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COMBAT EXPERIENCE AS A FORM OF INFORMAL LEARNING: PROBLEMS OF VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION IN THE MILITARY EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE NATIONAL GUARD OF UKRAINE

The article presents an interdisciplinary study of the problem of recognising combat experience of National Guard of Ukraine servicemembers as a result of informal learning within the formal military education system. The research methodology combines theoretical methods (systematic analysis, synthesis, comparison, hermeneutic analysis) and empirical methods (survey of 50 students of L-1 officer professional development courses and 20 academic staff members at the Kyiv Institute of the NGU). The empirical findings reveal high self-assessment of combat-acquired competencies: tactical ($M = 4.62$), adaptive ($M = 4.51$), leadership ($M = 4.38$), communicative ($M = 3.94$) on a 5-point Likert scale. Strong support for recognition: 88 % of L-1 students and 85 % of academic staff endorse the concept. A positive correlation between combat experience duration and support was established ($r = 0.64$; $p < 0.01$). The regulatory analysis identifies a systemic gap at the departmental level. While the Law No. 2179-IX (2022) introduced qualification centres as entities authorised to assess and recognise learning outcomes from non-formal and informal education, no departmental regulations adapt these procedures to NGU military educational institutions. The comparative analysis of NATO member states' practices (PLAR at the Royal Military College of Canada, RPL at the University of Portsmouth) informs the proposed model. The author proposes a validation model integrating three components: pedagogical (declaration – identification – assessment – recognition), legal (draft regulation), and institutional (establishment of a Qualification Centre at KI NGU, accredited by the National Qualifications Agency). The Centre would assess and recognise learning outcomes from combat experience, NATO-standard courses, and international missions, positioning KI NGU as an institutional leader in informal learning recognition within Ukraine's security and defence sector.

Keywords: *informal education; combat experience; validation; recognition of learning outcomes; National Guard of Ukraine; higher military education; qualification centre; competencies.*

Problem Statement. The full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022, has fundamentally changed the requirements for the training of military specialists. Tens of thousands of servicemen of the National Guard of Ukraine (hereinafter – NGU) have acquired unique combat experience encompassing tactical skills in conducting modern combined-arms combat, the ability to make unconventional decisions under conditions of uncertainty, leadership competencies in managing units under extreme conditions, as well as practical knowledge of interoperability with allies in accordance with NATO standards.

By its pedagogical nature, this experience fully corresponds to the characteristics of informal education, defined by the Law of Ukraine “On Education” as the “self-organised acquisition by an individual of certain competencies, in particular during everyday activities related to professional ...

activity” [1]. At the same time, the current system of higher military education lacks an effective mechanism for recognising these outcomes, which creates a significant gap both in the pedagogical and legal domains.

The problem acquires particular urgency in view of two aspects. First, the pedagogical aspect: a considerable proportion of cadets and students of higher military educational institutions (hereinafter – HMEIs) of the NGU possess combat experience, yet are compelled to study academic disciplines whose content significantly lags behind their actual competencies acquired on the battlefield. Second, the legal aspect: despite the existence of a general Procedure for the Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Outcomes in Higher Education [2; 3], there are no departmental regulatory acts adapting this procedure to the specific features of NGU HMEIs, taking into account restrictions related to information protection and the particularities of military service.



Thus, the relevance of the study is determined by the need for scientific substantiation of the pedagogical mechanism and legal foundations for the validation of combat experience as a result of informal learning within the NGU military education system. Additional significance is attached to the problem by the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Functioning of the National Qualifications System” dated 01.04.2022 No. 2179-IX [19], which provides for the establishment of qualification centres – entities authorised by the National Qualifications Agency to assess and recognise learning outcomes, including those acquired through non-formal or informal education [20]. This regulatory instrument opens a fundamentally new perspective for addressing the problem under study.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

The issue of incorporating combat experience into the educational process of HMEIs is actively explored by Ukrainian scholars. Ye. Yakovenko, S. Bielai, and I. Volkov substantiated the necessity of introducing combat experience into the educational process of the National Academy of the NGU during the study of general military disciplines, noting that such experience constitutes a determining factor in officer training [4]. In subsequent publications, Ye. Yakovenko and R. Kizian examined combat experience in the context of professional military training, focusing on six key stages of its implementation: collection, analytical processing, adaptation, implementation, reflection, and updating [5].

Issues concerning the quality of military education and the integration of practical experience were studied by M. Medvid, M. Kitorov, Yu. Medvid, and others, who established the dependence of the development of HMEIs’ internal quality assurance systems on the incorporation of practical experience into the educational process [6]. Problems of professionalisation of HMEI instructors under conditions of modern warfare, particularly in the context of non-formal and informal education based on the andragogical approach, were highlighted by A. Vitchenko [7]. L. Oliinyk, S. Illiushchenko, and others proposed a structural-functional model for the professional development of academic and teaching staff during advanced training in HMEIs [8].

The organisational foundations for studying and implementing experience in the Armed Forces of Ukraine were investigated by Ye. Honcharenko and A. Tkachenko, who identified directions for improving lessons-learned procedures in

accordance with NATO standards [9]. Yu. Pashchuk conducted a fundamental analysis of the development of organisational learning and implementation of experience in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, substantiating methodological approaches to enhancing the capabilities of HMEIs in this field [10].

Among foreign studies, particular attention should be paid to the work of T. Dyson and Yu. Pashchuk devoted to organisational learning during the war in Donbas, which demonstrated the evolution of lessons-learned processes in the Armed Forces of Ukraine [11]. International standards for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in armed forces are summarised in the NATO Handbook on Lessons Learned [12], as well as in the practice of the Royal Military College of Canada, where the PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition) system operates, allowing military experience to be credited as academic credits [13].

At the same time, the analysis of scholarly publications demonstrates that most studies focus on integrating combat experience into the content of academic disciplines, whereas the problem of recognising this experience as a result of informal learning within the formal military education system remains virtually unexplored. There is no scientifically substantiated model for validating combat experience that would combine a pedagogical mechanism for competency assessment with legal support for recognition procedures in NGU HMEIs.

The purpose of the article is to provide scientific substantiation of combat experience as a form of informal learning and to develop a model for validating its outcomes within the higher military education system of the National Guard of Ukraine, particularly through the establishment of a Qualification Centre at the Kyiv Institute of the NGU (hereinafter – KINGU). To achieve this purpose, the following tasks were defined: 1) to verify the hypothesis regarding the pedagogical equivalence of combat experience and informal learning outcomes; 2) to analyse the regulatory and legal framework for recognition and identify gaps concerning NGU HMEIs; 3) based on empirical research, to determine the competencies acquired by NGU servicemen during combat operations and the attitudes of educational process participants toward recognition procedures; 4) to generalise foreign experience in recognising prior learning within the armed forces of NATO countries; 5) to substantiate a model for validating combat experience and the expediency of establishing a Qualification Centre at KINGU. The research methodology is based on a

combination of theoretical methods (systemic analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalisation, and hermeneutic analysis of regulatory texts) and empirical methods (questionnaire survey using descriptive statistics). The empirical study sample consisted of 50 participants in L-1 officer advanced training courses at KINGU who had combat experience, and 20 academic and teaching staff members of KINGU. The total sample comprised 70 respondents.

Research Instrumentation. The questionnaire consisted of three blocks. The first block (12 statements) was aimed at self-assessment of competencies acquired during combat operations using a five-point Likert scale (1 – “not developed at all”, 5 – “developed at a high level”). The second block (8 statements) identified attitudes toward the procedure for official recognition of combat experience in formal education. The third block (6 statements) concerned preferences regarding specific assessment methods and institutional formats. The content of the questionnaire was aligned with the theoretical constructs of the study, ensuring content validity. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach’s alpha method: for the first block $\alpha = 0.83$, and for the second block $\alpha = 0.79$, corresponding to an acceptable level of internal consistency ($\alpha \geq 0.70$). Prior to the main data collection, a pilot survey ($n = 8$) was conducted, following which the wording of two statements was refined.

Presentation of the main material. **Combat Experience as a Category of Informal Learning: Theoretical Justification.** According to Article 8 of the Law of Ukraine “On Education,” informal education (self-education) is education that involves the self-organized acquisition by an individual of certain competencies, particularly during everyday activities related to professional, civic, or other activities [1]. Comparing this definition with the characteristics of combat experience allows us to assert that the participation of military personnel in combat operations fully corresponds to the features of informal learning.

The Doctrine on Lessons Learned and Experience Implementation in the Armed Forces of Ukraine defines experience as a “set of lessons, knowledge, abilities, and skills acquired in the course of practical activity” [14]. The Instruction on the Study and Implementation of Experience in Performing Combat (Special) Tasks by the National Guard of Ukraine during the Repulsion of Armed Aggression specifies this definition in relation to the particularities of the National Guard [15]. A substantive analysis of these regulatory documents

demonstrates a correlation between the concept of “combat experience” in military doctrine and the concept of “informal learning outcomes” in educational legislation.

For the scientific substantiation of this thesis, it is advisable to refer to the competency-based approach. Combat experience ensures the formation of a set of competencies that may be classified into the following groups: 1) tactical competencies – the ability to plan and conduct combat operations, manage fire, and organize interaction; 2) leadership competencies – the capacity to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty, motivate personnel, and manage stress; 3) communicative competencies – the ability to interact effectively with allies, use communication means, and conduct negotiations; 4) adaptive competencies – the ability to adapt quickly to changes in the operational environment, creatively apply available resources, and act in non-standard situations.

It is important to note that these competencies are formed not as a result of purposeful learning according to a defined curriculum, but as a consequence of practical activity in real combat conditions, which constitutes a key feature of informal learning. As noted by A. Vitchenko, the andragogical approach to military education presupposes recognition of prior experience as a valuable educational resource [7]. This corresponds with the provisions of the Law of Ukraine “On Education,” which guarantees the recognition of the results of non-formal and informal education within the formal education system [1].

Regulatory and Legal Framework for the Recognition of Informal Learning Outcomes: Analysis of Gaps. The legal basis for the recognition of informal education outcomes is the Procedure for the Recognition in Higher and Professional Pre-Higher Education of Learning Outcomes Acquired through Non-Formal and/or Informal Education, approved by Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 08 February 2022 No. 130 [2]. Order of the Ministry of Education and Science dated 13 May 2025 No. 724 introduced substantial amendments to this Procedure, particularly defining the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes as “one of the instruments for forming the learner’s individual educational trajectory” [3].

According to the specified Procedure, an educational institution is obliged to develop its own recognition procedure and independently determine the specific organizational aspects of recognition procedures, authorize relevant structural units, appoint authorized persons, and determine methods and formats of assessment [2]. The recognition

procedure includes sequential stages: submission of an application and declaration of prior learning; identification of learning outcomes; comparison with the learning outcomes envisaged by the educational programme; assessment and decision-making.

The Regulation on the Peculiarities of the Organization of the Educational Process in Higher Military Educational Institutions of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, approved by Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine dated 15 February 2024 No. 120, recognizes that higher military educational institutions conduct educational processes both within formal and non-formal education frameworks [16]. However, an analysis of the regulatory framework reveals a number of significant gaps regarding NGU higher military educational institutions.

First, there is no departmental procedure for the recognition of informal learning outcomes adapted to the specifics of the NGU. The general Procedure of the Ministry of Education and Science does not take into account restrictions associated with secrecy requirements, the NGU's subordination to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (rather than the Ministry of Education and Science), and the peculiarities of documenting combat experience under combat conditions.

Second, methods for assessing competencies acquired specifically during combat operations have not been defined. Standard methods (testing, examination, portfolio assessment) require substantial adaptation, considering that a significant part of combat experience is confidential and cannot be documented in open sources.

Third, no procedure has been developed for matching competencies acquired on the battlefield with the learning outcomes envisaged by educational programmes for training NGU officers. This complicates making well-grounded decisions regarding the transfer of academic credit for disciplines or their individual modules.

These gaps necessitate the development of a comprehensive approach combining a pedagogical validation mechanism with appropriate legal support.

Foreign Experience in the Recognition of Prior Learning in the Armed Forces of NATO Member States. To develop a substantiated model for validating combat experience, it is advisable to refer to the practice of the armed forces of NATO member states, where prior learning recognition (RPL) procedures have a long history and a well-developed regulatory framework.

In Canada, the PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition) system actively operates at the Royal Military College of Canada. The purpose of this system is to ensure an accessible, fair, and academically grounded process for assessing prior learning in order to determine its compliance with university-level standards [13]. Military personnel submit portfolios that include a Military Personnel Record Resume, descriptions of completed courses, and certificates of acquired qualifications. Based on the assessment, individual academic disciplines may be credited or academic credits awarded.

In the United Kingdom, the University of Portsmouth applies an RPL system in which recognition of military experience is carried out, inter alia, on the basis of NATO rank classification. Thus, a service member holding NATO OR-7 rank and possessing two years of service may receive recognition of up to 240 undergraduate-level credits [17]. Canada's Fanshawe College recognizes military experience as a source of prior learning for obtaining academic credits, provided that the learning outcomes correspond to those of specific programme courses [18].

The *NATO Lessons Learned Handbook* (4th Edition, 2022) defines a standardized procedure for analysing and institutionalizing experience, including observation, identification, dissemination, and implementation of lessons learned [12]. Although this document does not directly regulate recognition of experience within the educational system, it establishes a methodological basis for structuring and assessing competencies acquired during combat operations.

The generalization of foreign experience allows the identification of key principles that should underpin a domestic model for validating combat experience: 1) the principle of accessibility – the recognition procedure should be understandable and accessible to military personnel; 2) the principle of reliability – assessment methods should ensure objectivity and reproducibility of results; 3) the principle of flexibility – the procedure should account for the diversity of forms of combat experience; 4) the principle of confidentiality – the procedure should ensure the protection of restricted-access information.

Empirical Study: Survey Results. To empirically verify the theoretical provisions, a survey of two groups of respondents was conducted. The first group consisted of 50 participants of the L-1 officer advanced training courses at the Kyiv Institute of the National Guard of Ukraine who had direct combat experience (average duration of deployment in the

combat zone – 14.7 months; 72% held command positions ranging from platoon commander to company commander). The second group comprised 20 academic and teaching staff members of KINGU (65% hold academic degrees, and 40% possess their own combat experience).

In response to the question concerning self-assessment of competencies acquired during combat operations (using a 5-point Likert scale), L-1 participants rated tactical competencies the highest ($M = 4.62$; $SD = 0.53$), which is expected given the intensity of combat training. Adaptive competencies ($M = 4.51$; $SD = 0.58$) ranked second, confirming the development of a high level of cognitive flexibility under real combat conditions. Leadership competencies were assessed at $M = 4.38$ ($SD = 0.67$). The somewhat lower assessment of communicative competencies ($M = 3.94$; $SD = 0.81$) is explained by varying levels of interaction between respondents and units of other defence components and international partners.

Regarding attitudes toward the recognition procedure: 88% of L-1 participants considered official recognition of combat experience within the formal education system appropriate; 76% expressed willingness to undergo an assessment procedure to obtain ECTS academic credits. Among acceptable assessment methods, respondents selected: structured interview – 68%; practical skills demonstration – 62%; combat experience portfolio – 54%; testing – 38%. Correlation analysis demonstrated a positive relationship between the duration of combat experience and the level of support for recognition ($r = 0.64$; $p < 0.01$).

The survey results among KINGU academic and teaching staff ($n = 20$) demonstrated that: 85% support the idea of recognizing combat experience as an outcome of informal learning; 90% believe that such a procedure would increase military personnel's motivation to obtain higher education. At the same time, 70% expressed reservations regarding the need to ensure objectivity of assessment, and 55% noted the need for specialized training of assessors. Regarding the institutional format: 80% of academic and teaching staff considered the establishment of a specialized Qualification Centre to conduct recognition procedures to be optimal; 84% of L-1 participants also supported this idea, indicating consensus between both categories of educational process participants.

Thus, the empirical study confirmed that combat experience forms an integrated set of verifiable competencies; the overwhelming majority of respondents in both groups support the idea of

official recognition; and there exists a clear demand for the establishment of an institutional mechanism (a Qualification Centre) to implement validation procedures.

Model for Validating Combat Experience and Rationale for the Qualification Center of KINGU. Based on theoretical analysis, examination of the regulatory and legal framework, synthesis of foreign experience, and the results of the empirical study, a model for validating combat experience as a result of informal learning was developed. The model integrates three components: pedagogical (competency assessment mechanism), legal (regulatory support for the recognition procedure), and institutional (Qualification Center).

The pedagogical component of the model provides for four consecutive stages.

The first stage – declaration: a servicemember submits an application and completes a structured declaration of combat experience, indicating: periods of participation in combat operations; positions held; tasks performed; training courses and exercises completed in the combat zone (including those conducted according to NATO standards); and key situations requiring responsible decision-making. Disclosure of restricted-access information is not required at this stage.

The second stage – identification: a subject commission, consisting of specialists from the relevant department and representatives of the combat experience unit, compares the declared competencies with the learning outcomes prescribed by the relevant educational program. At this stage, a list of academic disciplines (modules) whose learning outcomes may potentially be recognized is determined.

The third stage – assessment: to confirm the actual level of competencies, combined methods adapted to military specifics are applied. These include: structured interviews with departmental specialists (allowing assessment of the depth of understanding of tactical processes without disclosure of confidential information); practical demonstration of skills at training facilities (for tactical and fire competencies); analysis of a combat experience portfolio, which may include open-source documents (NATO course certificates, commendations, awards) and the servicemember's reflective report; and solving situational tasks (case studies) based on typical combat situations.

To ensure objectivity and prevent the reinforcement of erroneous skills, a three-level verification procedure is applied during the assessment stage. First, referential comparison: the declared experience is compared with NGU

regulatory documents (combat orders, mission reports, commanders' statements), which makes it possible to confirm the context in which the experience was acquired and to eliminate purely subjective or unreliable information. Second, cross-verification: during the structured interview, the commission asks control questions oriented toward critical thinking (for example: "What decision did you make and what consequences did it have?" and "How would your actions change in a similar situation considering the experience gained?"). This technique makes it possible to identify reflective understanding of experience as opposed to mechanical reproduction of actions. Third, compliance with current standards: the assessed competencies are compared with current doctrinal and tactical standards of the NGU and NATO. If the experience contains elements that contradict current standards or are considered ineffective according to post-combat analysis, such elements are not subject to recognition, and the relevant conclusion is recorded in the recommendation section of the commission protocol.

The fourth stage – recognition: based on the assessment results, the subject commission decides on full or partial recognition of informal learning outcomes. Recognition may take three forms: credit transfer for an academic discipline (if competencies fully correspond); recognition of individual modules of an academic discipline (in cases of partial correspondence); recognition within the elective component of the educational program.

The legal component of the model provides for the development and approval of a Regulation on the Recognition of Informal Learning Outcomes in NGU higher military educational institutions, which should include: procedures for submission and review of applications; requirements for the composition of subject commissions; a list of assessment methods and decision-making criteria; an appeals mechanism; requirements for the protection of restricted-access information; and procedures for recording recognition results in academic documentation and awarding ECTS credits.

Appeals Mechanism. The appeals mechanism has a two-tier structure. The first level – internal appeal: a servicemember who disagrees with the decision of the subject commission submits an appeal to the Head of the Qualification Center within 10 working days from the date of receiving the reasoned written decision. An appeals commission consisting of at least three members, at least two of whom did not participate in the initial assessment, reviews the case within 15 working

days and adopts one of three decisions: confirmation of the initial decision with detailed justification; referral for reassessment involving an independent specialist in the relevant tactical or specialized discipline; or annulment of the initial decision and recognition of the learning outcomes. The second level – external appeal: if the individual disagrees with the decision of the appeals commission, they have the right to apply to the National Qualifications Agency in accordance with Article 41 of the Law "On Education," as well as to an administrative court in accordance with the Code of Administrative Procedure of Ukraine. All decisions are documented in protocols signed by each commission member and stored in the archive of the Qualification Center for no less than five years.

Risks of Erroneous Recognition and Mechanisms for Their Minimization. The procedure for validating combat experience is associated with three groups of risks, each requiring specific managerial responses. First, academic risks: unjustified awarding of ECTS educational credits reduces the actual level of officer training and devalues formal qualifications. These risks are minimized through mandatory collegial decision-making (at least three commission members), which prevents unilateral influence, as well as through annual external audits of assessment quality conducted by the Scientific and Methodological Council of KINGU. Second, operational-combat risks: recognition of erroneous or morally outdated tactical techniques may instill false combat doctrines in future officers and endanger personnel safety. These risks are minimized through mandatory comparison of declared experience with current NGU doctrinal documents and NATO standards, as well as by involving specialists whose combat experience covers the period no earlier than 2022–2026. Third, corruption risks: subjectivity or bias on the part of assessors toward subordinates, comrades, or acquaintances. These risks are minimized through the incompatibility rule, according to which a commission member must declare recusal if they are in a relationship of direct subordination, kinship, or close personal acquaintance with the applicant, as well as through mandatory audio recording of structured interviews, with recordings retained for three years.

Institutional Component: Qualification Center of KINGU. A key practical recommendation of the study is the substantiation of the feasibility of establishing a Qualification Center at the Kyiv Institute of the NGU. According to the Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Functioning of the

National Qualifications System” of 01.04.2022 No. 2179-IX [19] and Article 38 of the Law “On Education” (2025 edition) [20], a qualification center is an entity authorized by the National Qualifications Agency to conduct assessment and recognition of learning outcomes, including those acquired through non-formal or informal education, and to award and confirm professional qualifications. The rationale is based on four arguments.

Regulatory argument: accreditation of a qualification center by the National Qualifications Agency grants legitimacy to recognition procedures and ensures compliance with nationwide quality standards for assessment.

Empirical argument: 84% of L-1 course participants and 80% of KINGU academic staff support the establishment of the center, indicating a social demand among both categories of participants in the educational process.

Infrastructure argument: KINGU possesses the necessary material and technical base for assessment procedures (training complexes, tactical ranges, modern equipment for simulating combat situations), as well as human resources (academic staff with combat experience and specialists in tactical and special disciplines).

Functional argument: the Qualification Center of KINGU would provide assessment and recognition of informal learning outcomes for L-1, L-1A, and L-1B course participants; assessment of competencies acquired according to NATO standards; awarding/confirmation of professional qualifications for NGU servicemembers; recognition of qualifications acquired during international missions and internships; and creation of a database of verified competencies for improving educational programs. Establishing such a center would transform KINGU into an institutional leader among higher military educational institutions of the security and defense sector in the field of recognition of informal learning outcomes.

Legal argument: legal responsibility for recognition outcomes has a three-level subject structure with clearly differentiated types of responsibility for each participant in the procedure. The Qualification Center of KINGU, as a legal entity (a structural subdivision of KINGU), bears institutional administrative responsibility for compliance with assessment procedures established by the National Qualifications Agency; violation of accreditation conditions may result in suspension or revocation in accordance with Law No. 2179-IX. The Head of the Qualification Center bears personal

disciplinary responsibility under the NGU Disciplinary Statute for improper organization of the center’s activities, as well as administrative liability for violations concerning storage and protection of personal data (Article 188-39 of the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses). Members of the subject and appeals commissions bear collegial disciplinary responsibility for the substantiation of decisions recorded in protocols bearing their handwritten signatures; in the event of deliberate adoption of knowingly unfounded decisions, they may incur criminal liability for official negligence (Article 367 of the Criminal Code) or abuse of official position (Article 364 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). The applicant bears personal criminal liability for knowingly false statements (Article 383 of the Criminal Code) and disciplinary responsibility for providing false information in the declaration of combat experience. This three-tier system of responsibility constitutes a necessary condition for accreditation of the Qualification Center and a guarantee of trust in the recognition documents it issues.

Conclusions and prospects for further research.

The conducted interdisciplinary study made it possible to substantiate a number of theoretical provisions and practical recommendations.

1. The hypothesis regarding the pedagogical equivalence of combat experience and informal learning outcomes was verified: combat experience corresponds to all constitutive characteristics of informal education as defined in Article 8 of the Law of Ukraine “On Education”. Four clusters of competencies were structured: tactical, leadership, communicative, and adaptive.

2. A systemic gap was identified at the departmental level of regulatory and legal support: despite the existence of a legislative framework (including the institution of qualification centers under Law No. 2179-IX), the NGU system lacks specific regulatory acts that adapt the recognition procedure to the particularities of higher military educational institutions.

3. A high level of support for the idea of recognition was empirically confirmed: 88% of L-1 course participants and 85% of KINGU academic and teaching staff support it. A positive correlation was established between the duration of combat experience and the level of support ($r = 0.64$; $p < 0.01$). Preferences regarding assessment methods were identified: structured interviews and practical demonstrations proved to be the most acceptable. Foreign RPL/PLAR experience (Canada and the

United Kingdom) was summarized, demonstrating the effectiveness of the portfolio-oriented approach.

4. An original model for validating combat experience was developed, integrating three components: pedagogical (four stages: declaration, identification, assessment, and recognition), legal (draft Regulation on recognition), and institutional (the Qualification Center of KINGU accredited by the National Qualifications Agency). The feasibility of establishing the Qualification Center was empirically substantiated: 84% of L-1 course participants and 80% of KINGU academic and teaching staff support this initiative.

Prospects for further research are associated with: developing assessment and evaluation materials for the validation procedure; preparing a package of documents for accreditation of the Qualification Center of KINGU by the National Qualifications Agency; studying the impact of recognition of combat experience on academic performance and learner motivation; and conducting comparative research on recognition practices across different components of Ukraine's security and defense sector.

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БОЙОВИЙ ДОСВІД ЯК ФОРМА ІНФОРМАЛЬНОГО НАВЧАННЯ: ПРОБЛЕМИ ВАЛІДАЦІЇ ТА ВИЗНАННЯ У СИСТЕМІ ВІЙСЬКОВОЇ ОСВІТИ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ ГВАРДІЇ УКРАЇНИ

Здійснено міждисциплінарне дослідження проблеми визнання бойового досвіду військовослужбовців Національної гвардії України як результату інформального навчання у системі формальної військової освіти. На підставі аналізу нормативно-правової бази та результатів емпіричного дослідження (анкетування 50 слухачів курсів підвищення кваліфікації офіцерського складу L-1, а також 20 науково-педагогічних працівників Київського інституту НГУ) верифіковано гіпотезу про педагогічну тотожність бойового досвіду та інформального навчання. Запропоновано науково обґрунтовану модель валідації, що поєднує педагогічний механізм оцінювання компетентностей із нормативно-правовим забезпеченням процедури визнання. Обґрунтовано практичну доцільність створення у Київському інституті Національної гвардії України Кваліфікаційного центру як інституційного механізму реалізації процедур визнання результатів навчання відповідно до Закону України «Про внесення змін до деяких законодавчих актів України щодо функціонування національної системи кваліфікацій».

Ключові слова: *інформальна освіта; бойовий досвід; валідація; визнання результатів навчання; Національна гвардія України; вища військова освіта; кваліфікаційний центр; компетентності.*