the factor of age and physical development (20%). The physical preparedness factor comes third (16%), and the professional activity factor comes fourth (15%). Strange as it is, the factor of fighting abilities contributes least (13%) to the professional competence of security workers. This human quality is least pronounced in various situations of daily life and in professional activities. Therefore, while assessing the professional competence of a security worker it is necessary to diagnose the manifestation level of fighting abilities by applying a special test with elements of wrestling. The difference between the highest and the lowest contributing factors is only 9%, showing a high significance of all the factors. Factor analysis failed to elucidate the very significant and insignificant factors, although the superiority of the indices

of physic qualities' studies, age and physical development is obvious. The total significance of the psychobiological group of factor is high (71%), showing the highest contribution of these indices to the professional competence of security workers. They should be evaluated while checking the candidate employers and those working in security services for professional fitness.

Analysis of the superiors' (external) appraisal of their subordinates (Fig. 3) revealed professional activity as contributing most to their opinion (20%), followed by the factor of age and physical development, which contributed a much lower percentage (8%). The factor of theoretical and practical preparedness contributed only 7% to the security worker's professional competence. Physical fitness contributed only 2% to the total superior's appraisal, whereas psychic qualities and fighting abilities were completely disregarded and had no influence whatsoever on superior's appraisal. Analysis of superior's appraisal material revealed a paradoxical phenomenon: 63% of superior's appraisal of their subordinates comprise the unknown or subjective factors, which had been not designated. This fact shows that employment of security workers and their evaluating only visually or after an oral or questionnaire examination without testing them according to an approved programmer involves a high probability of subjectivity and these of erroneous selection. Figure 4 shows the obvious differences between the internal (objective) and external (subjective) appraisal. The factor of theoretical and practical preparedness in internal appraisal has a factor weight of 14% and in external appraisal only 7%. Professional activity in internal appraisal gained a weight by 5% higher than in external appraisal. The psychic qualities that reflect the properties of intellect, aggressiveness and fighting capacity, which in internal appraisal have the highest factor

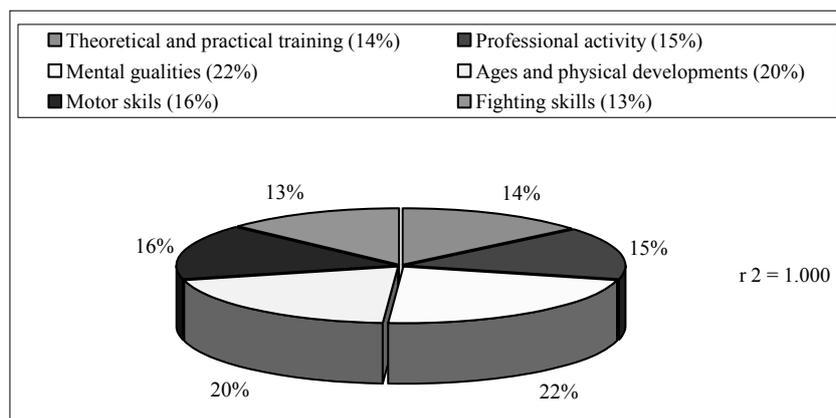


Fig. 2. Contribution of various factors to professional competence of guards

Fig. 3. Contribution of various factors to external appraisal

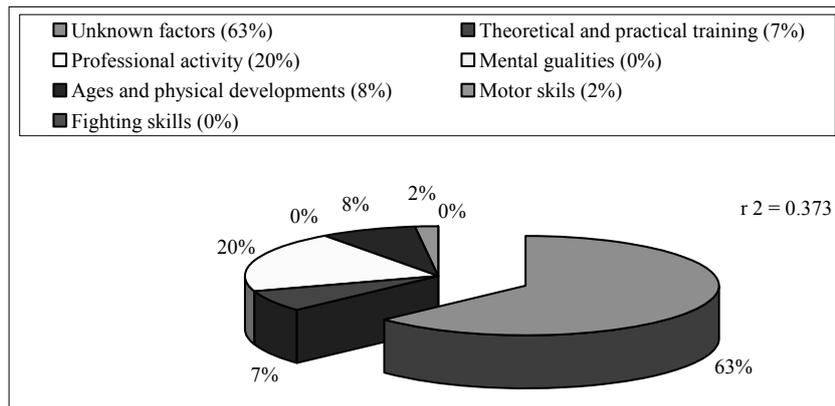
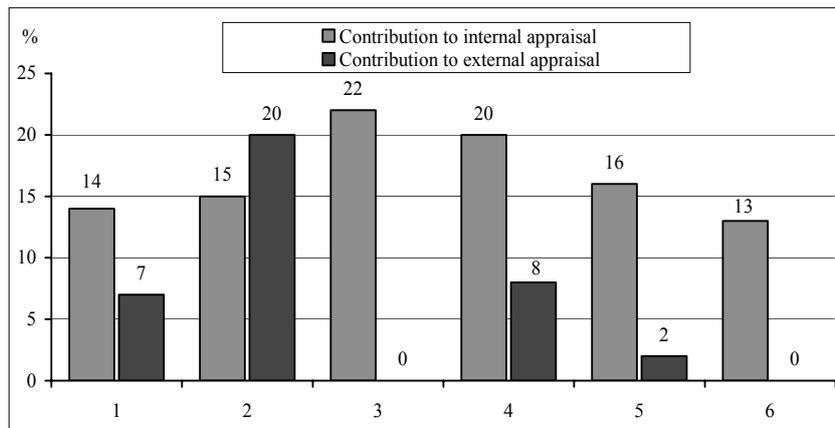


Fig. 4. The ratio of external (subjective) and internal (objective) appraisals



Note. 1 — theoretical and practical training; 2 — professional activity; 3 — mental qualities; 4 — age and physical developments; 5 — motor skills; 6 — fighting skills.

weight of 22%, in external appraisal equaled zero. Age and physical development, having a high factor weight in internal appraisal, gained a much lower value in external appraisal.

Physical preparedness in internal appraisal has an eight fold weight than in internal appraisal. Fighting abilities, rather significant in the internal appraisal of the guard’s professional competence, have no value at all in external appraisal.

An essential difference was revealed between the internal (the contribution of objective test data) and external (the guard’s superiors’ subjective) appraisal.

DISCUSSION

Thus, our research revealed that the guard’s professional competence was a multifactoral characteristic. According to Z. T. Nowicki (1999), protection of personal property and life is the basic function performed by the guard. This particular function is determined by the level of the guard’s overall preparedness and by his inborn characteristics, such as somatic indicators of his physical development or his

mental qualities. In general, any representative of human species, including, naturally, a guard, is a very complex psychobiological system whose behaviour is determined by numerous internal and external factors (Giddens, 2000; Skurvydas, 2001). To investigate into this complex system or to predict its behaviour is a very complicated task (Skurvydas, Mamkus, 1999). Our research showed that guards’ examination carried out on the grounds of external and internal assessment criteria produces different results. Authors argue that a thorough examination of a human demands a great deal of measuring and testing. What is more, thorough investigation requires to apply methods utilised in other areas of scientific research (Dal-Monte et al., 1988; Платонов, 2004; Skernevičius, 2004). Our findings indicate that guard’s competence is limited by a series of factors, and that the difference among contributions made by each factor is not great. Thus, if the scope of research programme is reduced, very significant information is lost. Guards are exposed to stress in a wide range of professional situations. Stress, as is known, influences operations performed by a human in a number of ways (Виру, Кыргыз,

1983; Хаджиев, Дашева, 2000). Our findings show that it was the factor of mental qualities that produced the most powerful effect on the professional competence of guards.

Thus, the factors can be divided into three groups: 1) those having a similar weight in internal and external assessment (theoretical and practical preparedness; 2) those having a big weight in internal and a medium weight in external appraisal (theoretical and practical preparedness), age and physical development; 3) those contributing much to internal and little, if at all, to external appraisal (psychic qualities, physical preparedness; fighting abilities). These factors can be considered as easy, hard and very hard to diagnose. There are reasons to maintain that only a comprehensive examination of security workers by verified, valid, reliable and objective methods of investigation can provide adequate information on their professional competence. The subjective appraisal of superiors hardly reflects reality. Thus, a quality professional selection and the evaluation of the professional competence of security workers must not be based on subjective opinions.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Factor analysis applied for competence assessment of security workers has shown that in internal appraisal (of summarized identified variables) the highest value belongs to psychic qualities (22%) as well as age and physical development (20%), followed by physical preparedness (16%), professional activity (15%), theoretical and practical preparedness (14%) and fighting abilities (13%).
2. The (external) appraisal by security service superiors, when only the observation and questioning methods are applied, are not sufficiently informative and reliable.
3. The factor of theoretical and practical preparedness has been found to have a similar weight both in external and internal appraisal, however, a number of factors, such as psychic qualities, physical preparedness and fighting abilities, in internal and external appraisal have a cardinaly opposite value.

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APSAUGOS DARBUOTOJŲ KOMPETENCIJĄ LEMIANČIŲ VEIKSNIŲ ANALIZĖ

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SANTRAUKA

Tyrimu siekta išsiaiškinti apsaugos darbuotojo profesinę kompetenciją lemiančius veiksnius ir kokių ryši jie turi su apsaugos darbuotojų vadovo savo pavaldinių vertinimu. Daroma hipotetinė prielaida, kad apsaugos darbuotojo asmeninių savybių poveikio profesinei kompetencijai ir jų sąsajos su vadovo savo pavaldinių vertinimu nustatymas padės formuoti privačių saugos tarnybų personalą bei gerinti darbo kokybę.

Tyrimo subjektas — 118 privačios saugos tarnybos apsaugos darbuotojų ir keturi jų tiesioginiai vadovai. Tyrimo objektas — apsaugos darbuotojų profesinę kompetenciją lemiantys psichobiologiniai ir profesiniai veiksniai. Tyrimo tikslas — ištirti apsaugos darbuotojų profesinės kompetencijos, vadovų savo pavaldinių vertinimo ir psichobiologinių veiksnių informatyvumą, kiekybinius rodiklius bei atlikti jų analizę.

Vertinant apsaugos darbuotojų kompetenciją, taikyta faktorių analizė. Atlikus vidinį (apibendrintų identifikuotų kintamųjų) vertinimą pastebėta, kad kompetenciją daugiausia lemia darbuotojų psichinės savybės (22%), amžius ir fizinis išsivystymas (20%), tačiau nemažiau svarbūs veiksniai — fizinis parengtumas (16%), profesinis aktyvumas (15%), teorinis ir praktinis parengtumas (14%) bei koviniai gebėjimai (13%). Nustatyta, kad apsaugos tarnybos vadovo (išorinis savo pavaldinių vertinimas taikant stebėjimo ir apklausos metodus) nėra pakankamai informatyvus ir patikimas. Teorinio ir praktinio parengtumo veiksnys įvardytas kaip vienodai svarbus atliekant ir išorinį, ir vidinį vertinimą, o psichinės savybės, fizinis parengtumas ir koviniai gebėjimai vertinami gana prieštaringai.

Raktažodžiai: apsaugos darbuotojų paslaugos, kompetencija, veiksniai.

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