

From Trainee to Adapter: A Mapping of Leadership Competencies of Adapter Cadet in the Air Force Academy



Natália Pim Lucas Costa Lima¹, Raphael de Almeida Leitão²

¹ Cadet Intendent of the 4^o Squadron of the Air Force Academy in Brazil.

² Infantry Captain. Master's Student of the Postgraduate Program in Aerospace Science at Air Force University, PPGCA-UNIFA, Brazil.

ABSTRACT: The beginning of military training of those who join the Armed Forces is one of the most important stages of their professional lives. At the Air Force Academy (AFA), this period is known as the Military Adaptation Internship (EAM), and demands a lot of dedication of the candidates, called trainees, and of the Officers of the Cadet Corps Command, who are responsible for adapting inexperienced young people to the new and strenuous routine. In order to carry out such a challenge, it is necessary that the Officers should be assisted by a group of cadets to conduct the various activities that will positively influence the trainees during their first days in the barracks. These cadets, now called as adapters, are chosen by their Squadron Command through a selection process that should occur as uniformly as possible. In order to provide such an important service, it is essential that the adapters are properly trained, as they will reflect on their subordinates the main attributes of an Air Force cadet and serve as a reference to them. However, it is noted that nowadays, the selection process for adapters is not formally standardized. In this sense, the objective of this work is to contribute to the mapping of the competencies that the adapter cadet needs to have developed by the beginning of the EAM, in order to better fulfill the tasks to which he/she will be assigned during this internship. The transactional leadership theory will serve as the basis for identifying knowledge, skills and attitudes in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor fields of the students, in order to explain the importance of each one. The methodology consists of an applied, descriptive and explanatory research, using a questionnaire with the Officers of the Squadron Commands of AFA, to analyze the sample of competencies to be suggested and implemented. In addition, it was done a bibliographic review of the most relevant articles, books and academic works on the subject, and paying special attention to the publications of the Air Force Command that deal with the issues at hand. At the end of this research, the main aspects of an adapter cadet were highlighted, emphasizing the meaning of each item and how it can assertively reflect on the career of a future officer of the Brazilian Air Force.

KEYWORDS: Military Adaptation Internship; transactional leadership; Air Force Academy; mapping; competencies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every year, numerous young individuals enter the gates of the Air Force Academy (AFA) in Pirassununga, São Paulo, with the goal of becoming officers in the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) after four years of training. However, before achieving this goal, those who volunteered to become Air Force Cadets are subjected to the Military Adaptation Internship (EAM) for a period of approximately forty days.

There are two ways to enter in AFA. The first is through a selective process to enter directly to the Academy. The process consists of four phases, as outlined in the Edict. The first phase is a written test with 64 objective questions, covering subjects like Portuguese, Mathematics, Physics, English, and an Essay. If the candidate achieves a sufficient average score in the objective part and ranks within the number of available slots specified in the Edict, their essay is evaluated, and they can proceed to the next phase, which involves a thorough medical examination. After that, the candidate undergoes a psychological aptitude test and, finally, the Physical Fitness Assessment (TACF). The TACF has gender-specific performance standards defined by the Air Force Command, as specified in Portaria COMGEP n° 99/3SC3, consisting of push-ups, sit-ups, running, and horizontal jump.

The second way to enter the AFA is by completing the Air Cadet Preparatory School (EPCAr). Located in Barbacena, Minas Gerais, this school allows students to pursue their high school education while already serving as Air Force personnel. After competing for coveted slots in a selection process similar to that of the AFA, the students prepare to become cadets, following the values outlined in the Cadet Manual (BRAZIL, 2023a) and the AFA's Code of Honor: Courage, Loyalty, Honor, Duty, and Country. Those who achieve a sufficient average and pass the medical examination are then sent to the AFA in the Aviation, Intendence and Infantry branches, becoming trainees alongside those who passed the direct entry examination.

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According to the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b), the mission of the EAM is to adapt the young individuals to the cadet's routine and the FAB, using physical, doctrinal, and military training. Furthermore, these training activities aim to develop qualities such as esprit de corps, discipline, emotional control, and self-confidence, guided by ethical and moral principles.

During this period, trainees are subjected to a demanding routine that requires significant physical fitness and mental preparation. Military readiness exercises, close-order drill training, and classes on the dynamics and standards of the FAB are among the activities outlined in the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b). These activities require cooperation among trainees and their development as military personnel. By the end of the process, they will be prepared to receive the coveted Cadet of the Aeronautics insignia.

The abundance of activities, involving tasks of varying degrees of complexity, requires a significant coordination effort on the part of the Cadet Corps Command (CCAER). In order to enhance the coordination capacity of the CCAER and streamline their work, approximately sixty cadets are selected to assist and work in accordance with the directives of the future 1st Squadron Command and the cadet designated as the Leader of the 1st Squadron, chosen from among the cadets of the 4th Squadron.

These sixty cadets are chosen by the Squadron Command at the end of the 2nd year of the Academy and become adapters in the following year, during their 3rd year. After selection, the chosen cadets attend the Standardization Course for Military Adaptation Instructors (CPI-EAM), along with the entire Leadership Chain, composed of cadets from the 4th Squadron. The course aims to standardize the procedures that will be followed during the EAM and provide further insight into leadership, especially transactional leadership, used during the adaptation. At the end of the course, adapter candidates take an exam with questions related to the topics covered. Given the importance of this course, cadets who do not achieve a minimum score of eight on the exam will be excluded from the list of adapters.

According to Bass (1985) and Bass (1990), transactional leadership refers to rewarding followers based on their performance in proposed activities. Furthermore, Burns (1978) defines transactional leaders as motivators of their subordinates through rewards, while Robbins (2006) states that transactional leaders guide their followers toward established goals by clarifying role and task requirements.

The Manual of the Air Force Command (MCA 2-1), which functions as the FAB Leadership Manual (BRAZIL, 2016), defines transactional leadership as occurring when contact between the leader and subordinates exists for the purpose of exchanging values, which may involve economic, political, or psychological aspects. It also establishes that there are two factors to exert influence. The first is the management by exception, which involves the leader monitoring the results of their subordinates and making subsequent corrections. The second is contingent reward, which occurs when the effort of the subordinate is driven by the pursuit of a reward.

Based on this concept, the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b) adopts transactional leadership as the most appropriate awareness tool for the adaptation period, as there is a need for a significant behavior change in a short period. It also specifies that the leader can use punishment and reward mechanisms to exert influence, provided that their actions are appropriate to each situation experienced by the trainee.

Although the CPI-EAM is an excellent way to align the attitudes of cadets for the upcoming period, the competencies required for a cadet to become an adapter are not clearly defined. The selection is made through a thorough analysis by the Squadron Command. However, there are questions about the criteria used. This situation presents an opportunity for improvement, as it may raise doubts about the reasons for being selected or not, without knowing the path to achieving this coveted role in the EAM for the future class.

Thus, this work seeks to answer the following question: what competencies does a cadet need to develop to become an adapter in the AFA's EAM? The motivation for mapping these competencies arose from the perception of the need to standardize the adapter training process. Furthermore, it is expected to contribute to the selection process and serve as a guide for cadets who intend to become adapters.

The general objective of this work is to map the competencies that a cadet needs to develop in order to become an adapter in the Military Adaptation Internship. Five specific objectives were identified. The first is to outline the leadership competencies outlined in the FAB Leadership Manual. The second is to implement a questionnaire to the Commands of the Cadet Corps of the Aeronautics to collect data on the criteria used to select adapters. The third is to present the characteristics that the current Commands of the Cadet Corps of the Aeronautics identify in their cadets to make them adapters. The fourth is to emphasize the importance of each analyzed competency for an adapter. Finally, the fifth is to explain how the adapter role can contribute to the formation of a future Officer in the Brazilian Air Force.

To achieve these objectives, the work will use a methodology based on a documentary review of the manuals that underpin the Military Adaptation Internship (EAM), such as the Cadet Manual, the EAM Manual, and MCA 2-1. Additionally, a bibliographic research will be conducted to address articles that have already discussed the themes of military training and leadership. Furthermore, a questionnaire will be administered to the Commands of the Squadrons of the Air Force Academy, responsible for the adapter selection process, to collect data on the criteria used to select adapters. As a result, a mapping of the competencies to be developed in an Air Force cadet to become an adapter in the EAM will be presented.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this work, concepts of competency mapping, military training at the Air Force Academy, and leadership, with a focus on transactional leadership, will be addressed. To better reference these concepts, it is intended to rely on the theoretical basis of publications by renowned authors in the field of competencies and leadership, such as Burns (1978), Brandão (2005), Robbins (2005), and Leme (2012). In this context, the aim is to analyze documentary references that reflect the study of leadership in the Air Force Command, such as the FAB Leadership Manual (MCA 2-1), the EAM Manual, and the Cadet Manual. In addition to these manuals, articles and books by researchers and authors in the field of competencies and leadership will be used.

To begin with, it is necessary to establish the definition of competencies. Carbone et al. (2016) states: "Therefore, we understand competencies as synergistic combinations of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, expressed through professional performance within a specific organizational context. They add value to individuals and organizations by contributing to the achievement of organizational objectives and representing societal recognition of individuals' capabilities (CARBONE et al., 2016, p. 36)."

According to Leme (2012), knowledge refers to what is learned in schools, books, and courses. Skill is the ability to apply that knowledge in everyday tasks, and attitude is the exercise of that skill, reflecting the willingness to act. According to Brandão and Bahry (2005), when competencies are applied, they result in professional performance, expressed through behaviors and their consequences.

Furthermore, Carbone et al. (2016) state that competency mapping involves comparing the competencies needed to fulfill the organization's strategy, in terms of its vision, mission, and objectives, with the competencies already available within the organization. This process begins by identifying the competencies required to achieve the organization's goals and then collecting data from key individuals within the organization for analysis. Brandão and Bahry (2005) also emphasize the importance of describing performance benchmarks and the conditions under which such performance should occur to ensure clarity for all parties involved.

Leadership is fundamental in the life of a military personnel. MCA 2-1 (2016) states: "Military personnel who hold leadership positions within their teams, regardless of their hierarchical level, should strive to develop these competencies in order to generate an effective process of influence, obtaining results that go beyond mere obedience, fostering commitment among their peers and subordinates (MCA 2-1, 2016, p. 33)."

Robbins (2005) defines leadership as the ability to influence a group to achieve goals, and leaders can emerge naturally within a group or be formally appointed. Despite the existence of different types of leadership, the type used in the Estágio de Adaptação Militar at AFA is transactional. This type, according to Burns (1978), is characterized by contingent reinforcement, either positive or negative, which punishes or rewards subordinates based on the degree of task execution. The author also emphasizes in this model the management of exceptions, which states that leaders must monitor their subordinates in order to take subsequent actions.

The transactional model was chosen for the EAM because, according to the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b), it is the one that best fits the short period of one month of activities. Thus, according to MCA 2-1 (BRAZIL, 2016), leaders can, through punishments and rewards, exert their influence by aligning the consequences of the actions of the trainees with the severity of each one and providing the reasons for each lesson.

In accordance with the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b), the EAM period will be coordinated and conducted by the Command of the First Squadron, the Cadet Leadership Chain (CLC), and the adapter cadets. The Command consists of officers from the Aviation, Logistics, and Infantry branches, all graduates of AFA. The CLC is composed of cadets from the 4th Squadron designated by their Command to serve as Squadron Leaders and Flight Leaders. Finally, the adapter cadets will be those determined by the Command of the 3rd Squadron. Furthermore, according to the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b), all actions of the adapters, who are the military personnel closest to the trainees during the EAM, will be conducted under the guidance of the Command and the CLC, in order to maintain standardization and professionalism.

Additionally, it should be noted that the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b) specifies that "the roles and behaviors of the CLC and the Corps of Adapters should be guided by the Leadership Manual and the Military Training Program Manual, in addition to those defined by this manual.

To better elucidate the competencies of the adapters, the specific needs of each stage of the EAM were observed. It is worth noting that this period consists of four phases. According to the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b), the initiation is the first week of adaptation, which begins with the presentation of civilian trainees and ends just before the presentation of students from the Preparatory School of Air Cadets.

During this phase, civilian trainees are guided regarding the challenges they will face in their respective courses and are encouraged to overcome them. They receive instructions on drill, military values, doctrinal basics, and the cadet routine itself. The manual emphasizes that instructions should be conveyed patiently and didactically. Punishments may not produce the desired effects, especially those that involve physical exertion. Instructions should be delivered in a sober and firm manner. Physical training will be monitored by the Physical Education Section (SEF) to prepare the trainee for the next phase.

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The second phase, called integration, begins, according to the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b), with the arrival of trainees from the Preparatory School of Air Cadets and continues for the subsequent two weeks. During this period, the need for commitment to activities is explained, with an emphasis on maturity and seriousness. Drill practice intensifies, and adapters must maintain patience and didacticism as the demands increase. When trainees make mistakes, corrective measures should be applied, in addition to individual guidance, and errors should be discussed with the entire group to prevent their recurrence. This reinforces esprit de corps and helps trainees understand that their actions affect their routine. There should be no moments of relaxation between adapters and trainees. Physical training intensifies, and from the second week of this phase, psychological pressure related to military readiness training begins (BRAZIL, 2023b).

The third phase, known as intensification, starts from the third Sunday of the EAM and continues for the subsequent two weeks. According to the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b), the weight of instructions and demands will be greater, forcing the trainee to develop self-control, organization, and planning skills. Physical and drill training intensify. Psychological pressure is constant, and the objectives of each instruction must be very well defined to avoid arbitrariness and personalism. Inappropriate comments should be promptly corrected, and the instruction team should ensure clarity in giving orders. There may be more military readiness training sessions.

In accordance with the same manual, the tolerance level of the adapters will be reduced, and the level of demand will be increased. Trainees with inappropriate behavior will receive personalized guidance. As physical training intensifies, the instruction team should pay attention to the trainees' nutrition, hydration, and rest. In the second week of this phase, adapters should also strive for cohesion and enthusiasm among the group while maintaining the maximum level of psychological pressure. The objectives of each instruction should already be known to each trainee. Furthermore, physical training reaches its peak, especially with activities typical of the military (BRAZIL, 2023b).

The fourth phase, consolidation, begins at the end of the fourth week and concludes with the presentation of cadet insignia to the trainees. Trainees are entrusted with understanding what is expected of them and demonstrating mature cadet behavior, in accordance with the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b). The group should already exhibit self-criticism, esprit de corps, and conscious discipline. The demands continue, but the level of psychological pressure decreases. However, there should be no complacency on the part of the adapters. Military readiness training should be conducted to enhance morale with the presentation of cadet insignia. As mentioned in the manual, adapters should emphasize error individualization. Physical training continues, but its intensity is reduced, with a focus on morale, unity, and a sense of overcoming obstacles.

It is important to note that during the EAM, the cadet adapter remains in the academic period. Therefore, as stated in the EAM Manual (BRAZIL, 2023b), the academic performance of the adapter should not be negatively affected. They will follow a schedule in which, when not directly involved in the adaptation process, they will attend their class routine as usual.

In light of the concepts outlined above, it is observed that the selection of AFA adapters is carried out by experienced and qualified officers who rely on the performance of second-year cadets. However, there is a lack of reference, standards, or manuals that contribute to this selection process, which is crucial in the formation of Air Force Cadets. Thus, this work proposes to map the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that contribute to the decision-making process of Squadron Commands, in accordance with the epistemological knowledge of this framework and as recommended by the guiding documents of the research, such as the EAM Manual and MCA 2-1.

III. METHODS OF ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY OBJECT

To prepare this work, a bibliographic review was conducted through the analysis of literature from renowned authors in the areas of leadership, adaptation, military training, and competency mapping. Additionally, a documentary analysis of the Manuals of the Brazilian Air Force (COMAER) related to the research topic was carried out. Furthermore, there was a need for a descriptive study to portray the reality concerning the selection of adapters and present the collected data.

As will be detailed later, the Brazilian Air Force Leadership Manual, the Early Adaptation Military Training Manual, and the Cadet Manual contain various characteristics that Cadets need to develop during their training. In this context, a field research was conducted with the Officers of the AFA Squadron Commands in the year 2023, through data collection (questionnaire) in a ranking model, presenting nine criteria extracted from COMAER Manuals. Thus, they were asked which characteristics they considered most important in selecting adapters, considering each phase of the Early Adaptation Military Training, in accordance with the criterion that each Command usually uses to select cadet adapters.

As a result of the qualitative analysis of the research, four criteria were selected from those nine criteria, which were considered the most important in the opinion of the Officers, considering each phase of the Early Adaptation Military Training. These four attributes were conceptualized and contextualized in order to understand their influence on the adapter's performance during the Training, aiming to be categorized as competencies. To do so, the method recommended by MCA 30-1, Manual for Competency Mapping in the Brazilian Air Force, was used. Since the author's intention was to prioritize the criteria, Officers were asked to assign a score to each proposed criterion, with 1 being the criterion judged most important and 9 being the least important.

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The data obtained in the research were tabulated in Google Sheets program spreadsheets and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The responses of the Officers were compiled, and based on this, the arithmetic mean of each criterion was calculated, according to the phases of the Early Adaptation Military Training. The average calculation was automatically performed by the software itself. In prioritization, the most relevant criteria were considered to be those with the lowest arithmetic means and, therefore, had the highest priority for use as competencies. It is worth noting that the research did not identify the participating military personnel to maintain the impersonality and impartiality of the information.

Finally, based on the literature review and the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire to the Officers, the intention is to establish a competency mapping that the cadet should have developed to better perform their duties as an adapter, aiming for a more refined selection process and contributing to an opportunity for improvement in the Early Adaptation Military Training.

IV. RESULTS

The characteristics chosen by the Officers of the Brazilian Air Force Cadet Corps as the most important in a Cadet in each phase of the Early Adaptation Military Training (EAM) will be presented.

A. Officers' responses

The Brazilian Air Force Leadership Manual, the Early Adaptation Military Training Manual, and the Cadet Manual establish attributes that military personnel need to develop during their training process. In order to achieve the objective of this work, Officers were asked to rank the following criteria by importance: good communication, doctrinal posture, physical fitness, emotional balance, good interpersonal relationships, organization, adaptability, initiative, and a sense of justice. Fourteen Officers who make up the Commands of the four Squadrons of the Brazilian Air Force Academy in the year 2023 participated in this research.

Compiling the responses of each officer, with 1 being the criterion they considered most important and 9 being the least important, the arithmetic mean of each criterion was calculated, according to each phase of the EAM. The average was automatically calculated using the Google Sheets software. The criteria with the best ratings were those considered most important by the Officers. In the scope of this work, the four most important criteria in each phase were considered essential for a cadet to become an adapter. To better present the panorama of responses, the criteria will follow the labeling shown in Table 1.

Criteria	
Good Communication	GC
Doctrinal Posture	DP
Physical Fitness	PF
Emotional Balance	EB
Good Interpersonal Relationships	IR
Organization	OR
Adaptability	AD
Initiative	IN
Sense of Justice	SJ

The criteria chosen by the Officers as the most important for Phase 1 are:

	GC	DP	PF	EB	IR	OR	AD	IN	SJ
Officer 1	1	2	9	3	8	4	7	6	5
Officer 2	2	3	7	6	8	5	9	1	4
Officer 3	1	5	4	2	3	6	9	7	8
Officer 4	1	5	7	3	4	6	2	9	8
Officer 5	9	7	4	6	8	2	1	3	5
Officer 6	8	1	5	4	9	2	6	3	7
Officer 7	1	3	9	8	2	6	4	5	7
Officer 8	5	6	2	3	1	4	8	9	7
Officer 9	7	9	1	8	2	3	4	6	5
Officer 10	2	1	3	4	9	8	7	5	6

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Officer 11	5	7	4	8	1	3	2	6	9
Officer 12	1	3	8	2	9	4	5	6	7
Officer 13	4	1	5	6	9	2	7	3	8
Officer 14	1	2	9	3	5	4	6	7	8
AVERAGE	3,4	3,9	5,5	4,7	5,6	4,2	5,5	5,4	6,7

For Phase 2, the most relevant criteria in an adapter are:

	GC	DP	PF	EB	IR	OR	AD	IN	SJ
Officer 1	1	2	9	5	8	6	3	7	4
Officer 2	3	1	8	2	7	6	9	4	5
Officer 3	2	1	3	4	7	5	6	9	8
Officer 4	5	1	6	2	9	3	7	4	8
Officer 5	4	9	5	8	6	3	1	2	7
Officer 6	7	1	6	5	9	4	3	2	8
Officer 7	6	1	8	2	7	3	4	9	5
Officer 8	4	9	1	3	2	5	7	6	8
Officer 9	8	7	1	9	6	2	4	3	5
Officer 10	2	1	3	4	9	7	8	6	5
Officer 11	6	7	5	8	2	4	1	3	9
Officer 12	1	2	5	3	9	4	8	6	7
Officer 13	6	1	5	2	9	3	7	4	8
Officer 14	2	1	9	3	8	4	5	6	7
AVERAGE	4,1	3,1	5,3	4,3	7,0	4,2	5,2	5,1	6,7

For Phase 3, on the other hand, the criteria that stand out the most in an adapter are:

	GC	DP	PF	EB	IR	OR	AD	IN	SJ
Officer 1	4	2	9	1	8	6	7	5	3
Officer 2	3	2	8	1	9	6	7	4	5
Officer 3	3	1	2	4	7	5	6	9	8
Officer 4	9	5	2	1	8	4	3	7	6
Officer 5	3	5	8	9	4	7	2	1	6
Officer 6	4	1	8	5	9	3	6	7	2
Officer 7	6	2	4	1	7	5	8	9	3
Officer 8	4	8	2	3	1	5	7	6	9
Officer 9	5	9	1	7	4	2	8	3	6
Officer 10	2	1	3	4	7	8	9	5	6
Officer 11	6	8	7	5	2	4	1	3	9
Officer 12	5	1	3	4	9	7	8	6	2
Officer 13	1	2	4	3	8	9	5	7	6
Officer 14	3	1	2	4	9	5	8	6	7
AVERAGE	4,1	3,4	4,5	3,7	6,6	5,4	6,1	5,6	5,6

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Finally, for Phase 4, the criteria chosen by the Officers as essential are:

	GC	DP	PF	EB	IR	OR	AD	IN	SJ
Officer 1	4	5	9	7	1	3	8	2	6
Officer 2	1	3	9	4	2	5	7	6	8
Officer 3	2	1	5	3	4	6	7	8	9
Officer 4	6	1	5	7	8	4	2	9	3
Officer 5	1	9	7	8	6	3	2	4	5
Officer 6	3	1	7	5	9	4	8	6	2
Officer 7	2	1	9	3	4	6	7	5	8
Officer 8	5	8	1	3	2	4	6	7	9
Officer 9	8	6	2	9	7	1	5	4	3
Officer 10	2	1	3	4	7	8	9	6	5
Officer 11	7	8	6	3	2	4	1	5	9
Officer 12	5	1	3	4	9	7	8	6	2
Officer 13	2	1	7	4	9	6	8	5	3
Officer 14	1	2	9	7	8	5	6	4	3
AVERAGE	3,5	3,4	5,9	5,1	5,6	4,7	6,0	5,5	5,4

In this way, the four criteria considered most important in each phase are presented in the table below:

	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
1°	GC	DP	DP	DP
2°	DP	GC	EB	GC
3°	OR	OR	GC	OR
4°	EB	EB	PF	EB

B. Definition of selected criteria

Initially, it is necessary to present the definitions of the criteria listed in Table 6. According to the "Corporate Resource Management (CRM) Manual" of the Air Force Academy, as outlined in MCA 37-250 (2021), communication is understood as follows: "We communicate in order to achieve our objectives. To achieve these objectives, we strive to be as effective and efficient as possible. This effectiveness depends on whether you were understood or not, whether the message was truly conveyed or not, and whether there were any disruptions during transmission that distorted the message or not. Efficiency depends on the speed at which the transmission occurs. The ability to communicate can be decisive for success or failure in achieving objectives (MCA 37-250, 2021, p. 31)."

According to the Glossary of the Armed Forces (BRAZIL, 2015), doctrine can be defined as the "set of principles, concepts, norms, and procedures, primarily based on experience, intended to establish lines of thought and guide actions, presented in an integrated and harmonious manner." Doctrinal posture is how the cadet behaves in relation to the rules and regulations imposed by the Air Force Academy, complying with them not out of fear of disciplinary sanctions but out of a sense of duty to follow what is prescribed.

When it comes to emotional balance, various definitions can be found. The Manual of the Formation and Strengthening of Values Program (PFV), as provided in MCA 909-1, establishes the following definition for this criterion: "Emotional balance, within the scope of the FAB (Brazilian Air Force), can be understood as the concept of Emotional Intelligence, which corresponds to an individual's ability to manage emotions in order to balance the emotional and rational, intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects. This enables the individual to recognize, assess, and deal with their own emotions and respond to adverse situations or interactions appropriately (MCA 909-1, 2022, p. 33)."

Organization refers to the ability to plan one's time and tasks in a way that establishes priorities and goals correctly. According to Claessens et al. (2007), time management refers to behaviors aimed at effectively using time to achieve specific

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objectives. The author also discusses the relationship between time management and planning. An individual should determine which tasks to perform based on their priorities and avoid distractions that may occur during the execution of these tasks.

Finally, good physical fitness is related to being in good shape and the cadet's ability to perform the physical activities planned for the training period and in preparation for a military career. According to the Norma de Sistema do Comando da Aeronáutica (NSCA) 54-3 (BRAZIL, 2020a), physical fitness is "the state of physical readiness of the individual at a given moment." According to the NSCA, this conditioning can be associated with health (CFAS) or physical-professional (CFP). The former relates to well-being and health promotion and is independent of the military's role. The latter refers to professional performance without a loss of quality during their working day (BRAZIL, 2020a). Since the military is a professional in warfare, their body must always be in good condition, combining CFAS with CFP.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the results obtained from the survey of the Officers, it is necessary to analyze the reasons for the importance of the chosen criteria.

A. Phase 1 - Initiation

In phase 1 of the EAM, the primary criterion chosen was good communication. At this point, the trainees have had little contact with military life. Therefore, the adapters, with courtesy and patience, must explain what needs to be done and, whenever possible, why each guidance is given. The focus of this phase is on the trainees' learning about the peculiarities of the new routine and how they can or cannot behave in a military organization. There is a need to level those from the civilian background with the trainees who will soon be coming from the EPCAr. Therefore, it is essential for the adapters to know how to convey their experiences and the orders emanating from the Command of the First Squadron and the Air Force Academy.

Next, the most voted criterion was doctrinal posture. This characteristic is fundamental since the adapters are the reference that the trainees will have for what it means to be a cadet and about the AFA. In the understanding of this author, the reason why this characteristic was not ranked first, as in the other phases, is due to the fact that the trainees do not yet have a full awareness of what is right or wrong according to military standards, so they cannot clearly demonstrate whether that behavior is an example to be followed or not.

As the third-place criterion, we have organization. This criterion, essential for any cadet, proves to be crucial for the adapter during this period. Firstly, because, as already mentioned, the cadet who conducts the adaptation is in a teaching period, and their academic performance cannot be compromised. Therefore, it is necessary for the adapter to organize their tasks and know how to plan their time to perform their duties well in the EAM, study, physical activity, and leisure. Furthermore, organization will contribute to ensuring that they do not miss any guidance to the trainees, avoiding being verbose and providing the most detail within the available time.

Finally, in fourth place, there is emotional balance. It is worth noting that the trainees will have many questions about the new reality, so it is necessary to have patience and not get irritated by the excess of questions or repeated mistakes. Moreover, it is the first week of an exhausting period, so the adapter will still be learning to deal with new responsibilities, higher levels of fatigue, and the responsibility of leading a troop. It is essential that they can maintain a professional demeanor and control their emotions, regardless of who is in their troop. Whether the trainee is a friend who has just joined the AFA or a person with a different personality than the one they usually have affinity with, everyone should be treated equally, depending on their individual needs.

B. Phase 2 - Integration

In phase 2 of the EAM, trainees from the EPCAr will be integrated into the troop. According to the data obtained, the first criterion to be observed in this phase is doctrinal posture. Now, trainees from civilian backgrounds will exchange experiences with former students, and this will influence their opinion about right and wrong. Trainees coming from the EPCAr, having been in the military for three years, will have more solid opinions about the posture of each adapter, mainly because they already know most of the cadets from the Preparatory School. Moreover, it is at this moment that trainees will pay closer attention to the examples set by the adapters to support their attitudes. Therefore, adapters must be attentive and act under the strictness of doctrine.

Secondly, there is good communication. It is important that the adapter can explain maturity and correct errors collectively. Also, in this phase, the guidelines must be more detailed so that all trainees understand the behaviors to be adopted. Good communication will also be important to explain to the EPCAr trainees about the differences between the organizational culture of the Academy and their former school, as well as to highlight any standardizations that had already been passed on to those who arrived first.

Organization remains in the third position. This is because the cadet adapter must continue managing their routine and tasks in the role. However, they will have an even greater workload at this moment, as there will be more trainees under their command. The larger number of trainees should not hinder the individualized attention that each one should receive, whether to address doubts or to receive the necessary corrections.

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Finally, emotional balance continues in fourth place. This criterion is highlighted in this phase because many adapters already know the trainees from the School of Barbacena, which could influence the relationship between them. It is important that the adapter shows the trainee from the EPCAr that the expected maturity in their actions is at a higher level than what was expected of them as students. Emotional balance will ensure that no trainee is treated differently just because of how they behaved at the EPCAr, ensuring equality among all.

C. Phase 3 - Intensification

Phase 3 of the EAM is the most sensitive of all. The criterion highlighted by the Officers for adapters in this phase continues to be doctrinal posture. Intensification, due to its higher demands on trainees, is the period with the highest level of stress. The expectations are high in this phase, and the tolerance for errors is lower. Therefore, it is essential that the adapters maintain exemplary rectitude, as trainees will closely observe whether the cadet complies with what he demands from the trainees.

Emotional balance now takes second place. The state of tension in which trainees find themselves in this phase will reflect on the adapters. It is important that the adapter can distinguish their stress from what should be effectively demanded from the trainees, without ceasing to treat them with respect. Furthermore, possible moments of irritation from the adapter should not affect their activities or lead to academic difficulties. The adapter must understand the delicate moment the trainee is going through and know the correct way and time to enforce certain standardization, paying attention to the physical and mental exhaustion of the trainees. At this moment, adapters have more autonomy to demand more physical exercises from the trainee, as they are already better prepared. However, cadets should not allow this autonomy to affect their judgment and lead them to exceed the limits prescribed in the EAM Manual.

Good communication is in third place. Although this aspect is still essential for correcting erroneous behaviors and ensuring that standardization are well understood, it is understood that, at this stage, the trainee already knows how to differentiate right from wrong and understands the reason for having to act according to the rules. Furthermore, it is expected that trainees from the EPCAr will assist those from civilian backgrounds so that the adapter does not need to be the main source of knowledge, fostering friendship and esprit de corps within the class. Additionally, excessive sleepiness among trainees will lead to greater inattention. Therefore, communication should be clear and objective.

In fourth place, physical conditioning is one of the most voted criteria by the Officers. This is because, during intensification, the level of physical activity among trainees reaches its peak. The adapter is also required to accompany the troop in runs, readiness training, and sometimes overnight stays that may require it, as an example and to boost morale. It is worth noting that trainees will constantly observe their adapters, including those who may not meet the expected physical standards. Finally, good physical fitness is the duty of all military personnel, and considering that the adapters will undergo the same standards of the Physical Conditioning Aptitude Test (TACF) as the trainees and other cadets, the adapter cannot fail to demonstrate physical vigor.

D. Phase 4 - Consolidation

Phase 4, the final period of the EAM, ranked doctrinal posture in first place. Trainees, on the verge of becoming cadets, are now capable of, among their adapters, identifying those whose behavior most closely resembles the regulations prescribed for the AFA. At this point, they define those who will serve as their role models and create stronger bonds of closeness with their adapters.

Good communication once again takes second place. Adapters, at this point, begin to treat them more like cadets and less like trainees, allowing them to clarify any remaining doubts and motivating them to maintain the enthusiasm befitting those who will soon receive the cadet's silver wings of the Brazilian Air Force. Although errors may still need to be corrected during this period, trainees are on the verge of becoming cadets. Therefore, more lectures are given on the AFA's organization, duty services, and routine, for example. To ensure full understanding of the information, adapters must engage in more open and meticulous conversations with the trainees, reminding them of the aspects in which they will be assessed and how they will be evaluated when they become cadets.

In third place, organization has once again been emphasized. Adapters must now ensure that the trainees have received all the help they needed during the EAM and are ready to assume the responsibilities of a cadet. Furthermore, the adapter's academic period will have progressed further, and it is important for the cadet to return to their usual routine, paying attention to possible standardizations in their schedule and planning for the studies they missed.

In fourth place, once again, emotional balance is found. The adapter must distinguish between the trainee who had just arrived at the Brazilian Air Force Academy and the cadet who is becoming one. The emotional moment as they approach receiving their cadet's silver wings should not be confused with the need for ongoing corrections. However, even if errors still occur, the seriousness of behavioral review should not overshadow the trainees' enthusiasm for their achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

The Military Adaptation Stage of the Brazilian Air Force Academy aims to adapt trainees to the daily life of cadets through physical, doctrinal, and military training. To conduct these activities, sixty third-year cadets are selected, who will work according to the

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guidelines of the Command of the First Squadron and the Cadet Leadership Chain. In order to achieve the best results with the trainees, the selection process for adapter cadets must consider the individual competencies necessary to perform this task effectively. The selection process for these military personnel, although carried out by qualified officers, lacks norms or manuals that contribute to standardizing the criteria for selection.

In this context, the purpose of this work is to propose mapping the competencies that a cadet should have developed to be selected by their Squadron Command as an adapter in the EAM, in order to contribute to the improvement of both the EAM itself and the trainees. Professional competencies related to individual performance and behavior were identified using the method proposed by MCA 30-1.

To achieve this goal, a field survey was conducted with the Officers of the Squadrons' Commands in 2023, inquiring about the characteristics considered most important in the selection of adapters, considering each phase of the EAM, according to the criteria used by each Command. Thus, for a cadet to become an adapter and participate in the training of trainees during the EAM, the military personnel must be capable of:

- a) conveying information and standards patiently and clearly;
- b) using appropriate and respectful language;
- c) knowing how to organize their time between different activities, both within and outside the EAM;
- d) allocating their time well among each trainee, according to individual needs;
- e) controlling their emotions and distinguishing between personal and professional matters;
- f) understanding the difficulties of the trainees; and
- g) maintaining physical fitness and good physical condition.

The competencies were not listed in any specific order but were presented in a free choice by the author. It is worth noting that the other characteristics presented in the questionnaire also hold great relevance and richness and could serve as topics for future work.

After observing the data obtained from the questionnaires and analyzing these responses, it is essential to understand the implications that these results have for the selection process of adapters. It is understood that the selection of adapters cannot be based on just one competence but rather on several. One competence complements another, and all are essential for the smooth running of the EAM.

It is emphasized that these competencies, although fundamental in all adapters, are not limited to the scope of the EAM alone. It is suggested that all cadets, future leaders of the Brazilian Air Force, seek to develop these knowledge, skills, and attitudes to improve their leadership capacity and serve as examples to their peers and subordinates. All the described competencies will be essential for their careers and for the performance of their future roles.

Furthermore, the role of an adapter is beneficial for the training of FAB Officers. Developing the listed competencies from the beginning of their careers, as well as having greater authority and responsibility over others, assists the cadet in preparing to assume positions that require a high level of commitment.

The opportunity to be an adapter allows for the personal and professional development of the cadet since it enables those selected to enhance skills such as leadership, communication, teamwork, and people management. Additionally, interacting with other military personnel, both older and younger, fosters the creation of friendships, which are essential for the work to be carried out by a FAB Officer.

It is also noted that the experience of participating in the EAM as an adapter develops in the cadet adaptability and independence in problem-solving, as the military will face various challenges throughout the period. This author, having participated in the EAM 2020 as a trainee and the EAM 2022 as an adapter, can see how significant this role is and deserves due recognition.

Moreover, it is necessary for the Instructor Standardization Course for the Military Adaptation Stage to reinforce in cadets the competencies observed in them to become adapters. It is important for cadets to understand each phase and recognize the relevance of applying these competencies throughout the EAM. Such competencies could, in the future, be addressed through workshops and case studies to place them in a practical context.

It is evident that the study of competencies is intrinsically linked to factors such as leadership, hierarchy, communication, and people management, inherent to the military profession. Thus, it is presumed that this work may lead to models and propositions that are connected to the development of competencies and attributes in other schools of the Brazilian Air Force, as well as in the educational organizations of the Brazilian Army and Brazilian Navy.

Finally, the identified competencies constitute a mapping that contributes to the selection of cadet adapters in the Military Adaptation Stage, achieving the proposed thesis. It is expected, therefore, to contribute to the selection of cadets who, at this moment, have the best profiles to teach and lead the beginning of the military training of the trainees and, thus, improve the EAM and the training of AFA cadets.

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