

# **The Power of Teaching**

EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE ON STUDENT MOTIVATION

Sander Overkamp

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1st Supervisor: Dr. Ir. P.W. de Vries

2nd Supervisor: Dr. S.J. Watson

### **Abstract**

This bachelor thesis examines how instructor experience affects the motivation of aspiring Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) to complete their training. The study explores the potential mediating roles of psychological safety, rapport building, and social cohesion between instructor experience and NCOs' motivation. The research involves exploratory methods to gather information, establish connections between key concepts and variables, and understand how these factors impact aspiring NCOs' motivation and success in the initial military training.

Through qualitative interviews, aspiring NCOs were questioned about their perception of psychological safety, and social cohesion within their groups, and experienced rapport between them and the instructors. How these variables affected their motivation to finish the training was crucial throughout the interview. Thematic analysis was performed on the interview data and open coding identified key themes related to the variables. Axial coding grouped codes into broader categories, examining relationships between variables.

The research shows that motivation can somewhat be affected by the behaviour and experience of the instructor. However, this is mainly a short-term effect. The effect on motivation to finish the training appears to be limited. Especially the drive from within and the effect of the group fuel individual's motivation to carry on. The effect of instructor experience on the variables: psychological safety and social cohesion turn out to be either indirect or limited. The effect of experience on rapport does show a closer connection. The effect of psychological safety and social cohesion, both, seem to have a significant impact on motivation, although, social cohesion more than psychological safety. The effect of rapport on motivation is short-term, but the absence of rapport is expected to have a major effect on long-term motivation. Noteworthy, there seems to be a difference between experienced and inexperienced soldiers starting the NCO training.

Although the study shows no direct effect of instructor experience on motivation through two out of three variables, the variables themselves do affect motivation. Since the NCO is pivotal in educating military personnel, educating the NCOs on how to optimally affect social cohesion and psychological safety might be crucial to optimize motivation and increase the success rate of the course.

Keywords: Instructor experience, motivation, psychological safety, social cohesion, rapport

## Introduction

Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the worst security crisis in Europe since the Cold War (Mbah & Wasum, 2022), has prompted European nations to increase defence spending (Fiott, 2022). In response to the geopolitical uncertainty, the Dutch political coalition has announced a significant expansion of the defence budget (Omzien naar elkaar, vooruitkijken naar de toekomst, 2021). The goal is to modernize the armed forces, enhance cooperation with neighbouring European countries, and strengthen the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Royal Netherlands Army, literally with its boots on the ground, plays a crucial role in ensuring freedom, security, and prosperity both within and outside of the Netherlands (Koninklijke Landmacht, n.d.). While technology evolves, the primary factor in military activities of the armed forces is their personnel, necessitating investment in recruitment, training, and retention (Ministerie van Defensie, n.d.). This enables the Dutch armed forces to maintain a motivated and capable workforce dedicated to ensuring everyone's safety.

All military personnel have a rank depending on, among other things, education, training, and experience. The military ranks are roughly divided into three categories: officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and non-officers (privates and corporals). Each category has its own specific characteristics. Officers, for example, make strategic, operational, and tactical decisions which, in turn, are carried out by the subordinate ranks. The professional domain of the officer is typically formulated as “commander, advisor, coach” (HET DOMEIN van de OFFICIER, 2004). The NCOs have their own domain in the work field: “craftsman, leader, and instructor”. Although the craftsman and leader roles are important for the functioning of the army, the role of the instructor ensures the foundation to obtain and retain those motivated servicemen and -women. Vermeulen and Vranken (1998) concluded that the non-commissioned officer instructs officers, other NCOs, corporals, and privates and is the indispensable link between officers and non-officers. Finally, the non-officers are responsible for the effectuation of the orders of the NCOs.

Since military personnel is the most important aspect of the army, it is crucial to train them properly and retain these educated people for military purposes. In its place, this indicates the importance of the non-commissioned officer within the army, because of their domain of instructing. After all, lacking the right ratio of NCOs within the workforce has been proven disastrous in the past but also in the present. Ti (2022) affirms the effect of having a lack of NCOs through his research into the ongoing Russian-Ukraine war. In this case, Russia has almost no NCOs which affects the efficiency of the Russian Military.

By understanding the impact they have on the underlying motivations of aspiring NCOs to complete their training, instructors can adapt their approach and provide the necessary support and guidance to help students achieve their goals. According to Decuyper, Dochy, and Van den Bossche (2010), an optimal learning environment, where students are encouraged to finish their studies, is created when both psychological safety and social cohesion are experienced by those students. Both variables are deemed a direct influence of teachers or instructors, and their experience. They can promote and create a safe and inclusive environment, foster positive relationships amongst students and address conflicts appropriately in the classroom. This might indicate that building rapport between teachers and students is a precondition to establishing the increase of these variables. How students experience these connections between psychological safety, social cohesion and rapport, and how instructor experience can be linked to them, will be explored in this research. It gives insight into personal experience on motivation and possible understanding of potential student drop-out.

Summarizing, the Dutch Royal Army needs to obtain and retain qualified personnel to uphold their obligations to the government. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to ensure that personnel receive appropriate and effective education. To accomplish this, it appears crucial for the army to have experienced NCOs serving as educators, who can foster a positive environment of psychological safety and social cohesion within their classrooms. Additionally, these NCOs should possess the ability to establish rapport with their students. This way student's motivation to finish the training (specifically aspiring NCOs who later can pass through this knowledge) will increase. Although experience improves a person's knowledge of the subject matter, abilities, and productivity over time (Rice, 2010), it has yet not been documented whether the experience of a teacher has a positive or rather hampering effect on the motivation of students, from the standpoint of these students. Therefore, the overall research question in this exploratory qualitative research will be: *How is the relationship between instructor experience and student motivation influenced by psychological safety, social cohesion, and rapport within a military setting of training aspirant NCOs by NCOs?* Since interviews offer a chance to comprehend participants' viewpoints, experiences, and motives in the context of their particular circumstances. The answer to this question has been investigated through personal insights from aspiring NCOs at the Royal Dutch Military School for Non-Commissioned Officers.

## **Motivation**

Students' drive, ambition, and willingness to participate in learning and meet their academic objectives are referred to as their motivation for learning. Intrinsic elements like individual interest, curiosity, and delight in learning as well as psychological requirements like autonomy, competence, and relatedness are internal elements that support student motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to Arnold et al (2014), motivation is the connection between what prompts people to act, how much effort they put in, and how long they continue acting. Students who want to learn and participate actively in class discussions, ask questions, and seek feedback to help them do better are typically more motivated than others. Also, they have a higher tendency for setting and pursuing goals. Unmotivated students, on the other hand, maybe distracted or indifferent and find it difficult to concentrate or finish tasks. Also, they may find it harder to succeed and be more prone to drop out of the course or fail it. By fostering a pleasant and encouraging learning atmosphere, providing engaging and relevant learning opportunities, and offering the proper feedback and assistance to help students reach their objectives, instructor experience may play a big role in fostering student motivation (Arnold et al, 2014). As will be discussed in the next three paragraphs, it is plausible to assume that social cohesion, psychological safety, and rapport are mediating variables between these experiences and motivation. The desire of students to participate actively and achieve in their learning activities might be positively influenced by instructors' experience to foster an atmosphere that promotes trust, belongingness, and healthy connections.

## **Social Cohesion**

The level of social cohesiveness in a group is defined by how closely linked, united, and cooperatively group members feel toward one another and their common objectives (Ahronson & Cameron, 2007). It is a concept that shows the social networks and standards of reciprocity and reliability that develops from relationships between people (Moiseyenko, 2005). It is an indicator of how tightly a group is knit together as well as the degree of mutual respect, collaboration, and support that exists among its members. In contrast to groups with low levels of social cohesiveness, which may face social disintegration, conflict, and inequality, high-cohesion groups are typically more stable, robust, and capable of addressing social difficulties (Stansfeld, 2006). Within the army, the social cohesion of the group is essential to be able to do the assigned tasks, for which the group has to depend on itself to

succeed or even survive. In this setting, teamwork is more significant than individual performance (Ahronson & Cameron, 2007).

The effect of social cohesion on motivation is widely investigated and, overall, deemed a positive factor which increases team success (As cited in Wise, 2014). Members of groups with strong social cohesiveness actively contribute, volunteer, and take part in events and initiatives concerning that group or its tasks. This drive is fueled by a sense of obligation, a sense of community, and a desire to have a positive influence. However, social cohesion is not always correlated positively with high-performing, motivated, and close units. Excessive social cohesiveness can raise a culture where team members feel content and are less likely to confront and criticize one another's ideas and viewpoints in a positive way, which makes it harder for the team to grow and develop (Wise, 2014), this may lead to groupthink. Similarly, Hardy et al (2005) show several group-level disadvantages of too much cohesion. For example, time might be wasted, and tasks inefficiently done due to too much social interaction which results in a reduction of task commitment. Concluding, an optimal social cohesion is needed in order to have a maximum amount of motivation. For an instructor to foster the right amount of social cohesion, Bailey et al (2015) learned that 'group evaluation techniques' had a positive effect. I.e., the use of structural reports and peer evaluations.

Social cohesion does not only affect motivation to finish a task, but it also lays a foundation for psychological safety by establishing an environment that is encouraging and welcoming, allowing people to express themselves freely and take interpersonal risks without fear of repercussions (Edmondson, 1999). In its turn, psychological safety is thought to influence motivation as well.

### **Psychological Safety**

Psychological safety refers to a work atmosphere where employees feel secure and at ease voicing their opinions, asking questions, and providing feedback without worrying about repercussions (Edmondson, 1999). It is, build on social cohesion, a feeling of assurance that the environment is secure for taking social risks. Students are free to share their ideas and opinions in a psychologically secure study or work environment without worrying about being mocked, alienated, or disciplined. As a result, students may be more inclined, and thereby motivated, to challenge the status quo and engage in creative thinking, innovation, and cooperation at greater levels. This may lead to an increase in creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration in the learning or working environment (Vaida, 2019).

Within military schooling, too, psychological safety is essential. The students, aspiring NCOs, have to be able to voice a worry, ask a question, or admit a mistake in a work or study place without worrying about embarrassment, reprisal, blame, or being ignored (McClintock et al, 2021). Psychological safety promotes cooperation, fruitful classroom experiences for students, and efficient work outcome (Hardie et al, 2022). And that is, again, crucial for military teams. Instructors should be able to tap into their expertise and experience to create a learning environment to maximize psychological safety.

## **Rapport**

The term "rapport" does not seem to have an established definition since different scholars use deviating descriptions. In the context of education, intersecting characteristics lead to a definition like the affectionate bond that occurs between a teacher and their pupils, with repeated pleasant contact and excellent communication, a sense of mutual regard, understanding, and developing trust (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990; Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Collins et al., 2002). A nice and interesting learning environment may be created when a teacher and their pupils get along well. It is possible that students will feel more at ease speaking up in class, asking questions, and contributing ideas, which implies that rapport might be affiliated with psychological safety as well. Also, they could be more eager to learn and even have a better overall classroom experience. Salas et al (1999) discovered that group outcomes, such as productivity, creativity, and general performance, are positively impacted by team-building interventions, which work to strengthen bonds and rapport among team members and towards instructors. This might imply that rapport between students and instructors is a possible precursor to social cohesion and psychological safety. Salas et al (1999) emphasize that teachers or instructors could use a variety of techniques to establish rapport with their pupils, including active listening, positive reinforcement, being accessible, displaying empathy, and expressing interest in their hobbies and daily lives. In order to develop a healthy learning environment and improve student accomplishment, it is crucial for instructors to build strong relationships with their pupils. Relationships between students and teachers influence a variety of beneficial student outcomes, such as attitudes toward the instructor and course, student motivation, and perceived learning (Wilson and Ryan, 2013).

## **Instructor Experience**

"Instructor experience" refers to the level of skill, expertise, and competence that an educator or instructor possesses in a particular subject area or professional field (Burke & Sadler-Smith, 2006). The knowledge and skills a teacher contributes to the classroom are the results of their training, (teaching) experience, and professional background. Kane and Russel (2003) state that the quality of teaching and learning can be significantly impacted by the instructor's expertise. Experienced teachers are more likely to have a thorough grasp of the material, are able to present lectures that are both effective and interesting and are able to provide students with useful feedback. Also, they have a better chance of being able to adjust to the unique demands and learning preferences of every student (Kane & Russel, 2003). Experienced teachers may also have established successful teaching tactics and approaches over the course of many years of trial and error. Buskist (2002) noticed in his research that award-winning teachers had in common, amongst other things, that they usually become more student-oriented and less lecture-oriented during their careers. He argues that some people are born instructors; they possess self-assurance and have the ability to instantly connect with their students. It must be stressed that teachers who initially lack these characteristics can nevertheless endeavour to improve their abilities (Buskist, 2002). This student orientation from experience and instant connection to students show the interconnectedness of instructor experience and rapport. However, the same goes for the ability to positively affect social cohesion (Ahronson & Cameron, 2007) and psychological safety (Beamon, 2001) within the group of students.

Within the army, the general thought is that the longer someone is in the service as an NCO, which results in a higher military rank, the better he/she should be at teaching. In turn, the outcome of the course should be better than with a less experienced NCO instructor. Although this thought matches the outcome of previous research (e.g., Edmondson, 1999), especially within the army, possible counteracting variables which come with increasing experience are not investigated. Meaning, the rank differences between teacher and student might cause more discipline and attention in class but might also increase submissiveness which decreases psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999). Because of their expertise, seasoned teachers, or higher-ranking experienced NCO instructors, could have a higher degree of status and authority inside the group, which could result in an unequal balance and a lack of psychological safety for members of the team. Aspiring NCOs may feel less inclined to speak out and express their thoughts when they believe their opinions and ideas are not recognized or respected, which can undermine the psychological safety of the group.



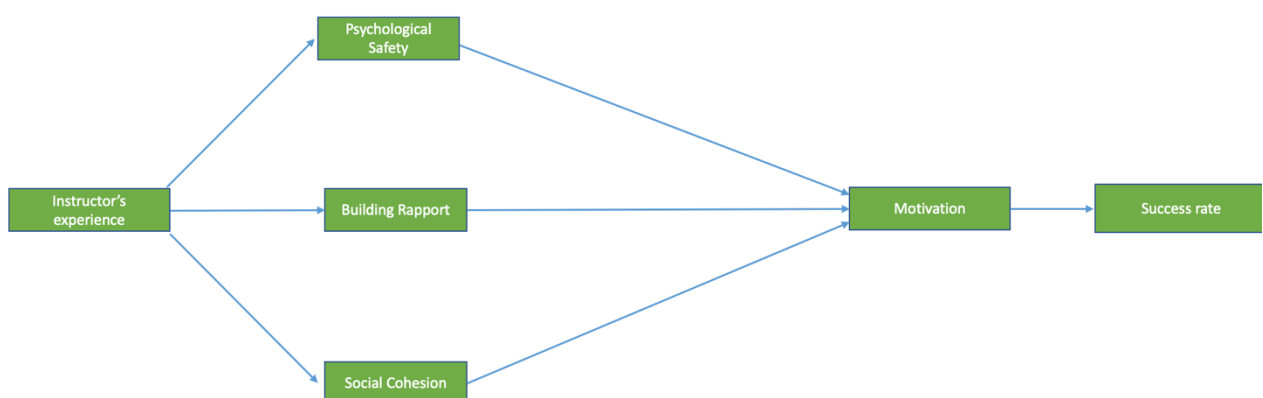
The same goes with age since age differences can contribute to an implicit hierarchy within a group, where older individuals may hold more perceived authority and status based on their experience and seniority. So, the teacher might be too young to gain proper respect or too old which creates a possible generation gap. This uncertainty makes it important to test how instructor experience might on the one hand positively influence rapport but at the same time e.g., negatively influence psychological safety or motivation, as experienced by current aspiring NCOs.

### The Current Study

This bachelor thesis aims to investigate the influence of instructor experience on the motivation of aspiring NCOs to complete their training at the Royal Military School for NCOs in the Netherlands. Psychological safety, rapport building, and social cohesion are suspected mediators between these independent and dependent variables. The conceptual model (Figure 1) visualizes the relationship. This study will entail exploratory research to gather information, identify the relations between the key concepts and variables, and explore how the concepts influence the aspiring NCOs' motivation and ultimately passing the initial military training.

Figure 1

*Conceptual Model of the Influence of Instructors' Experience on Student Motivation*



*Note: From right to left it is depicted that motivation, which influences the rate of success in passing a course, is in turn affected by psychological safety, rapport, and social cohesion within the group. Instructor experience is thought to have a substantial influence on the latter three variables.*

## Method

### Participants

Partly parallel to this study, a quantitative study was performed, with a similar research question, by means of a survey. After the survey, seven prospective non-commissioned officers from the Dutch Army's Royal Military School participated in the qualitative study this paper refers to. The selection of participants was done by using a combined method. Persons who were deemed suitable for the qualitative research had to have done the quantitative survey of the study which preceded this study, which gave the sampling technique a purposive character. Of those who met the condition of the previous quantitative research, one person per platoon (which makes it stratified) was randomly chosen to participate. Seven out of 10 platoon commanders acted on the request and assigned one of their subordinate students to the study. Of the seven assigned participants, one (14%) was a woman (Age = 27), and six (86%) were men ( $M_{\text{age}} = 24.33$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.83$ ). Five of the interviewees had no previous military training or experience, two were soldiers previous to their NCO training. Four participants went through pre-entry, which means that preconditions for the study were met: i.e., students and instructors were acquainted beforehand, needed equipment for the course was distributed and, e.g., hierarchical structures were explained, all before the actual start of the training course. Of the 42 educational weeks, the mean current week of training of the participants is  $M_{\text{week}} = 26.5$  ( $SD_{\text{week}} = 7.61$ ). Two salient details were that two of seven participants did their training for the second time after being held back a year, so they had somewhat of experience, and one did not participate in the quantitative study before. Based on the earlier inclusion criteria, the latter was partly excluded. Partly because the selection of participants was small already but due to extreme expressions (outliers) some answers were not taken into account.

### Procedure

Ten different training platoons of the Royal Military School for NCOs provide the backdrop for this research. The overall study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. However, this paper primarily focuses on the qualitative aspect of the study. In the initial stage of the research, a questionnaire was administered to all NCO students in the participating platoons to assess variables such as psychological safety, social cohesion, motivation, and rapport. While the quantitative portion of the study is not the main focus of this paper, it shares a common foundation with the qualitative phase. During the second phase, a subset of survey

participants was selected to take part in in-depth interviews. These face-to-face interviews, guided by a semi-structured questionnaire, explored the participants' experiences with the mediating variables. Specifically, the questions aimed to uncover how the instructors' influence impacted their motivation to complete the training program. The qualitative interviews, which form the basis of this paper, were conducted using multiple valid and reliable questionnaires as references. The questions pertaining to psychological safety were derived from Edmondson (1999), social cohesion questions were based on Carless and De Paola (2000), questions related to rapport were drawn from Duke et al. (2018), and motivation questions were adapted from the Achievement Motives Scale (AMS) developed by Lang and Fries (2006).

Prior to the interview, participants were provided with an information sheet (Appendix A) that outlined the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and confidentiality measures. Informed consent was obtained from participants through audio recording (Appendix B). The semi-structured interviews were conducted by two military officers in uniform who served as the researchers. Each interview followed a semi-structured guide (Appendix C), ensuring consistency in the interview process. The interview guide included questions pertaining to the dependent variable (student motivation), mediating variables (psychological safety, rapport, and social cohesion), and independent variable (instructor experience). Table 1, found on the next page, provides an overview of the topics and their respective intentions. The questionnaire began by allowing participants to describe their experiences with the mediating variables in their own words. For psychological safety, participants were asked about their feelings of safety within their group and their ability to express themselves freely. The questions related to rapport explored their experiences with the teacher-student bond, while the social cohesion section examined the importance and closeness within the group and its impact on motivation to complete the course. Participants were then asked to identify where they believed these variables originated from. Additionally, participants were asked about their perception of how the variables influenced their motivation, as well as the influence of instructor experience on the variables. Due to the interconnected nature of these variables, the questions about them were intertwined. Subsequently, participants were asked specific questions to assess their current motivation, such as "How is your motivation towards the training?" and "Describe how you express yourself through your abilities, energy, and capabilities." The participants' perceptions of how the instructor's experience influenced the aforementioned variables were also evaluated if this had not already been addressed during the conversation. They were asked to share their

thoughts on how the instructor's experience may affect each variable. Finally, participants were given the opportunity to address any additional points that could contribute to the research insights but had not been covered in the previous questions. Individual demographic information was collected to classify the participants. Based on the rapport established during the interview, it was decided whether to begin or end the interview with an ice-breaking conversation.

**Table 1**

*Topic Overview and Intentions of the Interview Questions*

Topic	Intention
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classification of participants</li> </ul>
Psychological safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore feeling of safety with the group</li> <li>• Uncover effect on personal motivation</li> </ul>
Rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore bond with the instructor</li> <li>• Uncover effect on personal motivation</li> </ul>
Social cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the importance of the group</li> <li>• Explore the closeness of the group</li> <li>• Uncover effect on personal motivation</li> </ul>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the progression of motivation through time</li> <li>• Explore the ability to express oneself through capabilities</li> <li>• Explore the experience of pressure</li> <li>• Explore the experience of self-efficacy</li> </ul>
Instructor experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore student's insight of the effect on previous variables by instructor experience</li> </ul>
Closing remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unmask important information that was not covered by questions</li> </ul>

## **Analyses**

In order to find recurrent themes in the interview data, thematic analysis was manually performed. The analysis was based on the paper of Braun and Clarke (2006) in which thematic analysis is explained and defended to be a proper analysis tool for qualitative data, and it provides guidelines to execute the analysis. Before the actual analysis, the recorded interviews were transcribed automatically through Amberscript, an automatic speech recognition technology which was obtained through the University of Twente. Next, the digital output of Amberscript was checked and altered manually by going through the text while listening to the original recording. Irrelevant conversation parts were not further transcribed manually. I.e., if the conversation was not about the research, say general ‘chitchat’ to break the ice, this part was not transcribed further than the automated transcription. Then thematic analysis was applied to firstly find initial codes. Marking the transcription and commenting with codes like e.g., “IE on SC” which, in this case, means that the marked text gives information on the experienced effect of instructor experience on social cohesion, was the first step. Since the questionnaire revolved around the specific variables and the data was particularly collected for this study, coding initially was straightforward and the thematic analysis had an inductive approach, e.g., the influence of psychological safety on motivation, the connection between instructor experience and social cohesion, or experience on rapport were all more or less directly linked to the asked questions and were already similar to the previously created codes. Information that hinted at one of the questions elsewhere in the interview, was easily coded to the respective theme. The identified codes were gathered in the corresponding theme. When a majority of participants hinted in the same direction, the remarks were assumed to cover the average opinion of the population.

## Results

### Thematic Framework

Based on coding and categorizing the data into different themes, the outcome is visualized in Table 2 and explained in the paragraphs after. The different variables turn out to be interconnected on several levels as explained later. Sometimes one variable has to be present to support another, e.g., if there is a high social cohesion, this, in turn, increases the motivation to finish the course but also increases the psychological safety which, in turn, increases motivation too.

**Table 2**  
Thematic Framework

	Influence on motivation	Influence from IE
<b>Social Cohesion</b>	<i>High:</i> -Helping each other -If groups become smaller and more cohesive -If cohesion extends the work floor to private circumstances	<i>Indirect:</i> -Quality of instruction (makes help each other more) -Creating optimum conditions (increasing safe learning) -Coaching group to perform on itself
	<i>Low:</i> -Reshuffling of group members -In-group/out-group effect	<i>Negative influence:</i> -Instructor doesn't stop 'the silly talk' or bullying quickly enough. So social cohesion is low.
<b>Psychological Safety</b>	<i>High:</i> -If there is a feeling of belonging	<i>Indirect:</i> -Creating optimum conditions -Adapting to new generation (empathize) -Confidence building -Instructor having right picture of student
	<i>Low:</i> -Not being able to express oneself reduces motivation.	
	<i>Note:</i> -There seems to be a difference in experience between experienced and 'new' soldiers	<i>Negative:</i> -Not stopping teasing or silly talk (setting boundaries) -Sort of threshold toward instructor because of grading
<b>Rapport</b>	<i>High:</i> -Direct by actively motivating (short term). -Instructor tries to improve students' future insights (long term).	<i>Direct influence both ways:</i> -True listener -Motivational -Treated as equals -Connecting -Equivalent ≠ identical
	<i>Low:</i> -Bullying/not taking students seriously	
	<i>Note:</i> -Heavily instructor dependent!	<i>Note:</i> -Highly instructor dependent.
<b>Motivation</b>	-Long-term motivation mostly comes from within. Proving oneself, knowing it will end,	<i>Short term:</i> -Reward (shoulder pat) -Instruction quality -Feedback handling -Age, experience, -More experience = more enthusiasm -Adapting to new generation  <i>Long term:</i> -Showing student progress systematically -Teaching knowledge of company through experience -Giving a 'look through' towards operational deployment

Note: This table shows the overall thought on the four themes social cohesion, psychological safety, rapport, and motivation. In the columns, from left to right, it states what influence is experienced on students' motivation and how instructor experience influences the theme.

## Psychological safety

Psychological safety is mostly experienced when it is safe to talk about anything without drastic repercussions for the individual from the group, he or she is in. This, too, contains the possibility to have a joke as long as there are no bad intentions, or the joke is being taken too far. One of the interviewees explained it like: *“We are so tight, that it is even okay to make jokes about each other. There are never bad intentions that come with that!”*. This experience is recognized by all the participants. However, the two aspiring NCOs who had to repeat the initial training, due to circumstances, stated that they experienced different cases the year before: *“Back then, there was bullying within the group. I experienced it. And the instructor participated in it.”*. This shows a possible fine line between ‘teasingly joking’ and ‘bullying’. The lack of instructor interference or lack of noticing from the teacher has an enormous impact on how psychological safety is experienced in the group and how it negatively affects individuals’ motivation to go on. Noting that this failure to intervene is an (absence of) behaviour from the instructor and not his experience per se, it is thought that lack of experience is one of the causes next to the depraved working atmosphere at the instructors’ level: *“If a new sergeant is assigned to the group where other NCOs do not enhance psychological safety, this atmosphere sticks to the new one too.”* When there is negative pressure merely from the group to perform, the feeling of safety is thought to be less apparent, although, none of the aspiring NCOs seems to experience this structurally. Overall, the interviewees indicate to think that high psychological safety is derived from the possibility to make mistakes and learn without negative consequences and the willingness of group members to help each other with all aspects to pull each other through the training. Psychological safety is less dependent on the behaviour or experience of the instructor, unless ‘all goes south’ and there is no interference in the group by the instructor. Although the direct impact of instructor experience on psychological safety within the group appears to be limited, there is an indirect influence present. Since instructors are pivotal in the creation of learning conditions, they, indirectly influence psychological safety. I.e., creating an environment where, e.g., students can express themselves, improves psychological safety. Similarly, building confidence by first taking students by the hand and over time giving them the trust to do it all themselves, creates a safe environment. *“I think the effect of the instructor is large. For example, the instructor sets the boundaries for aspiring NCOs. Furthermore, the instructor is a kind of role model to which aspiring NCOs, consciously or not, adapt to. Both possible positive and negative behaviours can therefore influence the group’s psychological safety.”*, according to one interviewee. Finally, learning students to

give positive feedback and constructive criticism toward their group, adds to psychological safety.

A typical requirement, however, is that students are capable of presenting an authentic reflection of their own motivation, abilities, and similar aspects, without feigning or pretending to be someone different in order to earn respect from their peers. This also applies to the impact of the instructor and their experience: they should not aim to construct an idealized image of a student merely to make the student feel recognized. Typically, the aspiring NCOs who have previous military experience, seem to think that a group with persons of similar age and gender increases psychological safety: *“Really, we are all boys of approximately the same age, so that creates a different bond than the other groups. We are more like-minded”*. Contradictory, the inexperienced aspiring NCOs point out that the diversity of the groups and the willingness to use individuals’ strengths increases psychological safety.

The feeling of psychological safety between a student and instructor is a bit more delicate. Although, generally, the safety feeling is genuine and quite high, there is a reservation. The knowledge of being judged and graded creates a form of threshold for expressing oneself towards the instructor, meaning that, because instructors also grade the actions of the pupils, pupils are hesitant to show their true colours. An interviewee states: *“(...) it is always in the back of your head: I might be assessed on what I express towards the instructor.”*

Listening or reading between the lines, the perception of psychological safety appears to have a gradation while looking at the direct environment of the student. First, the individual assesses whether he or she can solve his or her issue individually. If that does not seem to work, the group, or parts of it, is taken into confidence before taking the matter up with an instructor. Every step increases the assessed vulnerability and simultaneously threatens the psychological safety, of the individual.

### **Social cohesion**

The process of social cohesion building, too, is experienced as a gradual process. Where, in the beginning, people are assigned to certain platoons and groups, cohesion starts and is highest at the “room level”. Every person is appointed to a sleeping accommodation with approximately eight others from the same group. Since groups consist of approximately 15 persons, men as well as women, such a group can have up to three different bedrooms.



Generally, the more time people spend with others, cohesion increases. During military exercises in the field, the different rooms come together as a group again and face several mutual experiences which increases the cohesion as a group. These exercises are experienced as a form of “*shared suffering*” as one of the participants noted, referring to the saying “*A burden shared is a burden halved.*” which can increase cohesion between the parties. Throughout the course, students drop out for many different reasons. If this is in the beginning of the group process of cohesion building, most individuals accept this fact. However, if the cohesion increases, the burden of ‘losing a comrade’ also increases. The flip side is that groups become smaller and the involvement in an assignment, per individual, increases. This increases the feeling of belonging and social cohesion. “*For example, we used to need eight people for an assignment. Okay, then the other four people in our group had to be split off to another assignment and they will not go along with our assignment. Since groups decrease in size, now everyone is more involved in the same task, less invisible and therefore the group becomes tighter.*”

In most cases, social cohesion grew as far as even beyond the scope of schooling, groups interacted socially. Although it did not always go as far as intensive social contact at the weekends, groups did meet outside training hours to have dinner or party together away from the barracks. “*Last week, one person of our group had his birthday. Seven guys of our platoon took the time to celebrate at his house. Some even took their wives and children with them*”. This is mostly so for groups, or parts of it, that have been together since the beginning. People that joined a certain group later, expressed that psychological safety and social cohesion were more difficult to increase. Certain ‘islands’ had been formed and mingling became more difficult. Some people transferred from another group or joined an existing group because they did not have to participate in the first part of the course, as is with the experienced soldiers. They can skip the general military training for they did this already as a private or corporal. Especially these exercises, like fieldwork, military sports and, bivouacs are thought to have more impact on social cohesion than general barracks weeks where the main point is learning the theory behind the practice. It is also possible that a group decreases in size too much that it has to be split up for the sake of efficiency. Due to dropouts during the entire training, some groups lack a sufficient amount of personnel to effectively perform assignments. Leadership then decides to reshuffle particular members of certain groups. However, whether a person feels a connection to the new group or not, seems mostly dependent on the individual’s assertiveness and personality. This is illustrated by a remark of one of the interviewees which states: “*...they already have their group, you don’t,*

*you have to put in the extra effort... ”. Due to in-group/out-group dynamics, significant implications for social interactions might occur for the individual that is replaced with a new group. In its turn, this has a negative impact on the overall motivation of that individual. “Actually, your group process starts all over again in a new group (...).” Nevertheless, there has been no feeling of not being accepted at all and the connection with the former group seems to stay intact, especially with non-professional activities outside the barracks.*

Social cohesion does affect motivation to finish the training and is deemed rather important. *“It is very important because you have to work together a lot and thus trust each other”* sums up the general thought. If social cohesion is high, and especially when people tend to help each other through the course, motivation to finish the course increases as it does with psychological safety. However, if the social cohesion is negatively affected from the outside, e.g., because the group is extended, motivation can be seriously affected too. *“If you do not connect with the group or you don’t like the group, you still are sentenced to those people! A weekend break does not make up for the demotivating experience.”* Basically, this fits with being assigned to another group too.

As for psychological safety, social cohesion is also appearing not to be directly affected by instructor experience. Nonetheless, indirect effects are recognized. *“If the instructor does not stop silly talk or teasing during evaluations in time, it might influence the cohesion of the group”*, an interviewee said indicating an indirect effect. *“Instructors can help create an optimal environment, though, which possibly increases group cohesion”*. When the quality of a certain lecture or instruction is below the comprehensible level, students are prone to gather and improve their knowledge together, especially when experienced soldiers are part of the group, one thinks. This exemplifies an increase in indirect effect on social cohesion. Instructors too can create optimum or less optimum conditions which will influence social cohesion either positively or negatively. Creating a common goal might, e.g., increase group cohesion whereas *“(...) exclusion and division ruin the cohesion (...).”* Instructors are able to use a certain form of pressure, e.g., a timeframe in which an assignment has to be finished. Finding the optimal amount of pressure can increase motivation. In that case, the task is difficult enough to feel good about yourself when finished, but not as easy so it seems like a loss of time to do the assignment.

## Rapport

Rapport involves a sense of connection, empathy, and a supportive environment where both the aspiring NCO and the instructor feel comfortable and engaged towards each other. Generally, instructors are seen as professional, helpful, motivating and create a confidential relationship. Open and effective communication, mostly during feedback, is highly appreciated and increases rapport. Nevertheless, the experienced rapport remains within a professional bond and less social. A participant put it like instructors and students should be deemed “(...) *equivalent but not identical* (...)”. Meaning that instructors should be approachable, listening to others, connecting to students and levelling with them. However, they still remain an instructor and need some sort of authority. This means that an instructors’ boundaries are not only different in a school setting, but they also have to put on their professional ‘mask’ on more occasions, e.g., when instructors and students coincidentally meet at a bar.

A good rapport can influence motivation positively. However, most of the positive impact is in the short term, like actively motivating students at an assignment by an instructor. Helping aspiring NCOs reach their future goals through collaboration and support by the instructor seems to be one of the recognized influences on motivation in the long term, i.e., finishing the course. Being treated as equal and as an (aspiring) colleague, too in the long term, positively influences students’ motivation to push through. “*They actually see me as an equal, and they want to bring me to the level that they believe is necessary to get started as a troop leader within this organization.*”. This could not be felt if rapport was absent.

## Motivation

It seems that instructor experience and instructor behaviour are used interchangeably in the interview, however, assuming a direct connection between the two might also make the entanglement more difficult to unravel. Thus, motivation appears to be somewhat affected by the behaviour and experience of the instructor, it is assumed that behaviour is affected by experience in this case. “*Receiving open and honest feedback in order to take students to a higher level, motivates me to finish the course.*” This quote sums up the overall thought on the long-term influence of instructor experience on motivation since it gives pupils a sense of the future and what they can expect when finished with schooling. However, most influence is primarily short-term motivation which is connected to a particular instructor or to a particular assignment at a certain point in time. Receiving a “(...) *pat on the back* (...)”, experiencing good instruction or how feedback is handled, are examples of short-term

motivational advantages. Surprisingly, for the participants instructor experience is mostly not connected to the (long-term) motivation to finish the course. This long-term motivation largely comes from within. *“Not wanting to fail (...)”, “(...) knowing why you put yourself through it.”* and *“(...) never give up mentality (...)”*. Also, disproving others and proving yourself you have the capabilities to prevail, seems to have a major impact. However, some external facets do appear to increase long-term motivation. Not-wanting-to-fail-your-group seems to have an impact on one’s motivation to keep on going, as long as the social cohesion of that same group is high. This fact shows the relation and closeness between the variables motivation and social cohesion. Furthermore, the impression to make individual progress in the process motivates aspiring NCOs to finish the course. Here, the influence of the instructor seems to be present. Providing positive feedback, finding learning gaps for aspiring NCOs and shaping a professional image based on experience increase this motivation. Also, setting the right conditions for a challenging course for every individual is attributed to the instructors. Lastly, acknowledging the work that already has been done and the progress made contributes to motivation. One interviewee puts it like this: *“(...) then, in his eyes, I am progressing and that is pretty important to me!”*. This shows how rapport affects motivation in certain ways. For some the overall end goal, becoming an NCO, motivates the students to go on. As one aspiring NCO said: *“The time I have done here, motivates me to finish the whole course more and more!”* This motivation increases with time since along the way there is ever more work done which would otherwise be in vain. Psychological safety can have an impact on overall motivation, however, seemingly only if there is a lack of it. One of the interviewees put it as follows: *“If you do not have a nice group, you cannot share your burdens with them and you feel the pressure to perform so you will not be judged... that would kill the motivation to go on!”*

Interestingly, the motivation of the participants who had past experiences within the military, do tend to be affected by instructor experience. This shows in the following quote: *“I have been a soldier for 7 years; I am not having this all over again!”* This participant is referring to the basic training he had as a young soldier and the operational experience he gained in the years after. Nevertheless, now, these aspiring NCOs still must conform to the “institute-mentality” all over again to transcend their current rank. Their motivation, initially, was based on becoming an NCO and not on reliving initial training with all the drawbacks. *“The instructors should use their experience to differentiate between experienced and ‘fresh’ soldiers.”* Instructors are able to use a certain form of pressure, e.g., a timeframe in which an assignment has to be finished. Finding the optimal amount of pressure can increase

motivation. In that case, *“the task is difficult enough to feel good about yourself when finished, but not as easy so it seems like a loss of time to do the assignment”*. That, too, is possible for the experienced students. Then, instructors could differentiate within the assignments per person.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The research goal was to explore “*How the relationship between instructor experience and student motivation is influenced by psychological safety, social cohesion, and rapport within a military setting of training aspirant NCOs by NCOs?*” The variables of psychological safety and social cohesion, in general, do not appear to be directly influenced that much by instructor experience. Indirectly and temporarily, it does have some effect. Nevertheless, psychological safety and social cohesion do have a large impact on motivation. This means that these variables do not mediate between experience and motivation. Rapport, on the other hand, appears to be affected by experience directly and, rapport itself influences motivation, however limited and mostly short term. Long-term motivation seems to be impacted most by the intrinsic motivation of the individual and less by instructor experience, however, in the short term, instructors do influence motivation locally and temporarily. Nevertheless, there are a few long-term effects on motivation by instructor experience but not the most important.

The expectations from students on how social cohesion, psychological safety and rapport should be present and shaped within a military learning environment are overall similar. There seems to be a slight difference in conception between aspiring NCOs with previous military experience and those who do not have that experience, though. The biggest difference is how experienced soldiers perceive the role of the instructor. The more experienced aspiring NCOs generally prefer the instructor to take an increasing coaching role and let the group processes to the group itself. With course corrections, if necessary, observation and evaluation the instructor can steer the group of experienced students, is the thought. The group can teach itself. ‘Fresh’ aspiring NCOs, on the other hand, tend to lean toward more guidance from the beginning. The used expression would be “crawling, walking and then running” under supervision. It is uncertain what makes the difference between experienced and ‘fresh’ aspiring NCOs. Perhaps their time in operational circumstances makes experienced students more blindsided for new input or do ‘fresh’ students cling to more experienced students and thus prefer a diverse group. What the difference is in motivational outcomes between experienced and inexperienced student groups, did not fit the scope of this research, however, it might be beneficial to the way aspiring NCOs are taught in the future. Whether it is best to create diverse groups or homogenous ones, based on these differences, could be a topic in a later study.

However, the actual experiences of participants within their own groups at the Royal Netherlands Military School diverge from that idealized image among individuals. For example, social interaction capabilities, which are one of the facets of rapport, diverge between instructors and influence the feeling of inter-connectedness, or lack of it. Other facets, too, depend on the individual person, both instructor and student. It appears that these experiences are influenced by factors such as age, military and/or instructor experience, and social skills. The motivation to successfully complete the entire course seems to be primarily associated with the level of social cohesion, followed closely by rapport. Additionally, self-efficacy, aversion to failure, and the desire to prove one's abilities play significant roles in determining whether the motivation to persist exists. These factors are primarily internal processes and are minimally influenced by external factors such as peer pressure or parental expectations. Furthermore, psychological safety seems to influence motivation but only when it is far from optimal, and people feel unsafe. In other words, if the perception of psychological safety is high, it generally stays unnoticed but, a low feeling of psychological safety reminds the students of its importance of it. Against expectation, instructor experience does not seem to have that much of an effect on motivation in the long term. Apart from offering perspective, unfolding students' learning gain and sharing operational knowledge, the influence of instructor knowledge limits itself to the secondary impact of creating conditions for the course and short-term motivational occurrences. This is in line with the outcome of the research of Decuyper, Dochy, and Van den Bossche (2010) in which they state that an optimal learning environment, where students are motivated to finish their studies, depends on both psychological safety and social cohesion within the group. They too came to the conclusion that the instructors' experience did have an impact on motivation, however, through these two variables, not per se directly. However, the expectation in this research was that there would be an indirect effect through social cohesion, psychological safety and rapport and that only marginally came through for the latter.

The suggestion that to educate personnel properly and effectively, the use of experienced NCOs is a pre-condition, did not follow from the current study but was rather inconclusive. That might have several causes. First of all, the definition of "experience" turned out to be not that obvious. Aspiring NCOs mainly focussed on experience of teaching military subjects, experience 'in the field' and experience as a troop leader. Since the credo of the Dutch NCOs is "craftsman, leader and instructor", it is not that surprising. Specific experience gained at e.g., a hospital operation room, leader at the scouts or civil education were not thought of while interviewing the subjects. In reality, this might cause a military

inexperienced NCO to be an example instructor because of his or her academic teaching capabilities. Also, being able to connect military know-how to civilian experience to visualize given theories might make an 'inexperienced' NCO the perfect instructor. Vice versa, having military experience in a foreign country, during a military deployment for example, but not being able to pass that experience through in the classroom, might result in ineffective teaching. This confirms the theory of Rice (2010) that it is not excluded nor proven whether experience, which improves over time, increases or decreases students' motivation. A future study on this subject should concisely define the terms that are used in the research. Terms like 'experience', 'professional' and 'safe learning environment' can and will be experienced differently by different people.

This research was placed in a military setting. It is questionable whether the outcome of the research question can be projected onto another setting like a civilian classroom. Since, within the military, an NCO is more than 'just a teacher' but also a leader of a group, an advisor of military staff, a craftsman and all in between, the experience of the NCO does not restrain to teaching alone. The actual military experience is far broader than that and the question is where that can be the case outside the army. Educational settings where students are taught both theoretically and practically like an old fashion guild system, might be comparable. There might even be parallels between universities, where teachers also gain their experience by researching themselves, and universities of applied sciences, where teachers often come from the business world. The point is that it remains to be seen to what extent the outcome covers every sort of education. The results of Kane and Russel (2003) in which they assume that a teacher gains experience from teaching alone, and thus becomes a better teacher over time, do not hold for organizations like the military per se.

Within the army, NCOs are bound to fulfil at least one instructor's position in order to climb further up the ladder and broaden their military horizon. This does not automatically imply that every NCO is eager to fulfil this mandatory placement. For many NCOs, the instructor position is merely a mandatory job within their career. Even so, for some NCOs, being an instructor can provide them with some clear social structure or relative rest from operational chaos. Therefore, if needed, some NCOs are 'parked' at an instructor's chair, e.g. to sort out relational issues or other personal matters. What this might mean, is that it is not certain whether the best instructors are placed in the educational settings. In its turn, this means that the outcome of this research on the influence of experience might be skewed. Meaning, motivation to be the best instructor one can, might be reduced by the fact that teaching is mandatory and not preferable. This, in its turn, might influence the results



gathered in this research. Future research on the matter should best include the actual motivation and motives of the instructors themselves. Why and in what circumstances do the NCOs execute their task? And what is the consequence of that organizational choice?

The outcome of Wise's (2014) research, in which is stated that social cohesion and motivation are positively connected, turn out to be the case in this research too. Also, as Wise noted additionally, too much social cohesion might hamper an effective group process. In this research, it showed that too many like-minded students tend to be too nice to each other. This results in inefficient feedback, the fright of offending others and thus holding back on effective learning. In practice, it shows that a strong NCO instructor needs to be able to breach that impasse. What skills are needed to accomplish that and whether that is somehow connected to the instructor's experience is an interesting topic for future research.

This paper fails to show whether experienced soldiers, who enter the course after 16 weeks of basic training and have missed the initial building of social cohesion and psychological safety within the group, cause distancing from the existing group. On the one hand, interviewees acknowledge there is a delay in social cohesion for these people, on the other hand, their expertise from previous operational deployments seems to bring the new group closer together faster. It is not clear whether this renewed 'social cohesion' is the result of respect for operational experience (and thus no social cohesion), or genuine cohesion which formed faster because e.g., the existing group was large enough to uphold its initial cohesion. This is important to establish in future research because high social cohesion increases motivation and lowers the dropout rate (Wise, 2014). However, if existing groups are complemented with experienced soldiers which causes the 'fresh' soldiers to lose their feeling of cohesion (because they follow the experienced soldiers instead of creating actual cohesion) the dropout rate might be different than suspected.

Both the individual student as well as the individual instructor appear to have a significant influence on the rapport between both parties. The most effective elements of rapport building according to the research are: (1) truly listening to students on all subjects; (2) Motivate students with e.g., perspectives and accumulated operational leadership experience; (3) Treat aspiring NCOs as equal but less knowledgeable colleagues. These create trust, respect, empathy and understanding. Combined with the peer help from the instructor to student and motivation and success will increase.

Although the study shows no direct effect of instructor experience on motivation through two out of three variables, the variables themselves do affect motivation. Since the

NCO is pivotal in educating military personnel, educating the NCOs on how to optimally affect social cohesion and psychological safety might be crucial to optimize motivation and increase the success rate of the course.

### **Limitations**

Although participation is always voluntary, this research was conducted in a military setting. The request to interview military personnel was approved by higher-ranking personnel and distributed through the chain of command. This might have caused, because of the hierarchical structure of the army, that the request was interpreted as a command. In reality, one of the seven interviewees was sent to do the interview without having any information and without having been part of the quantitative research. This resulted in a conversation which deviated quite a bit from the average conversations. This person was clearly an outlier in his thoughts about the experienced education and some beliefs came across as biased. A small example: in order to increase the overall motivation of aspiring NCOs, unmotivated people should be kicked out of the army. And although this does increase the average motivation, the outcome would be contrary to the intended purpose; attracting and keeping more motivated NCOs to strengthen the workforce. Since there were merely seven interviewees, having to take one out might have influenced the outcome. Nevertheless, there were some meaningful contributions that did not deviate from the average that much, e.g., extra insides on a similar topic already mentioned. It was decided, however, to not silence or argue with the subject in order to gain possible different insights.

The sampling of the research was not completely unbiased since it is stratified, meaning that every interviewee was derived from another platoon. Although stratified sampling aims to improve representativeness, its effectiveness depends on accurately capturing the characteristics of the population within each stratum. If the chosen strata do not adequately capture the relevant variations or if there are substantial variations within the strata, the generalizability of the findings to the entire population may be limited. Since every platoon was represented by merely one person, the representativeness is questionable. However, the outcome shows that the different interviewees were on the same page on many subjects.

Furthermore, both researchers are military officers, and the interviews were conducted in military uniform. This may have influenced the way the subjects responded to the questions. After all, the subjects are all ranked lower and taking the hierarchical military structure into consideration, the interviewees might have been prone to give answers they

thought would fit the desirable answers. Furthermore, being in the hierarchical system as an officer too, might give the impression to interviewees that “confidentiality” is easily violated which prevents them from showing all their cards. Anyhow, there are benefits to this way of research. Interviewee and interviewer might understand each other better, they both underwent practically the same training, speak the same language and both being a soldier might even increase rapport in advance. Contextual understanding and relatability can be positive influences.

The researchers were not allowed to research below the group level. Meaning, specific questions about specific instructors were not allowed due to GDPR. This has several possible implications. E.g., the experienced rapport is based on unknown instructors. It might be one instructor to whom the connection is the highest, it might be a combination of feelings from two or three instructors or perhaps based on the one instructor to whom the student does not feel any connectedness. This might cloud the outcome of the research.

It turned out to be rather difficult to determine if an instructor with a specific set of skills is more prone to affect the motivation of students than other instructors. Since there is more than one instructor per group, motivation to finish the course might not be particularly affected by instructor behaviour. It is possible that participants think of different instructors on different occasions during the interview. This might cause a kind of levelling-out of certain behaviours, feelings or thoughts about the efficiency and effectiveness of certain instructors. Meaning, if one of the group instructors excels in teaching but another instructor of the same group does not, it is not visible based on this research. Not being able to isolate particular behaviours per individual and putting it in light of the general behaviour and experience of other instructors, might cause a skewed outcome of the effect of instructor experience on motivation. To counter this phenomenon, participants need to be allowed to refer to a single instructor, and that single instructor should be interviewed about his or her specific experience. Unless that is allowed, the outcome of the research question remains multi-faceted. In this research, it was not allowed by the military based on the complications they expected from the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

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## Appendix A: Information about the research

### Informatie over het onderzoek

#### “EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE ON STUDENT MOTIVATION”

*(Welk effect heeft (militaire) ervaring van een instructeur op de motivatie van een student?)*

#### **Doel van het onderzoek**

Dit onderzoek wordt geleid door Annemarie Beukers en Sander Overkamp. Beiden kapitein binnen de Landmacht, die psychologie studeren aan de Universiteit Twente.

Met dit onderzoek proberen wij in kaart te brengen hoe de militaire ervaring van jouw instructeur van invloed is op 1) de psychologische veiligheid in jouw groep (kan je bijv. jezelf zijn?), 2) de relatie tussen jou en de instructeur (“Rapport” in het Engels) en 3) en de sociale cohesie in de groep (Hoe ervaar je de band met de groep?). We verwachten immers dat deze drie facetten samen invloed hebben op de motivatie, het vierde facet, om de opleiding tot onderofficier positief af te ronden. Daarnaast willen we onderzoeken hoe de drie facetten elkaar beïnvloeden.

#### **Hoe gaan we te werk?**

Onlangs heb je een enquête ingevuld via een computer of telefoon. De 62 vragen die daarin waren opgenomen geven een beeld van hoe jij de eerdergenoemde vier facetten ervaart. Een dergelijke enquête geeft in hoofdzaak de mogelijkheid om antwoorden te geven die vooraf bepaald zijn, een multiple choice dus. Dit geeft een goed beeld van de gemiddelde antwoorden maar geven geen mogelijkheid om dieper in te gaan op de achterliggende gedachten van de antwoorden. Daarom hebben we een aantal respondenten gevraagd mee te werken aan een interview.

Dit interview maakt gebruik van dezelfde basis (de vijf facetten), alleen door dat je met elkaar praat en kunt doorvragen, geeft dit mogelijk een verdiepend beeld van de situatie. De antwoorden op deze vragen zullen worden genoteerd. Tevens zal er worden gevraagd of het gesprek opgenomen mag worden om later de gegevens beter te kunnen verwerken.

Ook nu zijn er geen goede of foute antwoorden, hoe jij het ervaart, is belangrijk.

De gegevens die voortvloeien uit het onderzoek worden anoniem gedeeld met de ondersteunende professoren van de Universiteit Twente zodat zij het onderzoek kunnen beoordelen. Verder zullen de uitkomsten als samenvatting, in een presentatie, worden gedeeld met cdt KMS en betrokken actoren. Op verzoek van de PC'n of CC'n kunnen wij ook de uitkomsten persoonlijk presenteren aan de pelotons.

### **Potentiële risico's en ongemakken**

Hoewel het niet de verwachting is, kunnen tijdens de deelname aan deze studie vragen worden gesteld die als (zeer) persoonlijk ervaren kunnen worden, vanwege de (mogelijk) gevoelige aard van het onderwerp. Wij stellen deze vragen enkel en alleen in het belang van het onderzoek. Je hoeft nooit vragen te beantwoorden die je niet wilt beantwoorden. Je deelname is vrijwillig en je kunt op elk moment besluiten om de resterende vragen niet te beantwoorden en te stoppen. Dit kun je aangeven bij de interviewer en dit zal geen enkel negatief gevolg voor je hebben.

### **Vertrouwelijkheid van gegevens**

Wij doen er alles aan jouw privacy te beschermen. Er wordt op geen enkele wijze vertrouwelijke informatie of persoonsgegevens van of over jou naar buiten gebracht, waardoor iemand je mogelijk herkent. Voordat onze onderzoeksgegevens naar buiten worden gebracht, worden je gegevens zoveel mogelijk geanonimiseerd.

In een publicatie zullen anonieme gegevens of pseudoniemen worden gebruikt. De audio-opnamen, formulieren en andere documenten die in het kader van deze studie worden gemaakt of verzameld, worden opgeslagen op een beveiligde locatie bij de Universiteit Twente en op de beveiligde (versleutelde) gegevensdragers van de onderzoekers.

De onderzoeksgegevens worden bewaard voor een periode van 5 jaar. Uiterlijk na het verstrijken van deze termijn zullen de gegevens worden verwijderd of worden geanonimiseerd zodat ze niet meer te herleiden zijn tot een persoon.

De onderzoeksgegevens worden indien nodig (bijvoorbeeld voor een controle op wetenschappelijke integriteit) en alleen in anonieme vorm ter beschikking gesteld aan personen buiten de onderzoeksgroep.

Tot slot is dit onderzoek beoordeeld en goedgekeurd door de ethische commissie van de faculteit BMS (Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences van de Universiteit Twente. Dit betekent dat er door een expert gekeken is of wij als onderzoekers geen onderzoek doen die de deelnemers bijv. zou kunnen schaden, in welke vorm dan ook.

### **Vrijwilligheid**

Deelname aan dit onderzoek is geheel vrijwillig. Als deelnemer mag je je medewerking aan het onderzoek te allen tijde stoppen, of weigeren dat je gegevens voor het onderzoek mogen worden gebruikt, zonder opgaaf van redenen. Het stopzetten van deelname heeft geen nadelige gevolgen voor jou en wordt niet bekend gemaakt.

Als je tijdens het onderzoek besluit om je medewerking te staken, kunnen de gegevens die je al wel hebt verstrekt tot dat moment, eventueel in het onderzoek gebruikt worden.

Wil je stoppen met het onderzoek, of heb je vragen en/of klachten? Neem dan contact op met een van de onderzoeksleiders via [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](#) of [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](#).



*Voor bezwaren met betrekking tot de opzet en of uitvoering van het onderzoek kun je je ook wenden tot de Secretaris van de Ethische Commissie van de faculteit Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences op de Universiteit Twente via [ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl](mailto:ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl). Dit onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd vanuit de Universiteit Twente, faculteit Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences. Indien je specifieke vragen hebt over de omgang met persoonsgegevens kun je deze ook richten aan de Functionaris Gegevensbescherming van de UT door een mail te sturen naar [dpo@utwente.nl](mailto:dpo@utwente.nl). Tot slot heb je het recht een verzoek tot inzage, wijziging, verwijdering of aanpassing van je gegevens te doen bij de onderzoeksleider.*

## Appendix B: Informed consent form

### Toestemmingsformulier *!!!Vanaf nu start de opname!!!*

#### **Door deel te nemen aan het interview erken je het volgende:**

1. Ik ben voldoende geïnformeerd over het onderzoek door middel van een separaat informatieblad. Ik heb het informatieblad gelezen en heb daarna de mogelijkheid gehad vragen te kunnen stellen. Deze vragen zijn voldoende beantwoord.
2. Ik neem vrijwillig deel aan dit onderzoek. Er is geen expliciete of impliciete dwang voor mij om aan dit onderzoek deel te nemen. Het is mij duidelijk dat ik deelname aan het onderzoek op elk moment, zonder opgaaf van reden, kan beëindigen. Ik hoef een vraag niet te beantwoorden als ik dat niet wil.
3. Ik geef toestemming om de gegevens die gedurende het onderzoek bij mij worden verzameld te verwerken zoals is opgenomen in het bijgevoegde informatieblad.
4. Ik geef toestemming om mijn antwoorden geanonimiseerd te gebruiken voor quotes in de onderzoekspublicaties.
5. Ik geef toestemming om de bij mij verzamelde onderzoeksdata te bewaren en te gebruiken voor toekomstig onderzoek en voor onderwijsdoeleinden.

**Ga je hiermee akkoord en geef je dus toestemming?**

## Appendix C: Interview questionnaire guideline

# Interview questionnaire guideline.

### DEMOGRAFISCHE GEGEVENS:

Leeftijd:

Gender:

Peloton:

Groep:

Opleidingsniveau:

Achtergrond (spijkerbroek, VEVA etc.):

Vooropkomst:

### PS:

- Kun je je onder woorden brengen hoe je je voelt in je eigen groep? (**Vv:** Wat maakt het dat je je zo voelt?) Denk daarbij bijvoorbeeld aan de veiligheid die je wel of niet voelt om te zeggen wat je denkt, risico's die je durft te nemen omdat je wel of niet gesteund wordt of de waardering die je al dan niet krijgt.
- Wat doet dit met jouw motivatie om door te zetten en de opleiding af te maken? (**Vv:** Zou er iets kunnen veranderen waardoor jouw motivatie groter wordt/verandert?)

### R

- Denk bij deze vraag aan jouw instructeurs en jouw band met hen. Hoe gaan ze met jou om? (**Vv:** Wat vind jij daarvan?)
- Kun je bij ze terecht met vragen/uitdagingen? (**Vv:** kun je een voorbeeld noemen?) Nemen ze je serieus? (**Vv:** Waar blijkt dat uit?)
- Komen ze professioneel en kundig over? (**Vv:** Waar baseer je dat op?)
- Luisteren ze oprecht naar je?
- Voel je je verbonden met ze zoals in bijv. een team? (**Vv:** Kun je daar meer over zeggen?)
- Heeft dit invloed op jouw motivatie om door te zetten en de opleiding af te maken? (**Vv:** Hoe zou de relatie tussen een instructeurs en jou zijn zodat de motivatie zo groot mogelijk was?)

### SC

- Denk nog eens aan jouw groep. Hoe belangrijk is de groep voor jou? (**Vv:** Waar blijkt dat uit?)
- Hoe hecht is de groep? (**Vv:** De hele groep?)
- Is de groep "een groep" tijdens de opleiding of ook daarbuiten? (**Vv:** Kun je daar een voorbeeld van geven?)

### M

- Hoe is jouw motivatie t.o.v. de opleiding? (**Vv:** wat zijn de redenen daarvan?)
- Word je uitgedaagd met de opleiding? (**Vv:** Motiveert dat?)
- Beschrijf hoe je je "ei" (capaciteiten, energie, etc) kwijt kunt in de opleiding? (**Vv:** Kun je voorbeelden noemen?)
- Beschrijf hoe je de druk ervaart (of gebrek aan druk) om te presteren? (**Vv:** Wat doet dat met de motivatie?)

- Wat gebeurt er als je het gevoel hebt dat je de opgedragen taak misschien wel niet aankan? (**Vv**: Gebeurt dat vaak? Wat doet dat met je motivatie?)

**IE**

- Hoe denk je dat ervaring van de instructeurs een rol speelt bij SC, PS, R en M?  
ALGEMENISEREN!!!

**Afsluiting**

- Zijn er nog andere zaken die je naar aanleiding van dit interview of de eerder ingevulde vragenlijst wil bespreken of kenbaar wil maken?