

UDC 159.98:355.1



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## FEATURES OF MILITARY PERSONNEL'S ATTITUDES WITH DIFFERENT SOCIOMETRIC STATUSES TOWARDS MANIFESTATIONS OF DESTRUCTIVE LEADERSHIP IN MILITARY COLLECTIVES

*The modern scientific and theoretical studies on leadership issues in military collectives have been analyzed and summarized. Forms of destructive leadership that may manifest in the professional activities of National Guard of Ukraine personnel have been identified and proposed. The attitudes of military personnel with different sociometric statuses towards manifestations of destructive leadership in military collectives have been highlighted.*

**Keywords:** leadership, military leadership, destructive leadership, leadership behavior, sociometric status, military collective.

**Statement of the problem.** Military leadership stimulates positive changes in the activities of troops (forces), focusing on motivation and interaction with personnel. It is one of the key components for achieving effective command and management in the National Guard of Ukraine [1].

Interpersonal interactions between commanders and subordinates, based on the principles of military leadership, are determined by a set of psychological characteristics. These characteristics, manifested in specific forms, may have an official or informal nature and, consequently, influence the quality of performing service (combat) tasks. The role and position of commanders in the military-professional environment, the cohesion of military collectives, the maintenance of a positive socio-psychological climate within units, and other psychological aspects of interaction between service members remain critical elements for the successful operation of any unit.

Most researchers traditionally focus on factors associated with effective leadership, assuming that ineffective management is typically due to a lack of leadership. However, research into the destructive aspects of leadership shows that they include manifestations of destructive behavior that extend beyond simply a lack of effective leadership behavior [2–9].

The success of military leaders has always depended on upholding military ethics – a set of enduring moral principles, values, beliefs, and laws

that guide the military and create the culture of trust essential for professionals during missions and duties [10].

Destructive leadership, on the other hand, undermines collectives from within, as it is more than just poor leadership. It represents a consistent abuse of power and influence to the detriment of subordinates.

The study of destructive leadership manifestations is now as crucial, if not more so, than understanding and enhancing the positive aspects of constructive leadership. This is because a leader's destructive behavior – especially that of an official superior – leads to decreased subordinate motivation to innovate, dissatisfaction with work, and other consequences that hinder organizational development overall [2].

Thus, understanding, timely identification, and prevention of destructive leadership forms are essential for ensuring the effective functioning of military collectives. Additionally, identifying the psychological characteristics of destructive leadership manifestations remains a relevant area of study for many domestic and international researchers.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Analysis of scientific and theoretical sources indicates that distinguishing between constructive and destructive aspects of leadership is a distinct area of research in leadership theory. In recent

years, this has been confirmed by significant interest among researchers in the "dark" side of leadership.

A review of approaches to defining the essence of destructive leadership reveals that researcher, alongside terms such as "tyrannical leadership," "toxic leadership," "destructive leadership," "despotic leadership," and "anti-organizational leadership," have identified both commonalities and differences in describing and interpreting this phenomenon. Domestic and foreign researchers have examined the features of destructive behavior among leaders within interpersonal interactions and its impact on the effectiveness of joint activities [4, 8–12].

For example, V. Karpenko (2021) analyzed the formation of the concept of leadership in military-scientific research, explored the multifaceted nature of this concept, and proposed the term "military leadership." This term, accounting for the specifics of management and military-professional activities, was defined as a key set of professionally significant qualities of an individual that determine the ability to influence the personality and behavior of other military personnel to achieve defined goals [3].

Destructive (toxic) leadership refers to systematic behaviors by a leader, manager, or supervisor that violate the legitimate interests of an organization by undermining and/or sabotaging its goals, tasks, resources, and efficiency, as well as the motivation, well-being, or job satisfaction of subordinates [2].

Thomas Hall Fosse, along with other authors (2019), conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of scientific studies on active and passive forms of destructive leadership in a military context. Their results showed that passive and active forms of destructive leadership in the military environment equally contribute to negative phenomena within units. Effective strategies to address the consequences of such manifestations must target both active and passive forms of destructive leader behavior [4].

Significant attention to destructive leadership research is given within the British Armed Forces. The Centre for Army Leadership [5] at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst regularly publishes views of officials on effective and destructive leadership in military settings. Moreover, in 2021, the Centre developed the Army Leadership Doctrine (AC 72029, Army Leadership Doctrine), which, in addition to key concepts essential for understanding the military approach to leadership, proposed the "ten diseases of leadership" and introduced the "toxic triangle of leadership" [6].

International sources [4, 6, 11] state that toxic leadership is based on three elements: the destructive leader, susceptible followers, and a conducive environment. This interaction is interpreted as a toxic triangle comprising the personal qualities and values of the leader, the hopes, fears, and motivations of those who choose to follow the leader, and the characteristics of the environment. Toxic leadership is chronic in nature, and if ignored, it can undermine the entire organization.

Given the above, studying the psychological characteristics of destructive leadership manifestations in military collectives remains a relevant research area, requiring a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, particularly in the context of the specific professional activities of the country's security and defense forces.

**The purpose of the article** is to determine the features of military personnel's attitudes with different sociometric statuses towards manifestations of destructive leadership in military collectives, focusing on their significance for National Guard of Ukraine personnel.

**Summary of the main material.** In a previous study [13], it was established that interpersonal interaction between commanders and personnel is influenced by a set of psychological characteristics. These characteristics are particularly expressed in specific manifestations of constructive leadership, which have distinct perceptions depending on the sociometric status of the military personnel. Furthermore, the evaluation of constructive leadership manifestations by personnel in their collectives is dependent on their sociometric status, a factor that should be considered by commanding officers when implementing influence measures to ensure effective fulfillment of service (combat) tasks.

The military environment is characterized by threatening and life-endangering conditions. To overcome the stress faced by military leaders, an optimal combination of professional skills, specialized psychological knowledge, willpower, and cohesive teamwork among all personnel is necessary. The needs to make decisions and the high level of responsibility for their consequences in combat situations are primary factors in the formation, establishment, and development of military leaders [1].

To investigate the attitudes of military personnel toward manifestations of destructive leadership in military collectives, the following algorithm was applied:

1. Conducting a scientific-theoretical analysis and summarizing contemporary studies on the issue of destructive leadership in military collectives.

2. Determining the individual sociometric status of military personnel using the non-parametric sociometric method.

3. Identifying the presence and forms of destructive leadership manifestations in military collectives.

4. Determining the perceptions of National Guard of Ukraine personnel with different sociometric statuses about the significance of destructive leadership manifestations in military collectives.

5. Performing qualitative and quantitative analyses of the collected data.

The study involved 104 military personnel (65 men and 39 women) pursuing higher military education at the National Academy of the National Guard of Ukraine, all holding different formal statuses.

To identify the forms of destructive leadership manifestations and their significance in military collectives, the following tools were utilized:

– Destrudo-L Questionnaire [12], comprising 20 statements designed to identify forms of destructive leadership manifestations in military collectives;

– A questionnaire to determine the significance of destructive leadership manifestations, which presented the 20 statements from the previous questionnaire for ranking these manifestations.

To compare indicators between groups, the Student's t-test for independent samples and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were applied.

In the first stage of the study, to determine the peculiarities of destructive leadership's impact on military personnel, their sociometric status was established. For this purpose, a non-parametric version of the sociometric method, developed by J. Moreno, was used. The data on the individual sociometric status of military personnel allowed the formation of three sample groups: high sociometric status (27.9 %), neutral sociometric status (43.3 %) and low sociometric status (28.8 %).

In the second stage, a survey was conducted using the Destrudo-L Questionnaire to identify forms of destructive leadership manifestations in military collectives. The survey results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Comparative Characteristics of the Presence and Forms of Destructive Leadership Manifestations in Military Collectives (Assessment by Military Personnel with Different Sociometric Statuses) (*X*, points)

No.	Forms of Destructive Leadership Manifestations in Military Collectives	Group			F	Value
		1	2	3		
1	A person behaves arrogantly, condescendingly, impudently	2.70	2.76	2.97	0.40	-
2	A person treats different people differently, with prejudice and unfairness	2.97	3.02	2.66	0.61	-
3	A person unpleasant, ungrateful, unfriendly	2.03	2.11	2.10	0.06	-
4	A person demonstrates a tendency towards aggressive behavior	1.43	1.29	1.45	0.60	-
5	A person suppresses the intellectual abilities of subordinates	2.80	2.58	2.48	0.42	-
6	A person uses threats to sway others to their own opinion	1.80	1.82	2.10	0.56	-
7	A person indulges or punishes subordinates who makes mistakes or fail to achieve set goals	2.03	2.09	1.90	0.19	-
8	A person makes unreasonable demands, demands the impossible	1.73	1.29	1.69	2.68	0.05
9	A person claims the achievements of subordinates as their own	2.20	2.02	2.07	0.13	-
10	A person puts their own needs above those of the group	2.07	1.98	2.03	0.04	-
11	A person shows distrust towards subordinates	2.23	2.27	2.38	0.11	-
12	A person is unwilling to oppose others, does not stand up for their own position	2.17	2.02	2.14	0.11	-
13	A person does not keep promises	2.40	2.09	2.07	0.60	-
14	A person does not stand out, does not assert themselves among subordinates	1.90	1.69	2.03	0.99	-
15	A person shows no active interest (in people, events, phenomena)	2.27	1.93	2.24	0.78	-
16	A person takes a passive approach to management, does not take control	1.93	1.60	1.90	1.12	-
17	A person demonstrates uncertainty when performing their role	1.90	1.53	1.79	1.38	-
18	A person poorly plans and organizes activities	2.27	2.20	2.28	0.04	-
19	A person gives unclear, vague instructions	2.30	2.24	2.41	0.15	-
20	A person acts confused	1.70	1.76	1.76	0.04	-

The obtained results allow for the following conclusions.

1. Statistically significant differences were identified in how military personnel with varying sociometric statuses perceive manifestations of destructive leadership, specifically regarding commander's unreasonable demands and expectations for the impossible from subordinates. It is worth noting that such differences among the sample groups were primarily driven by the perception of this form of destructive leadership by military personnel with a medium sociometric status. Their scores were comparatively lower than those of the other groups in the sample. This can be explained by the fact that commanders, when assigning tasks, tend to rely on individuals they can count on. Due to the responsibility associated with such tasks, this category of military personnel may experience increased demands regarding task execution. Meanwhile, military personnel with a low sociometric status, due to their limited authority, may perceive such demands as overly high.

2. An analysis of the study's results revealed certain trends in how destructive leadership is perceived by military personnel of different sociometric statuses. These trends are expressed as follows:

– as the sociometric status of military personnel increases, so does their sensitivity to perceptions of destructive leadership, particularly when

commanders fail to fulfill promises or suppress the intellectual abilities of their subordinates;

– as the sociometric status of military personnel decreases, their sensitivity to manifestations of arrogance, insolence, and mistrust from commanders increases. Additionally, they are more likely to experience threats and pressure to align with the commander's perspective.

The trends in increasing and decreasing perceptions of manifestations of destructive leadership among military personnel with varying sociometric statuses are illustrated in Figure 1.

3. The most prevalent manifestations of destructive leadership in military units, as perceived by military personnel with different sociometric statuses, were found to be consistent and predominantly exhibited by commanders in the following forms:

– arrogant, condescending, and insolent behavior;

– unequal treatment of different people, displaying bias and unfairness;

– suppression of subordinates' intellectual abilities.

Military personnel with various sociometric statuses also identified the least prevalent forms of destructive leadership in their units, which include:

– tendency toward violent behavior;

– confused behavior;

– imposing unreasonable demands that require impossible task execution.

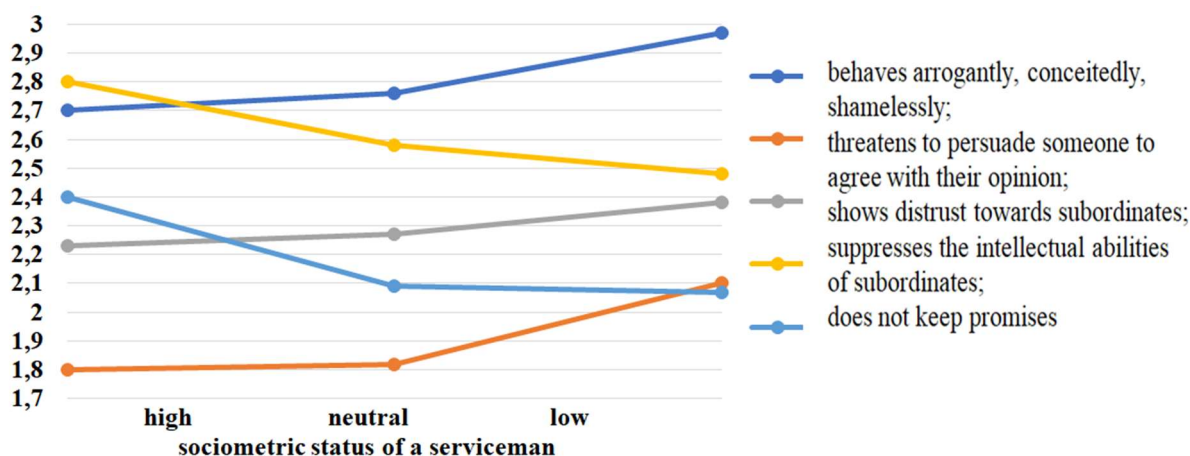


Figure 1 – Trends in the increase and decrease of perceptions of forms of destructive leadership by military personnel with different sociometric statuses

4. The results enabled the identification of forms of destructive leadership and a comparison of their perceptions by military personnel with high and low sociometric statuses.

The comparison of ranked positions of destructive leadership manifestations revealed that military personnel with low sociometric statuses, unlike those with high sociometric statuses, are more sensitive to confused behavior, a tendency toward violent behavior, and threats by commanders to force their opinion.

Military personnel with high sociometric statuses believe that shortcomings in planning and organizing activities, as well as the lack of active interest in people, events, and phenomena on the part of commanders, are more pronounced compared to those with low sociometric statuses.

In the next stage, the significance of the forms of destructive leadership in military units was assessed using the questionnaire on the significance of forms of destructive leadership in military units. The results are presented in Table 2.

From the analysis of Table 2, the following generalizations can be made:

1. Several statistically significant differences were identified in the importance of destructive leadership manifestations as perceived by military personnel with different sociometric statuses. It was found that for military personnel with low sociometric statuses, destructive leadership behaviors – such as commanders' threats to impose their opinions, unreasonable demands, expectations of the impossible, and unpleasant, ungrateful, or unapproachable behavior – are of greater significance compared to those with high sociometric statuses. At the same time, behaviors such as commanders showing distrust toward subordinates, failing to fulfill promises, lacking active interest in people, events, and phenomena, and failing to stand out or assert themselves among subordinates are more significant to military personnel with high sociometric statuses than to those with low statuses.

Table 2 – Assessment of the significance of destructive leadership forms by military personnel with different sociometric statuses (average rank)

No.	Forms of Destructive Leadership Manifestations in Military Collectives	Group			F	Value
		1	2	3		
1	A person behaves arrogantly, condescendingly, impudently	8.90	8.09	6.76	1.18	–
2	A person treats different people differently, with prejudice and unfairness	8.87	8.34	7.07	0.83	–
3	A person unpleasant, ungrateful, unfriendly	11.13	12.23	9.34	2.71	0.05
4	A person demonstrates a tendency towards aggressive behavior	6.97	6.09	6.59	0.20	–
5	A person suppresses the intellectual abilities of subordinates	8.03	8.18	6.90	0.51	–
6	A person uses threats to sway others to their own opinion	12.10	7.91	7.31	7.72	0.001
7	A person indulges or punishes subordinates who makes mistakes or fail to achieve set goals	11.23	9.55	9.83	0.82	–
8	A person makes unreasonable demands, demands the impossible	12.27	8.39	9.38	5.08	0.01
9	A person claims the achievements of subordinates as their own	11.30	11.32	9.48	1.20	–
10	A person puts their own needs above those of the group	10.47	9.77	10.83	0.37	–
11	A person shows distrust towards subordinates	10.70	12.45	13.38	2.40	0.05
12	A person is unwilling to oppose others, does not stand up for their own position	11.77	10.66	12.00	0.70	–
13	A person does not keep promises	7.50	9.48	11.24	3.72	0.03
14	A person does not stand out, does not assert themselves among subordinates	12.00	15.02	14.97	4.64	0.01
15	A person shows no active interest (in people, events, phenomena)	10.90	13.91	13.38	3.71	0.03
16	A person takes a passive approach to management, does not take control	10.33	11.25	12.69	1.28	–
17	A person demonstrates uncertainty when performing their role	11.77	12.34	12.76	0.24	–
18	A person poorly plans and organizes activities	11.80	10.98	12.10	0.35	–
19	A person gives unclear, vague instructions	10,00	10.68	10.31	0.12	–
20	A person acts confused	11.33	12.84	12.72	0.55	–

2. Analyzing the obtained results reveals the most important forms of destructive leadership for military personnel with high sociometric statuses:

- demonstrating a tendency toward violent behavior;
- failing to fulfill promises;
- instances where commanders suppress subordinates' intellectual abilities.

Conversely, the forms of destructive leadership that received the lowest significance ratings from this category of military personnel include:

- failing to stand out or assert themselves among subordinates;
- threatening to impose their opinions;
- imposing unreasonable demands or expecting the impossible.

On the other hand, military personnel with low sociometric statuses assign importance to the following forms of destructive leadership:

- demonstrating a tendency toward violent behavior;
- commanders displaying arrogance, condescension, and insolence;
- instances where commanders suppress subordinates' intellectual abilities.

This category of military personnel places less significance on such destructive leadership forms as:

- displaying distrust toward subordinates;
- lacking active interest (in people, events, phenomena);

- failing to stand out or assert themselves among subordinates.

Therefore, the study concludes that military personnel with different sociometric statuses consider certain forms of destructive leadership to be either important or unimportant, depending on whether or not they are exhibited in the collective. The results reflecting the presence and significance of destructive leadership forms for military personnel with high sociometric statuses are presented in Table 3.

Analysis of Table 3 indicates the presence of forms of destructive leadership in military units that are significant for military personnel with high sociometric status. It should be noted that although these forms exhibit weak manifestation from commanders, they hold significance for this category of personnel. Demonstrations of tendencies toward violent behavior, though not evident in interpersonal interactions, are significant for military personnel with high sociometric status. Furthermore, for this group of military personnel, there are no insignificant forms of destructive leadership that are manifested. This suggests that any form of destructive leadership is likely to be significant for this category of personnel and could, accordingly, have a negative impact.

Table 4 presents a summary of the forms of destructive leadership and their significance for military personnel with low sociometric status.

Table 3 – Forms of destructive leadership and their significance for military personnel with high sociometric statuses

Forms of destructive leadership		
	manifest	do not manifest
Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– does not fulfill promises;</li> <li>– suppresses the intellectual abilities of subordinates;</li> <li>– acts arrogantly, condescendingly, and insolently;</li> <li>– treats different people differently, showing bias and unfairness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– demonstrates a tendency toward violent behavior</li> </ul>
Insignificant	<p>There are no insignificant forms of destructive leadership manifestations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– does not stand out or assert themselves among subordinates;</li> <li>– sets unreasonable demands, expecting the impossible;</li> <li>– threatens to impose their own opinion</li> </ul>

Table 4 – Forms of destructive leadership and their significance for military personnel with low sociometric status

Forms of destructive leadership		
	manifest	do not manifest
Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– behaves arrogantly, condescendingly, and insolently;</li> <li>– suppresses the intellectual abilities of subordinates;</li> <li>– treats different people unequally, with bias and injustice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– demonstrates a tendency toward violent behavior</li> </ul>
Insignificant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– demonstrates distrust toward subordinates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– takes a passive attitude towards management, does not take control into their own hands;</li> <li>– behaves confusedly;</li> <li>– demonstrates uncertainty while performing their role</li> </ul>

From the analysis of Table 4, the following conclusions can be drawn: military personnel with low sociometric status, like those with high sociometric status, perceive manifestations of destructive leadership expressed through the arrogant, conceited, and audacious behavior of commanders, attempts to suppress the intellectual abilities of subordinates, and biased, unfair, and inconsistent treatment of different people. While these manifestations did not receive high scores as being present, they are significant for both sample groups. Similarly, the attitude towards destructive leadership, such as the tendency of commanders to exhibit violent behavior, which does not manifest in interpersonal interactions between commanders and subordinates, is still considered a significant form of manifestation. Furthermore, military personnel with low sociometric status sense distrust from commanders but do not assign significance to such behavior.

### Conclusions

The study of leadership phenomena in the military environment is gaining increasing relevance, making it one of the priority areas of research. In the professional activities of military personnel, interpersonal interactions are constant and can manifest in both constructive and destructive forms.

The research established that manifestations of destructive leadership in military units are minimal; however, several commonalities, trends, and differences were identified depending on the

sociometric status of the military personnel. Military personnel with varying sociometric statuses equally perceive and assign significance to instances where commanders behave arrogantly, conceitedly, and audaciously, when they attempt to suppress the intellectual abilities of subordinates, and when they exhibit injustice. The tendency of commanders to display violent behavior, while not manifested during interpersonal interactions with subordinates, is significant for all military personnel in the units. For military personnel with high sociometric status, in addition to the already mentioned forms of destructive leadership, failure to fulfill promises by commanders is also a significant factor. Furthermore, there are no insignificant forms of destructive leadership for this group – any form of manifestation would be perceived as significant.

The differences in the perception of destructive leadership forms by military personnel with varying sociometric statuses lie in the significance assigned to forms of destructive leadership that do not manifest in the unit and depend on the level of authority and activity of the personnel.

Thus, the research highlights the attitudes of military personnel with varying sociometric statuses toward manifestations of destructive leadership in military units, which should be taken into account by commanders during interpersonal interactions with their subordinates. Identifying the specific impacts of leadership manifestations on the motivation of military personnel could serve as a promising direction for future research.

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*The article was submitted to the editorial office on 27.11.2024*



УДК 159.98:355.1

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**ОСОБЛИВОСТІ СТАВЛЕННЯ ВІЙСЬКОВОСЛУЖБОВЦІВ  
З РІЗНИМ СОЦІОМЕТРИЧНИМ СТАТУСОМ ДО ПРОЯВІВ ДЕСТРУКТИВНОГО  
ЛІДЕРСТВА У ВІЙСЬКОВИХ КОЛЕКТИВАХ**

*Проаналізовано й узагальнено сучасні науково-теоретичні дослідження військового лідерства. Визначено і запропоновано форми деструктивного лідерства, які проявляються у професійному середовищі військовослужбовців Національної гвардії України. Визначено форми деструктивного лідерства, що демонструють командири у своїй професійній діяльності. З огляду на соціометричний статус військовослужбовців виявлено й проаналізовано тенденції як до зменшення, так і до збільшення сприйняття деструктивних форм лідерства, які демонструють командири. Визначено і проранжовано за значущістю форми деструктивного лідерства, які демонструють командири, для військовослужбовців із різним соціометричним статусом. Виявлено особливості та відмінності форм деструктивного лідерства, які проявляються або не проявляються у військових колективах, та визначено значущість їхнього сприйняття військовослужбовцями з різним соціометричним статусом. Установлено, що військовослужбовці як із високим, так і з низьким соціометричним статусом однаково сприймають і надають значущості випадкам гордовитої, зарозумілої та нахабної поведінки командирів, випадкам, коли командир упереджено, несправедливо, по-різному ставиться до різних людей та пригнічує інтелектуальні здібності підлеглих, а також використовує погрози для досягнення свого, які не продемонстровані командирами, але все ж є вагомими руйнівними чинниками для всіх військовослужбовців. Крім того, встановлено, що для військовослужбовців із високим соціометричним статусом випадки невиконання командиром обіцянок є значущими, а неважливих чинників для них взагалі немає.*

*Результати дослідження можуть бути використані командирами під час міжособистісної взаємодії з підлеглими для більш ефективного впливу у ході виконання професійних завдань.*

**Ключові слова:** лідерство, військове лідерство, деструктивне лідерство, лідерська поведінка, соціометричний статус, військовий колектив.

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