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AUTHORS

Dalia Prakapienė 
Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė 

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Kazlauskaitė Markelienė, 2024

Dalia Prakapienė, Dr. of Social
Sciences, Associate Professor, Defence
Economics and Management Research
Group, General Jonas Žemaitis Military
Academy of Lithuania, Lithuania.
(Corresponding author)

Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė,
Dr. of Social Sciences, Associate
Professor, Research Group for Security
Institutions Management, General
Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of
Lithuania, Lithuania.



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Dalia Prakapienė (Lithuania), Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė (Lithuania)

CHALLENGES OF RESILIENCE TRAINING FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL IN THE LITHUANIAN ARMED FORCES

Abstract

Resilience is a complex phenomenon that results from the natural human response to adapt to change through the ability to cope with or respond to threats. In today's security challenges, military personnel are responsible for the defense of their country, and exposure to unfamiliar situations can harm the ability of military personnel to perform successfully. Therefore, this study aims to identify the challenges in resilience training for the Lithuanian Armed Forces military personnel. The study uses a qualitative research method and an in-depth interview. Eight military psychologists participated in the study. The selection criteria for the informants were currently employed/serving in the military with at least five years of experience and participating in resilience training. The results revealed that there has been significant recent attention to and need for resilience training in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, but that resilience development is fragmented. The findings show that the lack of a unified concept of resilience in the Lithuanian Armed Forces complicates the development of a unified resilience training system. Summarizing the organizational aspects of resilience training for military personnel in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, the following key challenges were identified. There is a lack of leadership support for resilience education; the need for the development of trainers or responsible persons involved in resilience education; the lack of a clear perception of the value of resilience education among trainers; the need for unification and systematization of the education system through the updating/creation of the use of a system for feedback and evaluation.

Keywords

resilience, resilience training, challenges of resilience training, military personnel, Lithuanian Armed Forces

JEL Classification

O15, M53, I20

INTRODUCTION

A dynamic world and a constantly changing environment in different areas of human activity, as well as increasing levels of stress and pressure in the workplace, highlight the importance of developing human resilience. It is argued that the success of modern organizations and the achievement of their goals depend to a large extent on the appropriate use and development of staff skills. Therefore, staff training, mental health support, and decision-making support are essential organizational responsibilities directly linked to resilience training. In the context of today's security and defense challenges, military personnel have increasing responsibility for national security. Uncertainty and exposure to unfamiliar situations create a multitude of persistent stressors that can have a damaging effect on the ability of military personnel to succeed (Labrague et al., 2018; Haghshen et al., 2020). Occupational stress reduces the quality of life of military personnel, can lead to burnout or even resignation from the armed forces. Therefore, systematic and high-quality resilience training for military personnel would contribute to progress and success in military organizations (Vanhove et al., 2016).

Recently, a growing number of researchers have been analyzing the current issues in the development of military organizations and their personnel. They focus mainly on evaluating different programs, potential resilience factors, and competency sets (Vanhove et al., 2016; Joyce et al., 2018; Crane et al., 2019; Ihme & Sundstrom, 2021; Gutierrez et al., 2021; Iversen et al., 2023; Niederhauser et al., 2023). However, the results of these studies are limited by geography or organizational specificity.

In the Lithuanian Armed Forces, the development of military personnel is a systematically planned process, which includes various trainings, national and international exercises, stress management, and suicide prevention training. However, the analysis of the system lacks a specific focus on the importance of resilience training in the context of contemporary geopolitical events. In Lithuania, detailed research on resilience training is fragmented and mainly focused on psychological resilience and its developmental content (Kanapeckaitė et al., 2022; Bekesiene et al., 2023a; Bekesiene et al., 2023b). Therefore, it is likely that revising and supplementing the existing training system in the military would facilitate the preparation of military personnel to accept and survive emerging challenges.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recently, resilience has been analyzed in scientific literature from different perspectives. First is the ability to recover from stressful situations (Kalisch et al., 2017; Wamser-Nanney et al., 2018; Wyatt, 2021; Kamphuisa et al., 2021). Second is the ability to prepare oneself to survive potential emergencies (Lee et al., 2011; Masten & Cicchetti, 2016; Haghshenas et al., 2020; Masten et al., 2021). Third is a process to build resilience (Leys et al., 2018; McLarnon et al., 2021; Kho et al., 2023). In addition, resilience is increasingly being described as a long-term and multi-component process that encompasses both the ability to survive environmental risks and the processes to develop competences to cope with those risks through resilience factors (Vanhove et al., 2016; Thompson & Dobbins, 2018; Nindl et al., 2018; Gottschall & Guérin, 2021). Resilience is commonly understood as the ability to cope with complex events, such as stress, trauma, or long-term disasters, as well as the ability to recover from post-event responses (Wamser-Nanney et al., 2018; Wyatt, 2021; Kamphuisa et al., 2021; Niederhauser et al., 2023).

In the military context, resilience is commonly understood as the physical and psychological resilience of military personnel (Simón, 2023); recently, there has been an increasing focus on mental health and stress management, which, according to Haghshenas et al. (2020) reduced the level of occupational stress after the intervention. However, the concept of military resilience is much broader

and can be defined as the ability to overcome the negative effects of setbacks and associated stress on military performance and combat effectiveness (Nindl et al., 2018). The resilience of military personnel in military organizations has recently been focused mostly on deployment-related stress and challenges. However, several categories of stressors apply to non-deployed personnel, including work, social, interpersonal, and family-related stressors (Masten & Cicchetti, 2016; Brooks & Greenberg, 2018), as well as a widely discussed harmony between physical and psychological resilience training (Nindl et al., 2018).

Resilience training is a systematically organized activity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to cope with difficult and stressful situations (Lee et al., 2011; Thompson & Dobbins, 2018; Kho et al., 2023). Brassington and Lomas (2021) argue that resilience can be developed, but there is debate about the extent to which resilience depends on personal characteristics, educational influences, and successful adaptation in the face of an adverse event (Bowers et al., 2017; Nieto et al., 2023). There is a growing consensus that resilience is a plastic characteristic that can be developed and strengthened, particularly through resilience training based on an individual's awareness, cognitive and behavioral skills, and the ability to adapt and recover effectively after a disaster (Joyce et al., 2018). However, building resilience is a complex process involving not only the individual but also the family, the team, the organization, etc. (Gottschall & Guérin, 2021). From this perspective, resilience in the military can be understood as a construct re-

sulting from internal (e.g., personality) and external (e.g., social and organizational support) processes and factors.

The concept and factors of resilience include a wide range of psychological, physical, behavioral, and social groups of factors (Meredith et al., 2011; Vanhove et al., 2016; Thompson & Dobbins, 2018). Responsible and informed resilience programming is necessary, considering the specificity of the organization and the functions performed by the individual. In particular, in military organizations, the necessary competencies and skills for resilience training are not identical between those for soldiers participating in conventional war and those intended for soldiers participating in military training and missions (Bekesiene et al., 2023a). Organizations, such as the military, are argued to increase resilience and promote well-being among their members by identifying and targeting a range of psychosocial factors that can positively affect mental health, psychological safety, engagement, and productivity (Gottschall & Guérin, 2021).

According to Vanhove et al. (2016), Nindl et al. (2018), Crane et al. (2019), Ihme and Sundstrom (2021), Gutierrez et al. (2021), Iversen et al. (2023), and Niederhauser (2023), although there are a number of resilience education programs, they vary considerably in terms of duration, depth, or even the organization of the training process itself. While there is a lack of systematic resilience training, resilience development in soldiers occurs through a variety of training programs, where the protective factors that are developed overlap with those developed through other types of interventions (Adler et al., 2015a, 2015b; Vanhove et al., 2016; Kho et al., 2023). However, this integration of resilience training into other training raises discussions about the compatibility of existing programs, the effectiveness of the training, and its continuity.

In Lithuania, detailed research on resilience training is fragmented and mainly focused on psychological resilience and its developmental content (Kanapeckaitė et al., 2022; Bekesiene et al., 2023a; Bekesiene et al., 2023b). The development process and its success depend not only on the content, but also on the attitudes of the or-

ganization's management, the competence of the trainers responsible for the process, the organizational features of the process, the assessment system, and other factors. In the Lithuanian Armed Forces, the training of military personnel is a regulated process, and a structured training program is approved by the Commander of the Lithuanian Armed Forces (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2022). It identifies the priorities and requirements for military training and includes a plan for the training of soldiers for both international and national operations. The analysis of the program shows that the amount of training is quite high. However, the emphasis is on the professional development of soldiers, with a focus on conflict law, cyber security, first aid, etc. However, given the need to build resilience among military personnel, the focus is mainly on stress management and suicide prevention. Therefore, it is appropriate to strengthen this area by identifying the challenges in the resilience training of military personnel of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

It is arguable that leaders and the organization play an important role in this process (Meredith et al., 2011; McInerney et al., 2024). Lepore and Revenson (2006) emphasize the importance of the organization in developing situations and strategies that allow individuals and units to return to a mission-ready state and to adapt adequately, with minimal loss, to new situations and challenges. In other words, building resilience is a shared outcome of individual and organizational performance. It is the responsibility of individuals to develop a set of adaptive behaviors and psychological skills to increase their resilience and performance. However, it also requires systematic support from the organization through appropriate guidance, counseling, and training. Therefore, this study focuses on the intersection of individual and organizational levels, as the factors at the latter level are directly related to the resilience-building process. Start et al. (2020) discovered that the implementation of training in an organization often depends not on experts but on the military personnel in the organization who are responsible for the delivery of the planned training. Zanesco et al. (2019) and Gutierrez et al. (2021) demonstrate that the effectiveness of resilience training also depends on the type of instructor and his/her ability to convey and apply the knowledge in real situations.

One of the problems with resilience training is that the effectiveness of resilience training depends on the individual's existing experience, i.e., some high-risk populations may not benefit from some forms of resilience training (Brassington & Lomas, 2021), and the condition that resilience training is most effective when it is relevant to a current or near-future event. Furthermore, given that military personnel often work in teams, team resilience training is necessary, which is often associated with the level of organizational resilience (Tannenbaum et al., 2024). Therefore, when organizing resilience training, it is necessary to consider not only the content but also the differentiation, i.e., the levels of training. The effectiveness of resilience training is also linked to the usability of the competencies/skills acquired during the training years. Vanhove et al. (2016) found that the effectiveness of curricula diminishes over time, i.e., the content and teaching methods need to be continuously updated according to the current changes in the situation; they also raised the need to ensure the use of the acquired knowledge and skills, as the knowledge that is not being used becomes meaningless and is forgotten. This problem is comprehensively identified by Meredith et al. (2011) in their evaluation of the psychological resilience development system in the US Army. Their study identified the following key problems: lack of support or endorsement from military leadership, logistical issues (such as maintaining adequate staffing, coordinating events, and finding appropriate working space), and lack of sustainable funding.

Another challenge for resilience development is the lack of a unified and as accurate as possible framework to measure resilience. Thompson and Dobbins (2018) and McLarnon et al. (2021) state that the lack of a mutually agreed-upon standard for resilience makes it difficult to compare studies and measure the efficacy of resilience interventions. According to Fisher and Law (2021), there are a number of resilience scales commonly used as self-assessment tools. However, it is also necessary to recognize the limitations of this approach, including social desirability, careless responses to survey questions, and common method bias when other variables of interest are also measured with self-report scales. It is, therefore, worth considering other measurement tools that can help to pro-

fessionally assess the effectiveness of training for the individual and the organization.

The importance of resilience training and challenges of this process identified in the literature review are relevant, but have not been researched in the Lithuanian Armed Forces context.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the challenges of the training in resilience of military personnel in the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

2. METHOD

The method of collecting empirical data was individual in-depth interviews. This method is suitable to obtain detailed information about the phenomenon under study from each research participant personally, by analyzing individual experiences, attitudes, and perspectives related to the research problem (Silverman, 2017).

The study involved eight participants, military psychologists working in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The selection of subjects was based on nonprobability criterion sampling, where sample units are selected purposively from the population in accordance with the criteria set by the researcher, allowing for the collection of high-quality research data while providing the necessary reliability and breadth of the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). The following selection criteria were established for the study participants: military psychologists currently working/serving in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, with at least five years of service, and involved in military resilience training. In the initial planning of the study, 12 potential informants were selected, but four were rejected as not fully meeting the selection criteria; that is, they were not involved in processes of resilience training in the last year. Thus, the study achieved a saturation effect. After six informants, the responses started to repeat themselves, but two more informants were interviewed to get a more complete picture and to ensure the reliability of the study. All participants took part in the study voluntarily, gave their verbal agreement, and were informed in advance of the research questions. The study followed the guidelines of the European Code of Conduct for Research Ethics (ALLEA, 2023) and was carried

out in accordance with fundamental ethical principles such as freedom of participation and privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. The names of the participants or other personally identifiable information are not published. For the analysis of the survey results, informants were coded using the code I (informant) and a number (e.g., first informant: I1). Detailed demographic characteristics of the informants are not provided due to organizational specificities and security considerations.

Guidelines for interview research questions were formulated based on theoretical assumptions related to understanding both the concept of resilience training in a military context (Nindl et al., 2018; Labrague et al., 2018; Haghshenas et al., 2020) and the challenges associated with resilience training in the military (Meredith et al., 2011; Thompson & Dobbins, 2018; Zanesco et al., 2019; Brassington & Lomas, 2021; Tannenbaum et al., 2024). The interviews sought (1) to identify how resilience is understood in the Lithuanian Armed Forces; (2) to assess the current situation of resilience training; and (3) to identify the challenges of resilience training in the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

The interviews were conducted between March and October 2023 through face-to-face meetings, by telephone, and via the Zoom platform. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The duration of the interviews ranged from 40 to 90 minutes and covered the entire conversation.

Qualitative thematic analysis was chosen to analyze the data collected during the interviews. The choice was based on Clarke and Braun's (2013) assumptions that

- (1) the method can be applied to large or small datasets;
- (2) it is suitable for addressing a range of research questions, from questions about people's experiences or understandings to questions about the representation and construction of particular phenomena in particular contexts; and
- (3) it can be applied to data- or theory-driven analysis.

Thematic analysis allows for the discovery of overt or hidden themes, meanings, and patterns in a text (Bryman, 2018). The analysis followed the thematic analysis model of Braun and Clarke (2006) and Squires (2023). The aim was to maintain reliability and coherence in the analysis of the data, and therefore, the data were analyzed by two researchers. During the analysis, the texts were broken into specific units of analysis, forming subtopics, which were combined into themes based on their similar meanings.

3. RESULTS

The analysis of the study results followed a research logic, which first identifies the informants' perceptions of resilience definition and factors influencing the resilience training, then presents the evaluation of the current situation of resilience training in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, and finally identifies the particular challenges of resilience training in the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

The analysis of the informants' views on the concept of resilience, at the theoretical level, reveals a broad spectrum of concepts, which basically covers three areas such as the interaction between the military and society, the individual soldier's resilience, but with an additional emphasis on the soldier's psychological resilience (Table 1).

As the results show, the study participants identified no single approach to building resilience. They stated that the army is a reflection of society, and resilience can be analyzed in organizational, team, individual, and other contexts. The informants' definitions of resilience ranged from the broadly understood resilience of the individual to the professional distinction of resilience as a soldier, referring to the ability to adapt and bounce back while maintaining a balance. According to the informants, particular attention must be paid to increasing soldiers' psychological resilience, which relates to the ability to function effectively physically and emotionally in a constantly changing environment.

Considering that resilience is influenced by a wide range of factors, it is important to identify the diversity of factors that affect soldiers as members of an organization with a specific function.

Table 1. Informant diversity of opinion in defining the concept of resilience

Subtopics of the concept of resilience	Supporting statements
Relationship between the army and society	"The military environment is different from the civilian environment" (I6) "A soldier is also a human being: with feelings, with life experience" (I2)
Soldier's resilience	"It is important for a soldier to be able to bounce back from events on the battlefield and carry on" (I1) "To be able to withstand, both physically and psychologically, as long as necessary" (I8) "Resilience is one of the most important things; without it <...> a soldier will do nothing on the battlefield" (I5)
Physical and psychological resilience of the soldier	"...has many components that are significant in both military and civilian contexts" (I7) "It is about self-awareness and self-control, mental health literacy, communication skills" (I4) "Emotional intelligence, emotion control, <...> time management" (I7) "Physical, that your body is capable of doing it and psychological <...> your brain is able to endure as long as it takes" (I8)

Table 2. Factors that influence the resilience of soldiers

Subtopics of factors affecting soldiers' resilience	Supporting statements
Personal characteristics and life experience	"Comes into the army <...> as a person with a past, with a certain level of maturity" (I4) "The most resilient should be those middle-aged <...> or all <...> if they have recovered from various traumas <...> before" (I1)
Family	"The relationship with their parents, the crises that occurred, the things that are typical of certain developmental stages, how they overcame or did not overcome them" (I2) "What they got from their family, what kind of development they had in their family" (I4)
The influence of the team and commanders	"...it is very important who are around: the platoon, the commanders" (I1) "The team's cohesion, the commander's support, and the organization's attitude toward continuous learning" (I8)
Training	"Training can also influence a person's motivation to build personal resilience through self-development and performing tasks and following instructions" (I3) "Training provides knowledge, can demonstrate skills or shape a warrior" (I4)

The four main groups that influence the resilience of the soldiers' are (Table 2) personal characteristics and life experiences, the influence of family on personal maturity, the importance of immediate commanders and the team, and training. Informants emphasized the importance of the personal qualities and life experiences of soldiers. They pointed out that those soldiers who have personal qualities, such as self-efficacy, proactivity, motivation, and responsiveness related to their overall life context, are resilient to changes or unexpected situations. However, this context also highlights the role of the family as a resilience enhancer factor, which acts as a source of positive attitudes and support from family members and as an environment of trust and understanding. In addition to the aforementioned, informants also pointed to the internal relationships between participants in the organization, indicating that the development and maintenance of resilience is directly linked to the influence of those in charge through their choice of leadership style, behavior, and ability to motivate. The informants considered that training plays an important role in de-

veloping resilience to both internal and external influences in a positive way, helping all members of the organization to improve in terms of knowledge, relationship building, and psychological development.

Therefore, the study sought to find out how the participants perceive the current situation of resilience training in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. The informants focused on six areas related to both the development of the resilience training system and its organization (Table 3).

Summarizing the opinions of the informants, it became clear that the requirements for resilience development should be included in the requirements of the Commander of the Lithuanian Armed Forces for military training. The research participants, evaluating the current situation, positively assessed the fact that raising the issue of resilience at the highest level creates prerequisites for creating a resilience training system in the army. The informants were convinced that the resilience training process would be more effective if it were or-

Table 3. Subtopics of the evaluation of the resilience training system of the Lithuanian Armed Forces highlighted by informants

Subtopics of the evaluation of the resilience training system	Supporting statements
Resilience training system	<p>"Resilience training needs time, a systematic approach, and not to be taught in isolation" (I6)</p> <p>"Resilience training system for soldiers is currently being developed <...>, but the system as a mechanism is still missing" (I7)</p>
Building resilience as a team effort led by a commander	<p>"Different military units live different lives, making it difficult to combine a uniform system" (I6)</p> <p>"...the commanders are responsible for creating the overall atmosphere and distributing the workload, because <...> it is often the case that heavier workload is given to those who are capable of dealing with it, and in the long run <...> those people suffer from cumulative stress" (I8)</p>
Role of military psychologists	<p>"Basically live the life of the unit" (I5)</p> <p>"They do counseling and training" (I2)</p> <p>"From a psychologist's point of view as an employee, the army supports and backs me. So initiatives are possible. But what can one do when the workload is heavy and there is no system" (I4)</p>
Significance of a resilience-building programs	<p>It could integrate areas such as "problem-solving skills, networking, communication, fitness training, etc., to be combined into soldier resilience training" (I8)</p>
Importance of practical sessions	<p>"There is not enough the time and topics <...> more practice is needed" (I1)</p> <p>"In the practice, in the form of game various exercises are done <...> for breathing, shifting attention, changing attitudes" (I2)</p>
Importance of feedback	<p>"All courses are beneficial for resilience, but we don't know what and where specifically" (I8)</p> <p>"Feedback is mostly verbal <...> at the end of the workshop" (I6)</p> <p>"Feedback helps to determine what topics were relevant to the person and what they took away from the course" (I7)</p>

ganized in a targeted, focused, and systematic way. Commanders are important in resilience training because they can mobilize the team, motivate soldiers to develop resilience, and integrate daily practical and cognitive activities into the resilience training process. Therefore, the study participants consider it important to provide separate training for commanders on resilience development. The study participants indicated that military psychologists creatively adapted a variety of training programs to resilience training. The informants highlighted the importance of mental health in dealing with traumatic events and their aftermath to help soldiers regain resilience and balance. Therefore, in the opinion of the informants, there is a need to develop a resilience education curriculum that could be updated every few years, taking into account environmental factors and the security situation. In addition, informants consider that continuous feedback is essential for situational awareness, evaluation, and process improvement. Regular feedback from soldiers could demonstrate the usefulness and effectiveness of resilience workshops.

The study participants identified the main problem areas and challenges related to resilience training. Firstly, the duration of the resilience training. On the one hand, informants identified that very little time is spent on resilience training;

on the other hand, they realize that the longer the duration of the training/workshops, e.g., 3-5 days, the harder it is to "take a soldier out of service for a while" (I8). Summarizing the informants' views, the optimal option is to give all conscripts two full days of training, followed by another two days of training six months later. This could be followed by periodic short annual refresher seminars of a couple of hours each. This would ensure the development of resilience knowledge and skills, continuity of training, and effective feedback.

Secondly, there is a need for differentiation of training according to the length of service, experience, and command responsibility. Higher commanders and unit commanders shape the attitudes of the lower-ranking soldiers toward resilience development and the importance of resilience in the life of a soldier. They are also the ones who can establish the resilience development process as a systematic one.

Thirdly, the informants indicated a lack of qualified staff, the workload for psychologists is huge, and "people are overloaded with work, they cannot keep up" (I1).

Fourthly, the military psychologists noted that military instructors lack understanding of the

process of developing soldiers, they “do not know what their soldiers have learned, what benefits they have received <...> and there is no reflection” (18). This situation can hurt resilience development as a systemic training process.

Fifthly, the lack of a feedback system in the resilience development process may have negative consequences not only for the effectiveness of training but also for the development of a comprehensive resilience training system and its significance in the daily activities of soldiers.

4. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the research results shows that the need for and importance of resilience development in the Lithuanian Armed Forces are understood and supported. Given the complexity of the concept of resilience, the position of Vanhove et al. (2016) and Kho et al. (2023) that resilience development in soldiers takes place through a variety of training programs, in which the protective factors that are being developed overlap with those that are being developed in other types of interventions, is not excluded. Therefore, national and international military exercises, crisis management exercises, basic soldier course, etc., organized by the Lithuanian Armed Forces relatively satisfy the aspects of resilience development. Nevertheless, these are fragmented trainings, which, according to the informants, often lack continuity and effective feedback.

The results suggest that the military psychologists in the Lithuanian Armed Forces use a variety of educational programs that are not systematically focused on resilience training. Therefore, a new resilience tool, based on a common conceptual framework and a list of factors, could be applied to different groups of military personnel according to their experience and the specifics of the functions they perform in service. This is particularly relevant as Vanhove et al. (2016) and Brassington and Lomas (2021) highlight the importance of both educational differentiation and the use of knowledge and skills. A conceptually structured resilience training program is likely to move toward the desired effective outcome.

The survey revealed a rather positive attitude of the structural unit commanders of the Lithuanian

Armed Forces toward initiatives related to the organization of training. However, a key challenge has emerged that resilience training is organized on the initiative of staff, but there is no unified regulated system. Therefore, only the goodwill of the commander can lead to the implementation of these initiatives. Another problem relates to the involvement of military personnel in the training, i.e., according to the informants, it is difficult to divert the military personnel from their direct functions for a few days. One possible way to gain management support is to provide a clear explanation of the benefits of the results of such training to the commander and their subordinates and to justify how the program supports the values of the military and achieves the organization’s tasks and objectives. However, given the specific nature of the institution, it is likely that this issue should be addressed at a higher management level.

Resilience training of personnel was highlighted in the answers provided by the informants but would require more detailed research in the future. However, it is assumed that trainers who are directly involved in resilience development do not themselves understand the value, benefits, and relevance of their work. This may reduce their motivation and engagement in the development process. This echoes Zanesco et al. (2019) and Gutierrez et al. (2021) that the effectiveness of training depends primarily on the competence of the trainer.

Discussing the impact of the training programs on military personnel, the informants highlighted two key aspects: (1) the continuous updating in line with the challenges faced by the army, i.e., they must be responsive to the current needs of the army, and (2) the knowledge and skills acquired during the training must be used or continuously updated. This is in line with the finding of Vanhove et al. (2016) that if protective factors developed during resilience building remain unused, this leads to a reduced resilience effect in the long run. Continuous training provides a platform for the application and deepening of acquired knowledge and skills. The topics and courses suggested by the informants are only hypothetical and would require further discussion. Regular updating and differentiation of courses according to levels (service and management experience, qualifications,

length of service, etc.) is essential. Repetitive or irrelevant training creates a perception of low priority and inhibits the perception of relevance and necessity of the courses among the troops.

The development of a feedback and evaluation system in the Lithuanian Armed Forces is one of the priority areas of the resilience training process. Although the informants indicated that they use evaluation scales in individual cases, they do it unsystematically and mostly on their initiative. A common agreement on the choice and use of the assessment system would likely ensure quality feedback for the organization, the trainers, and the learner. This is in line with Oprins et al. (2024), who state that research on the predictive value of the instruments used serves to improve the selection process at a practical level and increases knowledge of the added value of selecting for resilience at a theoretical level. Given that the informants reported high levels of occupation and time constraints for those involved in the resilience training process, it is likely that closer collaboration between researchers and program implementers would allow for an improvement of the resilience training process. Systematic research provides generalized findings and recommendations that can be used to improve education programs. This resonates with the theory of McInerney et al. (2022). The environment dynamically influences

an individual's resilience. Developing a resilience curriculum that includes an assessment of personal and environmental factors could help to link existing programs with empirically-based theory that would help to uncover the impact of existing programs and the mechanisms of change, the interplay of environmental factors, and the potential for more nuanced outcomes.

The study has several limitations. This survey revealed key aspects of the resilience training process improvement. However, to further substantiate the insights gained, it is worthwhile to investigate not only the views of military psychologists, but also to deepen the research by interviewing both those at the leadership level, i.e., at the strategic level, and the soldiers involved in the resilience training system. The second limitation is that the content of the resilience training programs was not analyzed. In the future, a detailed assessment of the content of existing programs in the Lithuanian Armed Forces and the possibility of developing a standardized integrated resilience training program based on these programs should be carried out. Another important aspect is that resilience training assessment systems have not been discussed and analyzed, and therefore, the recommendations made are assumptions that require expert assessment in the future as to their feasibility for use in the armed forces.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to identify the situation of resilience training in the Lithuanian Armed Forces and the challenges related to this process. The analysis revealed no unified definition of resilience in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Therefore, its development and content are and can be understood in very different ways, which implies the challenge of creating a unified resilience training system. However, resilience and resilience training have been stated to focus on the ability to function effectively (both physically and emotionally) in a constantly changing environment. The study identified that resilience training in the Lithuanian Armed Forces is perceived as a system that includes individual characteristics and family and organizational influences. Therefore, when developing resilience development models, it is necessary to assess and take into account factors of individual's personal qualities and experience, the influence of family on personal maturity, and organizational factors such as the importance of direct commanders and team and training. The study also showed that the need for resilience training in Lithuanian Armed Forces is high, but the development process itself is fragmented. The development of a unified and systematic concept of a resilience training system would lead to more effective resilience training of military personnel. It is recommended to have a clear policy defining the implementation guidelines for the resilience training program and a clear allocation of implementation roles among the responsible authorities/military units or responsibilities.

Three main challenges were identified when analyzing the organizational issues of resilience building. The first one is related to the positive attitude of the leaders of the Lithuanian Armed Forces' structural units toward initiatives related to the organization of resilience training, but it is left to the initiative of the personnel of individual military units. Therefore, the support of the highest level of commanders in addressing this challenge is essential. The second challenge relates to the training of trainers or those responsible for resilience training. The results highlighted that trainers often do not understand the value, benefits, and relevance of their work. This highlights the need for qualified staff training. The third area of concern relates to the need for the development and use of a system of feedback and evaluation, which is currently carried out at the discretion of the trainers without any system being followed.

In order to solve the identified challenges of resilience training of military personnel in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, it would be appropriate to include specific resilience training courses in the Lithuanian Armed Forces personnel training program and provide for the timing of their implementation. Moreover, it is vital to provide for regular and differentiated implementation of the courses that match the competence and experience of the military personnel, improve the training of instructors or persons in charge of the resilience training, and develop a feedback and evaluation system.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Dalia Prakapienė, Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Data curation: Dalia Prakapienė, Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Formal analysis: Dalia Prakapienė, Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Funding acquisition: Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Investigation: Dalia Prakapienė, Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Methodology: Dalia Prakapienė.

Project administration: Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Resources: Dalia Prakapienė, Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Supervision: Dalia Prakapienė, Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Validation: Dalia Prakapienė, Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Writing – original draft: Dalia Prakapienė, Rolanda Kazlauskaitė Markelienė.

Writing – review & editing: Dalia Prakapienė.

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