



Research Article

# Specifics of the Early Termination of Studies in Military Educational Programs

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## Abstract

Nowadays, the population of university students is the focus of researchers' attention, mainly due to the determination of assumptions and actual abilities to manage the demands of university studies. Increased interest in this area is a response to the need to address the current problem of higher education: a growing tendency to early school leaving, which does not allow universities to meet the social demand for professionals in the civil sector, especially in technical fields, military, in a wide range of specializations. In this discussion's context on the documentation of qualitative parameters of early school leaving at Czech universities, the article focuses on discovering the real reasons for early school termination for students of military study programs. The text has the character of a descriptive and comparative study. The study aims to verify the assumption that the reasons for early termination of studies related to the difficulty of military studies outweigh those reasons that are included in the category of study failure. Confirmation or refutation of this assumption affects the military's higher education system's ability to make full use of the measures of tertiary civilian education institutions to reduce early school leaving. In particular, methods related to the area of free choice of professional orientation of the student.

**Keywords:** early termination of studies, military students, study demands / failure.

## Introduction

According to the Framework for the Development of Higher Education, Czech university education (which also includes military education) was to reach a 35% share of university students in the age group 30-34 by 2020 (Framework for the Development of Higher Education by 2020). From the international level, 40% was required (Education and Training 2020 – ET 2020). In addition to these goals, the only military college (the University of Defence in Brno), founded by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), was to double the number of students at the beginning of studies in the academic year 2020/2021. Five hundred graduates were to leave the university each year, ready to fill in the numbers of missing officers in departments and facilities under the Ministry of Defence.

For comparison, the Czech Republic has been above the average of the countries selected by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) according to the research implemented since 2004 (Matějů et al., 2004). The Czech Republic, in the OECD statistics, in addition to Estonia and Sweden, belongs to the countries with the highest study failure. In addition, the trend that began around the year 2000 has shown an increasing tendency over the years and, according to some statistics, is still rising (Study Success at Czech Universities 2018). The most serious problem is in bachelor's degree programs, where there are approximately ten times more students than in master's degree programs. According to a study by a team of authors (Vlk, Drbohlav, Fliegl, Hulík, Stiburek, Švec, 2017), technical, scientific, and agricultural disciplines have achieved about 60% of study failure in recent years. The humanities and economic sectors of universities range between 40% and 50%. The failure rate was around 30% in the medical, legal, pedagogical, and artistic fields. By far: the lowest is 15% for psychology students. Mouralová, Tomášková (2007) point out that approximately half of all failures fall on the first years of study.

The military university also keeps statistics depending on the field and year of study. It is clear from them that mainly technical fields, electrical engineering rather than mechanical basis, face a high number of prematurely completed studies, and branches of studies based on an economic-managerial basis, which could be included in the humanities and economics categories. Let us give a concrete example illustrating the situation in military higher education. In total 297 students were admitted to the Faculty of Military Leadership, which provides the economic and managerial profile of the study, in the academic year 2018/2019. However, 219 students enrolled in the study. Already in the first year, 96 students dropped out of their studies. The required number of graduates at the given faculty for this 1<sup>st</sup> year is 128 people. At the Faculty of Military Technology, which offers technical fields of study, 282 students were expected to complete their studies for the same academic year. However, only 137 students enrolled in the study, and only 103 students started their studies – 21 students dropped out of their studies in the 1<sup>st</sup> year.

The presented statistical data only shows how many students do not complete the field they started to study. Nevertheless, they do not affect the fact that the student chooses another specialization or even another educational institution or form of study for some reason. It is also not possible to reliably predict how many students of the first year receive a university degree. The urgency of the higher education goals set raises questions: How to approach this phenomenon, which has long been accompanying not only Czech higher education? Can the early termination of university studies be a private matter of the student in the future?

We can find the answer at the international as well as national level. The international level is represented by the European Commission, which considers a high percentage of unsuccessful students to be a sign of the inefficiency of an educational institution. Since 2018, this opinion has established itself at the national level through the Ministry of Education, Youth

and Sports. All higher education institutions must state the measures they apply in their Annual Reports (Press Release 2019) informing about reducing the study failure. Students of the University of Defence in Brno belong to students of Czech universities. The military university is the only military university in the Czech Republic, which provides education for military professionals such as leaders (commanders) in both accredited and non-accredited forms of study.

The 2018 annual report of the University of Defence states: *"School regiment realized a set of measures included in the adaptation period of first-year students with the primary goal of motivating them to study. These measures are based on an individual approach to students."* (Annual Report of University of Defence Activities in 2018, p. 13). The Annual Report of the University of Defence Activities in 2019 regarding early termination of studies notes: *"The implementation of the measures taken to reduce the number of graduates resulted in a reduction in the number of students who left their studies. In 2019, there was a decrease in the drop-out rate of students compared to the same period in 2018, from 22% to 12%. In the evaluated period, 47 students had their studies interrupted. The total failure rate of first-year students at the University of Defence fell from 37.5% to almost 6%. It should be noted that unsuccessful military students usually remain in the service and leave for the Czech Armed Forces departments and facilities."* (The Annual Report of the University of Defence Activities in 2019, p. 18).

The number of unfinished university studies has become a problem for Czech universities in the Czech Republic today, which needs to be addressed at the level of the entire institution. If universities can identify and analyze various barriers to study, they can modify or remove them. It can increase students' chances of completing their university studies (Švec, Tichá, 2007). The study aims to verify the assumption that among the reasons for early termination of studies those related to the difficulty of outweighing the

demands of military studies outweigh those reasons that are included in the category over the reasons included of study failure. Confirmation or refutation of this assumption affects the military's higher education system's ability to make full use of the measures of tertiary civilian education institutions to reduce early school leaving.

### Methodology

There are a relatively large number of studies and many outputs concerning the problem of early school leaving. Therefore, to compare the results obtained at civilian universities with the results gained from probands from the military environment – they need to be meta-analyzed and find out how they were obtained and interpreted, whether they can be considered representative. The choice of research design was subject to this intention. It uses the qualitative methodologies and content analysis of information sources such as the Higher Education Act, the documents and reports of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, outputs from selected research projects in the time span from the 1970s to 2019, where the first-year civilian students formed the research sample. As for the military studies, content analysis was used to interview approximately 300 students. Interviews were conducted regularly before the end of the first semester of study. The content analysis was also used to obtain information from interviews with students who completed their studies in the 1<sup>st</sup> year, as part of the processing of diploma theses since 2015 (Vlašín, 2015).

The search of resources has shown that it is necessary to operationalize the concept of dropout. There are different concepts in the analyzed texts: early termination of studies, study failure, dropout, and retention. When assessing the research results, it is significant to answer the questions: What kinds of reasons do the research aim? Are any respondents' answers sufficient for the research either should the research differentiate the real motives for early termination of studies from the alternative ones? How are the student's real reasons detectable? The

research studies realized allow us to understand the importance of using qualitative research and its methods, especially interviews with students and qualitative analysis of their statements. The research studies also clarify the role of quantitative research: results enable us to observe a certain degree of stability or, vice versa, the dynamics of the reasons given in large groups of respondents. It is in addition to surveying the occurrence, distribution, and interrelations of reasons.

The mixed research design has proven to be an appropriate approach for the institution to investigate the actual causes of early termination of studies and monitor their changes. Based on such findings, it is possible to more accurately predict the need and priorities for potential innovations at the educational institution and thus ensure the effectual provision of assistance to the student in coping with the study requirements. Individual research teams use different approaches to explore the reasons for dropping out of the university. They also demonstrate how the given starting point opens the research problem. Although from the historical point of view, partial views have been constituted gradually. They can now be applied either as part of a holistic approach. They can be practiced individually or in various combinations according to the intent pursued. What views are these?

Until the 1970s, the approach that could be described as administrative prevailed – monitoring the socio-economic characteristics of students and their learning achievements before starting their university studies. The sociological approach since the mid-seventies of the last century allows institutional uncovering conditions of dropout. Moreover, the psychological method is associated with it. It aims at the identification of the students' internal dispositions and motives (Larsen et al. 2013; Švec, Koláčková, 2013; Vlk et al., 2017, p. 37).

The results of the research implemented within the individual approaches have resulted in an important finding. "The

dropout is a result of specific constellations of human characteristics; own family, school, and the education system only if these constellations have developed long-term negative attitudes towards the school and study." (Hloušková, 2014, p. 14). Whether the measures to reduce the number of unsuccessful studies are effective, it is necessary to know not only one-to-one reasons but, above all, their interrelations, which will finally result in the dropout. It is also required to know how the student's attitude towards school and study develops. It is essential to know all that information not only in general population parameters but especially concerning a particular educational institution, field of study, and a particular group (year) of students. Muralová and Tomášková (2007, p. 23) offer five model cases (A-E) for understanding the differences in the way of leaving school. They arose as thought constructs, similar to the Weber ideal types abstracting the individual characteristics cases of dropping out of studies to an extreme form. They have the ambition to combine all identified dimensions of the phenomenon called dropping out of university studies. It is useful to use them in research.

Most of the research implemented is aimed at a group of first-year students, in which the main number of unfinished studies is still recorded. Many researchers emphasize the fact that it is necessary to pay attention to the selection of the research sample. There may be different categories of respondents: those leaving the university with no continuation of this type of education, those who are waiting for the results of the admission procedure to another university or a decision to transfer to another field of study, etc. The percentage of individual groups in the research sample can significantly influence the outcome in the number and structure of the identified reasons for leaving school. The results of several studies focusing on first-year students may not be comparable.

## Results

The main findings of this study are the following: a) the concept of early school

leaving is a general term that includes the concepts of study failure and other forms of early school leaving; (b) academic failure has the largest share in early school leaving; c) in the military university environment, an ambivalent relationship to the basic parameters of military life is recorded - in specific cases, the same parameters are perceived as reasons for remaining in the study and also as reasons for early termination of the study. Study failure is also an important factor in prematurely terminated studies in this environment.

### ***Early termination of studies***

Universities of studies can be terminated early for several reasons (according to the law):

- a) voluntary abandonment of study,
- b) failure to meet the requirements arising from the study program according to the Study and Examination Regulations,
- c) withdrawal of the study program accreditation,
- d) termination of the study program accreditation,
- e) termination of the study program for reasons stated,
- f) termination of authorization to carry out the study program,
- g) expulsion from the study in connection with the results of the proceedings on the declared invalidity of the final examination state or its part or defense,
- h) expulsion from the study due to a disciplinary offense or as an effect of fraudulent conduct in the admission procedure (Act on The Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments to Other Acts as amended on 1 July 2019).

When researching or assessing the results, it is advisable to distinguish whether the early termination of studies happens at the student's request or at the initiative of the

educational institution, when the reasons for the termination of studies are stipulated by law and internal school regulations are fulfilled. However, the officially stated reasons for the termination of university studies need not and often are not the real reasons for leaving the university or the termination of a particular field of study. In many cases, the failure to fulfill study obligations is not caused by the inability to study, but, as the research of the study failure shows, it is due to pretty different, personal reasons. Expressions of the same meaning as the early termination of studies are used in many cases. These concepts are study failure, dropout, mortality (Framework for the Development of Higher Education by 2020). These express the share of unsuccessful termination of studies in the total number of students (Mouralová, Tomášková, 2007, p. 16). Just as the concept of early termination of studies, the study failure according to already implemented research at the national level is considered a considerably heterogeneous factor, under which several partial phenomena with different causes are hidden without exploring the motives of individual actors (Mouralová, Tomášková, 2007, p. 25).

According to the reasons stipulated by law, it is more accurate to approach the concept of early termination of studies as a more general term, including the theory of study failure and other forms of dropouts. It is necessary to know the real reason for the termination of studies in each case for statistical data processing so that it can be categorized. In some studies, the concept of termination of studies is almost absent. Researchers focus on the opposite of the phenomenon - keeping students in the study-retention. Spady (1970, 1971) and Astin (1972) began to explore this area fifty years ago. Moxley, Najor-Durack, Dumbrigue (2004) describe the sustainability of university students as a matter of fulfilling learning goals based on student aspirations in education. Švec and Koláčková (2013) point out that retention is a poorly structured problem. The use of retention indicators for comparing educational institutions and research

results is thus problematic in the Czech Republic. The low number of research studies in the given field further complicates it. Both approaches aim at the understanding of the common phenomenon. These are the reasons for the student to either stay in or leave a particular educational institution or program.

### ***Reasons for early termination of studies at civil universities***

The reasons causing the dropout of students are divided into several general groups (student background, organizational, pedagogical, social, psychological, and environmental reasons) according to theoretical models following the work of Bean (1980, 1982, 1983) and Tinto (1975, 1986, 1993). The study failure is the major contributor to the early termination of studies. It is made up of a whole group of factors. The team of authors, Menclová, Bašťová, Konrádová (2003), implemented the research on 363 students of technical faculties of Czech universities who had problems with their studies. It has resulted from the research that one of the most important causes of their study failure was their inability to master the technical curriculum, followed by the difference in the way of study at the secondary school.

The highest frequency of study problems in the total number of students who did not complete their studies was recorded in the research implemented by Švec and Tichá (2007) at the faculties of economics in the first years of the six faculties of economics of the Czech Agricultural University and the University of Economics in Prague. The study problems were identified as: the difficulty of study (57%), a different way of the study compared to the secondary school (48%), study abroad (12%), and quality of teaching (6%), concurrent study (5%) and poor faculty selection (4%). The loss of motivation to study due to the above-identified study problems was found in 48% of the interviewed students.

It results from the research implemented by Švec and Tichá (2007) that the study

failure is most often related to the field of study and the student himself when his personality traits, knowledge, abilities, and habits manifest themselves in coping with the study demands. The academic and social integration of the first-year student is a focus of the research done by Muralová and Tomášková (2007), which builds on the works of E. Pascarell and T. Terenzini (1980). Pascarell and Terenzini have shown that the academic integration degree depends on the student's academic success and intellectual development. Social integration is then related to the degree of interaction with peers and the school staff. The contact and communication with teachers and the others in the school management, as well as with the bureaucratic sphere of the institution, is important. According to these authors, the early termination of studies can be prevented by timely and well-planned interventions through the institution towards specific students, in whom indications of an intention to drop out have been identified. Successful integration correlates significantly with the general characteristics and the student's characteristics. These include e.g., gender, ethnicity, talent, academic abilities, study results from the secondary school and the students' expectations, as well as the parents' incomes and education, the motivation to complete their studies, extracurricular activities. In addition, last but not least, the choice of university and whether the given institution was a priority choice for the students, a substitute choice, or even an emergency choice (Muralová, Tomášková, 2007).

Muralová and Tomášková (2007) describe the situations leading to the early termination of studies and their causes as follows: dissatisfaction with the study form and the teaching form, dissatisfaction with the choice of field of study, the mismatch between wishes and the reality, the lack of motivation to study, incompatibility with the university or the university environment, the lack of skills and more external factors. They point out that individual reasons do not lead to the early termination of studies. However, it is a combination of several factors or a gradual

increase in problems and their accumulation.

The study aimed to examine the access to education in 5,805 undergraduate students with the use of the Self-Regulated Learning, Emotions and Motivation Computerized Battery (Mega, Ronconi, De Beni, 2014). The educational institution itself need not necessarily cause the overall dissatisfaction of a student, but it is strongly influenced by his overall attitudes to life, work, and study. The structural equation model showed that students' emotions influence their self-regulated learning and their motivation, and these, in turn, affect academic achievement. Thus, self-regulated learning and motivation mediate the effects of emotions on academic achievement. Moreover, positive emotions foster academic achievement only when they are mediated by self-regulated learning and motivation (Mega, Ronconi, De Beni, 2014). The study failure is also closely related to coping with the load and especially the study load. From the socio-psychological point of view, the study load can be described as the demands of the study.

According to the pan-European HEDOCE study from 2015, implemented by the Dutch research center CHEPS and the Norwegian NIFU (Stiburek, Vlk 2018), it is the motivation that decides whether the student wants to turn to self-study, to attend lectures, to actively participate in seminar discussions and to devote his time and energy to the efforts for a true understanding of the problems and the acquisition of skills. Motivation will reinforce the will to cope with the obstacles presented by the study load. Universities often do not admit that motivation is a factor that they can influence directly.

#### ***Reasons for early termination of studies at the military university***

The military environment and profession are attractive for the many benefits it provides to military professionals, as well as for the variety and complexity of activities (adventures, extreme living conditions, etc.). Benefits usually include

salary, scholarship, free accommodation, full board, language study offer, foreign training courses and stays, military equipment, sports activities, cultural activities, crediting of retirement time, and security of future employment. The basic parameters of military life that accompany the student throughout his university studies – the complexity of military training, military way of life, which emphasizes the fulfillment of military duties during studies, obedience to the authorities, and adherence to the daily routine are very attractive to some students. They also joined the army because of them and enrolled in the studio. For others, the same parameters can be a significant hurdle because they are more interested in the benefits of military service.

Recently, it has emerged that the undeniable advantages – benefits that represent a competitive advantage of soldiers in the labor market, cease to be motivators for the next generation Z to continue training. As shown above, the number of unfinished studies in the first year of study has not decreased significantly in recent years, quite the contrary. The situation of a military university about the early termination of studies is more complicated than the situation of a civilian university – not all those admitted to study startup. Not only for reasons commonly found in the civilian sector (e.g., the selection between a few schools based on a successful admission procedure) but also for health reasons (a practical drill on the training ground), which precede the commencement of academic studies. Both physical and mental health are monitored because of a lack of training in the training area (continuous military training). For example, at the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year, approximately 60 people terminated this course voluntarily.

In determining the reasons for the dropout, attention is paid to the first stage. Whether the reasons fall more in the military conditions and student life demands or the area of study failure further diversified. It is traditionally assumed as the first group

of reasons prevails. Unlike civilian institutions, the military sphere has not ascribed the importance of a socio-psychological, qualitative concept of study failure as a civilian institution. The existing reasons for the early dropout do not always correspond to consequences used in the national and international studies mentioned. Military students – were not included. The research implemented was to a smaller extent. It was linked to the development of students' diploma theses (Vlašín 2015) or the solution of partial problems. For example, attention has been paid to coping strategies in connection with the difficulty of military training, but not with the study (Kutal, 2011, Honzek, 2015).

The University of Defence monitors the powerful incentives that led students to launch a military form of study and were reported by more than 50% of students. The strong motivation was demonstrated in the following areas: guaranteed security of employment after graduation (81.2%); interest in the army and the profession of an officer of the Army of the Czech Republic (78.2%); increase in physical fitness and sports (77.6%), the possibility of obtaining a university degree in the field (72.3%), becoming independent (67.4%), the desire for adventure (61.3%); service to homeland and admiration for military values (57%), financial remuneration during the studies at the University of Defence (55.6%). If we compare them with the reasons given by the first-year students at the early termination of studies, we can say: These are often unfulfilled expectations in individuality areas. However, they may also be caused by misconceptions of the applicants for the military profession or underestimation of their abilities.

The study failure rate and the students' reasons at the military university vary depending on the field of study, as indicated by qualitative research on the early termination of studies at the University of Defence in 2015 (Vlašín). With the help of the content analysis of the answers of 10 respondents (5 represented the economic-managerial focus and five the

technical focus of the study) – two model cases have been drawn up, which illustrate the ways of early termination of the studies at the military university.

The majority of applicants are admitted to study the military study programs in economics and management. The main motives are military profession interests: armed forces, positive attitude to the military, security of employment, financial security, and social prestige. The first reflections on leaving school after the completion of the fundamental training course are related to negative feelings from the military academic environment in the garrison of Brno: the quality of accommodation is assessed negatively, the university environment does not match the original ideas (selection of unnecessary subjects, style and low level of teacher training, an unsatisfactory subsidy of foreign language teaching), lack of military practice and unwillingness to adapt to the rules and requirements of the military academic environment.

There are feelings of non-freedom, lack of self-realization and minimal contact with the military environment and training. Studying is not considered to be very demanding – rather a continuation of the secondary school. A student thinking about the early termination of studies from the first week after matriculation decides and resolves the situation within four months of its commencement. His family and friends either discourage him or support him. Whatever the approach, if his resolution to terminate the studies is strong, he will do it. The student believes that the University of Defence has the tools to keep him, but does not use them - it recommends combining teaching with practical training, individual approach of superiors and interest in the student, cooperation with older students – mentoring as a tool of integration into the team. The student quits the service and completely leaves the military area or works as an ordinary soldier in a unit or a facility of the army.

The following reasons have been found out among students: lack of interest, inability



to master the curriculum of this focus, different way of the study compared to the secondary school, too high requirements for some exams, insufficient preparation at the secondary school, poor choice of the faculty, low support from teachers, poor quality of lectures and exercises (Vlašín, 2015). The majority of applicants for admission to the military-technical study programs are enrolled. In some cases, it is owing to a large number of applicants. They were not placed in economic management programs. The main motives are concentrating in the military together with the ambition to obtain a university degree and academic degree, social securities – financial background and security of future employment in the Army of the Czech Republic, narrow specialization (pilot, meteorologist, geographer, weapon and ammunition expert, etc.) and the non-traditional character of work. The student comes from secondary school, employment, employment office, or another university.

He begins to consider leaving either before starting the basic training course (wondering whether he has made the right career choice) or two to three months after the start of the academic year when he admits that he is unable to meet his study obligations in technical subjects – e.g., electrical engineering and mathematics. Different teachers' approaches, their demands on students, and the related requirements for passing credits/exams also play a role. He assesses the university environment, or more precisely, its buildings, classrooms, but also hostels rather negatively (during a day the student moves during breaks to different classrooms located in five buildings of the University of Defence). The information on the new accreditation of the study program of the faculty is misleading for him. He learns about the five-year master's study program without the intermediate stage (the degree of bachelor). He assesses the demands on the service of a military professional who he will be after taking an oath of a professional soldier.

Emphasis is placed primarily on military behavior and courtesy, punctuality,

observance of the daily routine, drill training, and dressing discipline. The student does not decide on the dropout quickly (considering one to two months), assesses all alternatives – his abilities, advantages, and disadvantages of terminating education. He consults his decisions with his parents and friends. He would like to gain experience in a unit first, he would like to be an authority for subordinates – not just a university-educated officer without practice. He does not give up the idea of completing university education after a certain period of service in a unit, without realizing the pitfalls of further studies. The student believes that the University of Defence does not have a tool to keep him if he has already decided – his resolution is definitive, binding, and authoritative. It will not change by the involvement of school management, the individual approach to his needs, or interviews with superiors. He then assesses the approach of the teaching staff, teamwork, team consolidation in the course of basic preparation and communication – timely and clear provision of all information. The assessment of the real conditions of study and expectations play an important role. Expectations are referred to as naive – the discrepancy between the ideas of studying at the military and a narrowly specialized university, and not "only" at the university founded by the Ministry of Defence. Emphasis is placed primarily on military behavior and courtesy, punctuality, observance of the daily routine, drill training, and dressing discipline. The student does not decide on the dropout quickly (considering one to two months), assesses all alternatives – his abilities, advantages, and disadvantages of terminating education. He consults his decisions with his parents and friends. He would like to gain experience in the first unit. He would like to be an authority for subordinates – not just a university-educated officer without practice. He does not give up the idea of completing university education after a certain period of service in a unit, without realizing the pitfalls of further studies. The student believes that the University of Defence does not have a tool to keep him if he has

already decided – his resolution is definitive, binding, and authoritative. It will not be changed by the involvement of school management, the individual approach to his needs, or interviews with superiors. He then assesses the teaching staff approach, teamwork, team consolidation in the course of basic preparation and communication – timely and clear provision of all information. The assessment of the real conditions of study and expectations play an important role. Expectations are referred to as naive. It means the discrepancy between the ideas of studying at the military and a narrowly specialized university, and not "only" at the university founded by the Ministry of Defence.

The interviewed students of this program stated their reasons for the decision not to complete their studies: insufficient military training or strict military regime and disagreement with the scope of employment of a professional soldier, unsatisfactory five-year master's study program, demanding study requirements (mainly the subject "Basics of Electrical Engineering"), the composition of dissatisfactory subjects: Mathematics, Economics, etc., underestimation of their preparation, selection of professional study module after three years of study, a different approach of teachers – the way of education and interaction, a small-time allocation for English lessons.

From the abovementioned results, it can be concluded that the military conditions of the students' lives are not a prevailing reason for the decision to terminate their studies prematurely. As with civilian universities, these are reasons falling under the category of study failure. Therefore, it is a priority to pay attention to the crucial issues in this category. That has already been identified at civilian universities, such as motivation to study and coping with the study load. The specific steps have already been taken in these directions and are being prepared.

## Conclusion

Czech higher education has become a mass affair since the 1990s, as in other developed countries. The Rector of the most important Czech University – Charles University in Prague – Tomáš Zima states that the chances of university studying in the 1<sup>st</sup> year should be given to the largest possible population. On the other hand, it can mean a loss of a year of life for unsuccessful students and unnecessary issued funds based on school subsidies. Therefore, the schools themselves try to provide applicants with as much information as possible about the choice of field within their motivational programs. According to universities, a change in the law could also reduce failure – students can choose a specific study field only at the end of the first year. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports see perspectives in higher permeability of fields – flexibility in the study of study programs. For example, organizing compensatory courses that help increase success and master the required substance is a meaningful measure. Nevertheless, their impact will be limited until universities learn to work better with student motivation. An important factor that plays a role in the success or failure of a student at a university is his ability to manage the study load – the demands of study, related to motivation and personal discipline.

If it has been ascertained that the reasons for dropping out of the study programs are the reasons for study failure, does this mean that the military higher education system can use the same tools to reduce the dropout rates as civilian universities? The answer to the question is not and cannot be unequivocal because the development of military education after 1989 was not extensive. On the contrary, the individual faculties were gradually reduced, and subsequently, in 2004, the three military universities merged into one university. This process was also accompanied by significant interventions in material infrastructure and financial provision. The Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic founded the university. Its development has been and still is limited

by the allocated funds and the requirements of the armed forces for the profile of specialties as well as the requirements for the number of university-educated personnel within the Ministry of Defence.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports sees the perspectives in higher permeability of disciplines – flexibility within the study programs. Universities themselves create incentive programs in the framework of marketing activities that would raise students' awareness of the conditions and perspectives of their studies. The effectiveness of organized compensation courses that help to increase success and to master the required subject is conditioned by the fact that universities do not learn to work better with the motivation of the students.

The civilian sector already provides more freedom to choose a future career orientation in the credit system of study than the military study, where the variability of the credit system is limited. It also enables the study of several disciplines at the same time and participation in research and development projects. It uses modern technologies often and more intensively to provide basic and complementary forms of higher education (video recordings of lectures, remote lectures access). It establishes intensive cooperation with practice in relevant fields of study. Educational institutions have set up counselling and development centres to provide students with a wide range of services enabling them to cope with the demands of their studies.

The military education system is aware of the fact that several intelligent, talented and ambitious young people who are dissatisfied with what the school offers them leave the school – it is a mismatch of ideas and expectations from their studies and their real form. Through regular counselling interviews at the beginning of their studies, the university seeks to identify these disappointed individuals first and then to assist in their integration into the university environment, which also often represents the social environment of the field. The school actively focuses on

supporting the individual study needs of students, increasing their motivation to study, and assistance in choosing a suitable field of study, which facilitates the application of its graduates in practice. Students have also been offered the opportunity to solve individual problems associated with adapting to the new social and learning environment, inter alia, through the services of the University Advisory Centre.

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