

CURRENT STATUS OF CADETS' NEEDS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING MODALITIES AT TRAN QUOC TUAN UNIVERSITY

THỰC TRẠNG NHU CẦU HÌNH THỨC TƯ VẤN TÂM LÝ CỦA HỌC VIÊN TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC TRẦN QUỐC TUẤN

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Abstract - The study was conducted on a sample of 378 cadets to evaluate their needs across seven distinct psychological counseling modalities, including counseling via Zalo, telephone counseling, email counseling, individual face-to-face sessions at the unit, group face-to-face sessions at the unit, counseling integrated into classroom activities, and direct counseling at psychological counseling rooms. The findings indicate a very high overall demand for psychological support among cadets, with individual face-to-face counseling at the unit emerging as the most preferred modality. Based on these empirical results, several recommendations are proposed to meet cadets' needs for psychological counseling modalities, including diversifying support channels, integrating counseling activities into collective routines and extracurricular events, and establishing temporary psychological counseling rooms staffed by experienced instructors and management officers.

Key words - Psychological counseling needs; Counseling modalities; Cadets; Tran Quoc Tuan University; Military school psychology.

1. Introduction

The modernization process of the military has imposed more stringent standards on the next generation of military human resources, particularly young officers. As the core force who will directly manage and command grassroots units after graduation, cadets at Tran Quoc Tuan University are required to undergo comprehensive training, ranging from political steadfastness to physical and mental health. However, the closed training environment, strict discipline, and high-intensity training characteristic of the military have inadvertently created considerable psychological barriers and pressures for this group. The intersection between the psychological characteristics of young adulthood and the military environment may easily lead to stress, cognitive conflicts, or crises of values if timely psychological orientation and support are not provided.

Along with training activities, the university regularly conducts political-ideological education and troop management. However, practice shows that traditional forms of encouragement and reminders have not fully met the individualized and specialized nature of modern psychological issues. The organization of psychological counseling activities still reveals certain limitations. At present, there remains a considerable gap between cadets' intrinsic needs and the implementation methods of existing

Tóm tắt - Nghiên cứu được thực hiện trên 378 học viên, đánh giá qua 07 hình thức tư vấn khác nhau bao gồm: qua Zalo, điện thoại, email, trực tiếp cho cá nhân tại đơn vị, trực tiếp cho nhóm tại đơn vị, thông qua các buổi học trên lớp, và trực tiếp tại phòng tư vấn tâm lý. Kết quả cho thấy học viên có nhu cầu tổng thể rất cao đối với việc hỗ trợ tâm lý, trong đó, hình thức tư vấn trực tiếp cho cá nhân tại đơn vị là phương thức được mong muốn nhất. Trên cơ sở kết quả nghiên cứu, đề xuất một số giải pháp đáp ứng nhu cầu về hình thức tư vấn tâm lý gồm: đa dạng hóa các hình thức tư vấn, lồng ghép hoạt động hỗ trợ vào các sinh hoạt tập thể và thành lập các phòng tư vấn tâm lý tạm thời với đội ngũ cán bộ, giảng viên giàu kinh nghiệm.

Từ khóa - Nhu cầu tư vấn tâm lý; Hình thức tư vấn; Học viên; Trường Đại học Trần Quốc Tuấn; Tâm lý học đường quân sự.

counseling groups. Concerns about “psychological stigma” or fear of negative impacts on training assessment results remain major barriers that prevent cadets from being truly open to the university’s counseling formats. For the above reasons, studying the “Current Status of Cadets’ Needs for Psychological Counseling Modalities at Tran Quoc Tuan University” provides a scientific basis for developing a psychological support model appropriate for cadets and responsive to the requirements of officer education and training in the new context.

2. Problem solving

2.1. Research methods

The research method used in the article is the survey method.

Purpose: To examine the research content and collect data on the current status of cadets’ needs for psychological counseling modalities.

Participants: The survey was conducted on three groups of participants, comprising 378 cadets.

Survey principles: The survey was conducted objectively and honestly. Participants read and responded to the questionnaire based on their own perceptions. The questionnaire was designed with pre-determined response options.

2.2. Research instruments

To optimize the accuracy and practical value of the research findings, the article applied the following combined methodological system:

Questionnaire survey method: This method aimed to collect quantitative data reflecting the level of cadets' needs for seven psychological counseling modalities. The measurement instrument consisted of seven corresponding survey questions, developed based on the Likert scale format.

In-depth interview method: This method served to supplement the limitations of quantitative data. Direct dialogue helped further identify the underlying causes, personal motivations, and psychological barriers affecting cadets' preference for or hesitation toward certain specific support models.

Mathematical statistical method: All raw data collected were coded and processed using SPSS. The software was used to test the internal consistency, or reliability, of the scale, while also analyzing descriptive and inferential statistical indicators.

The needs assessment system was designed according to a five-point Likert scale with progressively increasing levels: 1 point corresponding to "Not desired"; 2 points to "Slightly desired"; 3 points to "Neutral"; 4 points to "Desired"; and the highest level, 5 points, to "Highly desired".

Table 1. Cadets' needs for psychological counseling modalities

No.	Psychological counseling modalities	Level				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Counseling via Zalo					
2	Telephone counseling					
3	Email counseling					
4	Face-to-face individual counseling at unit					
5	Face-to-face group counseling at unit					
6	Counseling integrated into classroom activities					
7	Direct counseling at psychological counseling room					

2.3. Research content

The learning and training process of cadets at Tran Quoc Tuan University is closely associated with the formation of the identity and personality of military commanding officers. During this transitional stage, learners often experience certain psychological pressures, stress, and imbalance. These factors directly affect and create numerous obstacles for cadets, ranging from fluctuations in motivation for striving, insufficient awareness of training goals, and conflicts in social communication to ambiguity regarding their military career development path. Without timely counseling support and intervention, some cadets may easily fall into a state of resignation, experience a decline in their will to train, or even violate military discipline to the extent that they have to discontinue their studies. From this objective reality, cadets' need to seek psychological support is highly evident. However, due to the distinct characteristics of the military environment, current psychological support activities are still carried out on a part-time basis and lack

specialized personnel. Therefore, researching and developing appropriate psychological counseling models and modalities for cadets at the university has become an especially urgent requirement in the current period.

Models and methods of psychological counseling have long attracted the research attention of many domestic and international scholars. A typical example is the work by J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver, and L. S. Wrightsman on *Measures of Personality and Social Psychological Attitudes* [1]. In this study, the authors introduced a system of more than ten online assessment tools specifically designed for students. Based on the analysis results from these instruments, specialists would conduct counseling and provide orientations for resolving the practical psychological problems encountered by learners.

The role of group counseling for learners has been demonstrated in many international studies. Typical examples include the experimental studies by S. Steen et al. [2], which affirmed that this method significantly helps students improve their social adaptation capacity. Sharing the same perspective, R. Sohrabi et al. [3] added that problem-solving-oriented group support has a positive impact on beliefs in educational self-efficacy. In Vietnam, Le Van Thang [4] also proposed integrating internal communication and digital technology to optimize ideological work for young officer cadets. These studies also indicate that group counseling is a feasible and highly effective solution when implemented in educational institutions, as it can simultaneously support many students facing similar difficulties. Notably, the authors agreed that online counseling, typically via electronic mail or email, provides practical value that is by no means inferior to traditional face-to-face methods.

From broader research perspectives, counseling has been evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively from various angles. For instance, L. Murphy et al. conducted a comparison of outcomes and client satisfaction indicators between face-to-face and online counseling methods [5]. With attention to the specificity of the military education sector, Nguyen Thanh Binh, in the article "*School Psychological Counseling in Current Military Universities: Current Status and Solutions*" [6], thoroughly surveyed learners' actual needs. Based on those data, the author analyzed and proposed specific methods and solutions to enhance psychological support capacity within military universities.

When examining field-based organizational models, the study by Nguyen Thi Tram Anh focused on developing a school psychological support program at junior high school in Da Nang City [7]. After analyzing the current status of needs and psychological barriers among lower secondary school students in the locality, the author designed a systematic and professionalized support program within the school setting. This model included stages ranging from screening assessment and intensive intervention to the organization of comprehensive development activities.

From another perspective focusing on staff capacity, Hoang The Hai and Le Quang Son published the results of

implementing a training model on psychological counseling skills for junior high school homeroom teachers in Kien Giang Province [8]. This study focused on verifying the feasibility and practical effectiveness of a training method designed to improve school counseling capacity specifically for homeroom teachers. Experimental data demonstrated that both cognitive skills and practical psychological support capacity among teaching staff showed positive and marked improvements after the training process.

The overview of the above scientific studies reveals the diversity of mental support methods, ranging from individual counseling and group counseling to classroom-based implementation and direct or indirect interaction channels via telephone, email, and the Internet. Most studies agree on the role and practical effectiveness of these models in addressing the psychological needs of pupils and students. This constitutes an important system of scientific arguments for the present article to inherit and apply in analyzing psychological support modalities for cadets at Tran Quoc Tuan University. Nevertheless, due to certain limitations in terms of time, length, and implementation conditions, within the scope of this study, the topic focuses only on surveying and evaluating the current status of cadets' needs for psychological counseling modalities.

To establish a solid basis before analyzing the current situation, all data collected from 378 cadets were tested for internal consistency. The study used SPSS 26.0 statistical software to analyze the reliability of the scale and the item-total correlation coefficients.

As shown in Table 2, the reliability coefficient of the scale was recorded at 0.760. For practical studies and school psychology research in the military environment, this index reflects the optimal reliability of the measurement instrument and observed variables. At the same time, the item-total correlation coefficients of all seven indicators ranged from 0.338 to 0.618, satisfactorily meeting the standard of being greater than 0.30. These results indicate that all questions contributed positively to the scale without any confounding factors, thereby ensuring the validity and scientific value of the input data.

3. Research results and discussion

3.1. Research results

The survey results reveal a vivid picture of the compatibility between individual psychological characteristics and the nature of the military environment.

First, the survey data demonstrate the predominance of cadets' expectations for direct interaction channels at the grassroots level. Specifically, the option of "Face-to-face individual counseling at unit" recorded the highest mean score, with a mean of 4.15 and a positive agreement rate of 85.7%, followed by Face-to-face group counseling at unit, with a mean of 4.10. This reality fully reflects its compatibility with the centralized living regime of military cadets. When free time is limited by strict training schedules, organizing counseling sessions directly in company-level spaces becomes the most feasible and convenient option.

To further clarify this situation, the author conducted an in-depth interview with cadet Ng. Q. H., a battalion-level cadre. He shared a view closely aligned with the reality of training: *"Our schedules for academic study, technical and tactical training, and duty shifts are very dense, leaving almost no free time for us to independently seek specialists outside the unit. Organizing direct counseling or small-group discussions in the company's common room during breaks or days off is the most appropriate approach. It helps us relieve stress after high-intensity field training sessions while ensuring strict maintenance of regular routines and avoiding any impact on the fulfillment of the unit's political tasks"*.

Next, there is a certain degree of hesitation toward remote counseling methods via digital platforms. Support channels through the Counseling via Zalo, with a mean of 3.91, or Telephone counseling, with a mean of 3.97, received the lowest priority levels, ranking sixth and seventh, respectively. This result is directly influenced by the specific information management regulations at Tran Quoc Tuan University. Due to strict requirements for military security, cadets' access to the Internet and use of personal smart devices are strictly limited to fixed time frames.

Nevertheless, the results approaching the level of 4.00 reflect cadets' substantial expectations for these support channels due to their advantages in protecting personal information. This observation was further reinforced by the in-depth interview with Lieutenant Nguyen V. M., a company political officer. According to his sharing, young officer cadets today possess high self-esteem and are always conscious of protecting their personal image. When facing emotional barriers or pressure from their families, many cadets are highly reluctant to seek help from public counseling rooms due to fear of prejudice from peers or concern that superiors may use such information to lower their periodic training classification. Therefore, they often tend to silently expect the academy to establish confidential information-receiving channels, such as a private hotline, internal email, or closed social media accounts. These are considered safe spaces for emotional release before they are confident enough to proactively meet and directly communicate with management officers.

This intersection of needs requires the university to diversify its support models and avoid rigidity and monotony. The implementation process should involve harmonious coordination between the "regular and public" nature characteristic of the military environment and the "discreet and confidential" principle of school psychological work. In general, the mean score of 4.03 demonstrates that cadets' need to receive psychological support modalities is very high. This result is fully consistent with previous publications by Tran Thu Huong and Tran Minh Diep [9] as well as V. Thuryrajah [10], which surveyed students at civilian universities. It can be affirmed that seeking mental support is an objective and law-governed demand of learners in the process of adapting to a new educational environment.

Table 2. Reliability testing results of the scale measuring cadets' needs for psychological counseling modalities

Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.760	7

Item-Total statistics

Item-Total	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Counseling via Zalo	23.9545	7.126	.557	.714
Telephone counseling	23.8909	7.731	.618	.703
Email counseling	23.7909	7.983	.559	.716
Face-to-face individual counseling at unit	23.5909	9.198	.348	.752
Face-to-face group counseling at unit	23.5091	8.711	.338	.758
Counseling integrated into classroom activities	23.6818	7.779	.474	.733
Direct counseling at psychological counseling room	23.8364	7.441	.568	.710

Table 3. Survey results on cadets' needs for psychological counseling modalities

Descriptive statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Counseling via Zalo	378	2.00	5.00	3.9074	.87366
Telephone counseling	378	2.00	5.00	3.9735	.73513
Email counseling	378	2.00	5.00	4.0212	.71333
Face-to-face individual counseling at unit	378	2.00	5.00	4.1534	.66176
Face-to-face group counseling at unit	378	2.00	5.00	4.1005	.74310
Counseling integrated into classroom activities	378	2.00	5.00	4.0635	.82802
Direct counseling at psychological counseling room	378	2.00	5.00	4.0212	.78755
Cadets' needs for psychological counseling modalities	378	2.14	5.00	4.0344	.55951
N	378				

3.2. Discussion

Based on the above research results, diversifying and innovating counseling methods to promptly meet cadets' thoughts and aspirations is an urgent requirement for the university. To optimize the effectiveness of psychological support work in the military environment, it is necessary to focus on the synchronous implementation of several core solutions as follows.

First, psychological support methods should be proactively diversified and made more flexible.

To promptly meet the increasingly high needs of learners, the academy system should flexibly implement counseling forms from the unit level. This solution may be

carried out directly by instructors and cadet management officers, either individually or in groups sharing the same problem-solving orientation. Interaction spaces may be organized directly in lecture halls, company common rooms, or other suitable locations within the unit campus, with particular focus on topics related to academic tasks and discipline training. In parallel, on a monthly or quarterly basis, the university command should direct functional agencies to advise on and develop specific action plans, while proactively establishing links and coordination with the Military Psychology Research Division under the Institute of Military Social Sciences and Humanities, together with the Department of Military Psychology under the Political Academy, to organize intensive and direct counseling sessions for cadets.

To realize and improve the effectiveness of these support methods, Party committees and commanders at all levels should proactively create favorable conditions for cadets to access and use mobile devices and the Internet during breaks and days off in accordance with regulations. At the same time, the Party Committee and Board of Rectors should direct functional agencies to urgently establish a diverse system of interaction channels, including counseling hotlines, email boxes, traditional suggestion boxes, and confidential discussion groups on digital platforms. This constitutes an important technical foundation for implementing counseling activities smoothly. In addition, the university should maximize the functions of the existing internal communication system to widely disseminate support sections, helping cadets easily access support resources whenever they face barriers and pressures in their learning, training, and daily life.

Second, counseling content should be integrated into collective activities and extracurricular programs.

The characteristics of education and training in the military require cadets to study, train, and live collectively according to the organizational structure of units, from squad and company to battalion levels. Therefore, in addition to implementing the academy's general curriculum, each unit maintains its own professional and extracurricular activities suited to actual conditions. Party committees and commanders at all levels should take advantage of these collective activity spaces to integrate ideological orientation and psychological relief content for troops.

In parallel, cadet management units should proactively coordinate with local Party committees and authorities, or with universities and colleges in the stationed area, to organize exchange and twinning programs. Forums for sharing communication and behavioral skills, together with cultural and artistic exchanges, sports competitions, and traditional camps, should be organized regularly. These activities are not only useful playgrounds but also effective indirect channels for creating an open environment, helping cadets relieve mental pressure and proactively express their need for sharing and psychological support.

Third, a temporary psychological counseling room model should be established.

The psychological support room plays a key role as a place that directly helps resolve cadets' psychological barriers and mental crises in a professional and scientific manner. Access to a visible support space directly on campus is a common aspiration of a large number of learners. In the context where actual resources are not yet sufficient to establish large-scale specialized centers, the university may flexibly arrange temporary counseling rooms to promptly address emerging situations.

To operate this model effectively, the unit should pay attention to personnel selection. The core force participating in rotational duty should prioritize specialized instructors and experienced management officers who possess strong pedagogical communication skills, dedication, and a high sense of responsibility. These individuals will directly accompany, support, and orient cadets in overcoming psychological obstacles in daily life as well as throughout the training process at the university.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

The study has shown that cadets at Tran Quoc Tuan University have very high and diverse needs for psychological counseling services, stemming from pressures in training, academic activities, and social relationships. Among the modalities included in the survey, the model of direct individual interaction at the unit received the greatest expectation from learners. This choice is fully compatible with the characteristics of strict time management and rigorous discipline in the military environment. In addition, indirect support channels through digital and telecommunications platforms, including hotlines, email, and social networks, also recorded a high level of interest due to their advantages in information confidentiality. The current situation indicates that the activities of existing counseling groups have not yet met cadets' expectations, while the university is also facing a shortage of specialized human resources formally trained in school psychology.

4.2. Recommendations

4.2.1. For the Party Committee and Board of Rectors of the University

Optimize specialized resources and infrastructure: Attention should be paid to investing funding, prioritizing land-use planning, and equipping synchronized facilities to establish psychological counseling spaces at battalions or centralized living areas. These locations must strictly meet standards of discretion and the principle of information confidentiality. This is a prerequisite for eliminating hesitation and reluctance among young officer cadets when they encounter difficulties.

Promote the application of digital technology in association with information security: It is necessary to urgently study and integrate a support section or a secure interactive mailbox system on the internal military data transmission network. This option ensures harmonization between strict compliance with military security regulations and the need to meet learners' demand for rapid and flexible connection.

4.2.2. For Academic Faculties

Foster and standardize supplementary competencies: Academic faculties should proactively organize training courses to improve professional qualifications and practical psychological skills for social sciences instructors and management officers, including company commanders and political officers.

Digitize self-help support materials: Pocket publications and electronic manuals should be compiled and widely disseminated to guide cadets in methods of self-controlling stress, managing personal emotions, and improving adaptability under high-intensity training conditions.

4.2.3. For commanders of units directly managing cadets (including Companies, Battalions, and Cadet Management)

Renew management thinking from "administrative command" to "companionship and sharing": Grassroots-level officers, especially company political officers, need to closely follow their units and promptly identify and forecast changes in the thoughts, behaviors, or moods of the troops under their command. Listening, empathy, and psychological orientation should be regarded as key and regular tasks in management and in building comprehensively strong units.

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