

The Factors of Mental Maladjustment of Law Enforcement Officers

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Abstract. The article presents the data of the study of mental maladjustment factors of law enforcement officers. The study involved 153 employees of the Internal Affairs bodies. It is established that more than 30 % of experts of an extreme profile have a complex of mental disadaptation signs. The system of factors contributing to the development of mental maladjustment: professional, social and individual psychological. The main professional factors include the profile of professional activity, stress conditions of official activity, a high level of organizational stress, the specifics of the activity, length of service. To social – lack of family and children, the presence of 3 or more children, low level of education, a tendency to limit social contacts. To individual & psychological – personal resources – using of maladaptive coping strategies, low overall adaptive capacity, inadequately inflated self-esteem, low rates of mental abilities; somatic disorders, high level of anxiety, signs of depression, neuropsychiatric instability. The results should be taken into account in the development of preventive measures to reduce the likelihood of mental maladjustment.

Key words - *mental maladjustment, law enforcement officers, professional factors, social factors, individual psychological factors.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Professional activity is the most important component of human life. It leaves a peculiar imprint on his personality and the whole way of life [1]. Professional activity of specialists in many industries in modern society takes place in difficult conditions, designated by the concepts of "special", "crisis", "stress", "extreme".

Adaptation of a person to extreme situations is the most important individual and social characteristic [2,3].

Professional activity of law enforcement officers is characterized by the impact of stress factors [4,5,6] Performing official and professional duties in conditions complicated by the impact of emotional and stress factors associated with the aggravation of the criminal situation, local fighting, they can be attributed to the risk of stress and, as a consequence, the development of mental maladjustment. In turn, this can have a negative impact on both the employee's personality and the quality of his / her activities.

Under the concept of personality disadaptation is understood psychological phenomenon, which manifests itself in the behavior, condition of the person, as well as in the properties of the character of the disadapted person.

In accordance with the structural-level concept the mental adaptation is a complex process due to the structural-level organization of the psyche. Mental adaptation is a result of psychophysiological (biological), individual-personal (psychological), social (personal-environmental) substructures functioning. Depending on the degree of these substructures functioning, mental adaptation can manifest itself at different levels of the continuum: mental adaptation – mental maladjustment. Disadaptation is expressed in deformation of biological, psychological and social mechanisms of human activity. It arises as a result of the fact that the requirements of the situation exceed the resource capabilities of the system to meet them, the system links between the components that ensure their coordinated activities, at some stages weaken or disintegrate. The social level of maladjustment is characterized by inadequate response, affective outbursts and isolation, psychological – sharpening of character traits, rigidity, emotional tension, inadequate self-esteem, psychophysiological level – physical weakness, neurotic reactions, decreased immunity, stereotypical motor reactions [7].

To date, the severity of the mental maladjustment problem is the lack of special studies on the types and factors of maladjustment, and the lack of data relating to mental maladjustment of law enforcement officials, allowing to organize an effective system of prevention and correction of personality maladjustment, which forces to pay attention to this problem and evaluate it as very relevant.

The aim was to study the factors of mental maladjustment in law enforcement officers.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was attended by 153 employees of the Internal Affairs bodies (ATS) in the Arkhangelsk region, Ms. age - 34.3 ± 7.6 y. ($M \pm \sigma$).

The experimental-psychological method of research was used: survey, expert survey, multilevel personal

questionnaire "Adaptability" (MLE AM), McLean scale of organizational stress, the questionnaire "Emotional burnout" by V.V.Boyko, H.Spielberger's test in the modification by Y.A.Hanin, R.Lazarus and S.Folkman's coping test, Dembo-Rubinstein's test.

The severity of police officers' mental maladjustment was evaluated using our method of expert survey of managers "Assessment of the individual and personal maladjustment severity of employees of the internal Affairs bodies." It is based on the method of expert evaluation, consisting of 16 items relating to psychological states and behavior, as well as the quality of the work performed.

With the help of a multi-level personality questionnaire "Adaptability" (MLO-AM) by A.G. Maklakov, S. V. Chermyanin [8] studied the adaptive capabilities of the individual based on the assessment of psychophysiological and socio-psychological characteristics of the individual, reflecting the integral features of mental and social development. The basis of the test is the idea of adaptation as a constant process of active adaptation of the individual to the conditions of the social environment, affecting all levels of human functioning.

To assess the tolerance (stress resistance) to organizational stress, the McLean scale of organizational stress was used [9]. The higher the total index of organizational stress, the greater the predisposition to the risk of coronary diseases and occupational burnout, the highest risk in type A behavior (the total index is more than 50 points).

With the help of the questionnaire "Emotional burnout" by V.V.Boyko [9] we studied the picture of emotional burnout as a dynamic process that occurs in stages, in full accordance with the mechanism of stress.

To measure anxiety as a personality characteristics and assessment of anxiety was used Spielberg-Hanin's test "Study anxiety" [10].

R.Lazarus, S.Volkman's coping test [11] is designed to determine coping mechanisms, ways to overcome difficulties in various areas of mental activity, coping strategies. This questionnaire is considered to be the first standard technique in the field of coping measurement.

The Dembo-Rubinstein's test in the modification by A.M.Prikhozhan [12] was used to determine the level of self-esteem and claims. This technique is based on direct assessment (scaling) of a number of personal qualities by employees.

In processing the results the package of applied statistical programs SPSS (version 23.00, license Z125-5301-14) and standard numerical methods were used [13]. Testing of hypotheses for independent samples on the reliability of the mean difference in the analysis of quantitative data in populations with normal distribution and the same variant was carried out using the student's method, if the distribution differs from the normal one, the nonparametric Mann-Whitney criterion is used. In the case of comparing the distributions of the results of the two samples by the frequency of occurrence of the considered features, the Fisher criterion (φ^*) was chosen. Correlation, factor, cluster types of analyses were used.

III. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND THEIR DISCUSSION

During the survey, it was found that in their professional activities, one in five police officers faced situations involving an immediate threat to life, and every second – was subjected to verbal and physical aggression, 21.1% of employees noted that they were in professional situations, accompanied by a sense of fear of death. At the time of the survey, 11.2% of employees rated their work harder and more intense than ever, as very heavy and intense – 3.3%.

Analysis of the results by the method of "MLO-Adaptability" revealed that almost half of police officers (43.8%) belonged to the 3rd group of adaptive abilities of the individual with satisfactory adaptation, most of them had signs of different accentuations, which in the usual conditions were partially compensated and could be manifested when changing activities; therefore, the success of adaptation largely depended on the external environment. These persons, as a rule, had low emotional stability. 7.5% of the employees were assigned to the 4th group of reduced adaptive abilities. This group had signs of obvious character accentuations and some signs of psychopathies; the process of adaptation was difficult for them. Persons of this group had low neuropsychological stability, were often conflicted.

We found that 38.2% of employees had a set of mental maladjustment signs, including the following manifestations: psychophysiological, individual-psychological, social-group, professional-activity maladjustment. The complex of mental maladjustment of employees included the following features: low level of efficiency, low tolerance to organizational stress, tendency to professional burnout, difficulties in establishing interpersonal contacts, conflicts, high neuropsychic stress, lack of desire to comply with generally accepted norms of behavior, inadequate behavior and behavioral deviations, dependent behavior, aggressiveness, depressed mood, sleep disorder, weakness and exhaustion [14].

Analysis of the factor structure of law enforcement officers' personal characteristics showed that the leading factor was the factor of "neuroticism" (23.9 %). This factor included such characteristics as hypochondria, low behavioral regulation, increased conflict, aggressiveness, increased personal anxiety, hypersensitivity combined with emotional coldness and rejection of generally accepted norms of behavior. The second most important factor was "maladaptation disorders" (10.4 %), including scales of asthenic and psychotic reactions and states, depression, paranoia, hypomania and social introversion. The third factor was "resistance to stress" (8.5 %); this factor included adaptive and non-adaptive coping strategies.

The study revealed a system of factors that contribute to the emergence and development of mental maladjustment in specialists of extreme profile of activity: professional, social and individual psychological.

Professional factors included: activity profile, stressfulness of working conditions and length of service (Table 1)

Table 1 Characteristics of mental maladjustment occupational factors of law enforcement officers

Factors	Components	The factors of maladjustment
Professional	Activity profile	Maladjustment manifestations in 50.0% of the division of operational investigative activities employees and 26.3% of the division of public order.
	Stress conditions official activity	Exposure to verbal and physical aggression (41.5%); high level of organizational stress (31.4%) (McLean test); experience of stress (with fear of death) in professional situations (21.1%); presence of situations related to an immediate threat to life (21.0%); business trips to the North Caucasus region (20.4%); frequent stressful situations in activities (11.9%); immediate threat to health (11.2%); work harder and harder than usual (11.2%); injury during work (9.9%) (questionnaire).
	Work experience	Work experience more than 15 years (27.6%); work experience up to 3 years (10.5%)

Social factors: marital status, level of education, social contacts (Table 2). To individual-psychological and individual psychological personality characteristics.

Table 2 Characteristics of social and individual psychological factors of mental maladjustment of law enforcement officers

Fact ors	Compo nents	The factors of maladjustment
Social	Marital status	No family: single (22.5%), divorced (8.0%); absence of children (27.2%), presence of 3 or more children (6.6%).
	Educational level	General secondary education (10.5 %), secondary special education (36.8%), higher education in the Ministry of Internal Affairs (5.9%)
	Social contact	Tendency to limit social contacts, focus on communication in a narrow circle (18.9%) (scale of the 1st level of MLO-AM).
Individually-Psychological	Individually-psychological features of personality	Inadequately inflated level of claims (65.7%), overestimated self-esteem (24.1%) (Dembo-Rubinstein's method), periodic alcohol consumption (92.7%), smoking (50.7%) (Questionnaire), high personal anxiety (10.7%) (Spielberger's anxiety test); inadequate coping strategies (6.0%) (R.Lazarus' test).

Based on the cluster analysis of the survey results, psychological tests and expert survey data, we identified a group of specialists with signs of mental maladjustment – 53 people (34.6%) and a group without such signs (adapted) – 100 people (65.4 %).

Adapted police officers easily and adequately oriented in the situation, had a high emotional stability and behavioral regulation, were not conflicted, sociable. Maladjusted officers were characterized by low behavioral regulation, moral standard, communicative potential tendency to the formation of syndrome of emotional burnout, conflict,

impulsiveness, lack of self-confidence, a strong neuro-psychological stress, high anxiety, low attention span, performance, and autonomic imbalance. More than half of the employees of this group abused alcohol and had discipline violations

Disadapted specialists were more often on business trips to the North Caucasus region and assessed the tension of their work as heavy, had professional experience of more than 15 years. They were characterized by a lower level of education and intellectual development. They were more likely to encounter difficulties in establishing interpersonal and family relationships. Also, to cope with stress, they used less adaptive coping strategies, had high levels of self-esteem and claims, and they often smoked and occasionally drank alcohol. According to the scales of the 1st level of MLO-AM maladapted, in comparison with adapted, were more characteristic manifestations of aggressiveness, conflict, frequent change of mood, interests, indecision, increased anxiety, self-doubt, difficulties in establishing interpersonal contacts, isolation.

Correlation analysis showed that disadapted employees had high rates of organizational stress ($r=0,304$, $p=0,000$) and personal anxiety ($r=0,309$, $p=0,000$), low level of education ($r=0,175$, $p=0,032$), communicative potential ($r=443$, $p=0,000$), as well as these employees more often used confrontation as a strategy of coping with stress ($r=0,175$, $p=0,032$). Staff with high levels of organizational stress have been shown to use less adaptive coping strategies such as confrontation ($r=0.269$, $p=0.001$), distance ($r=0.219$, $p=0.008$), and avoidance ($r=0.337$, $p=0.020$).

IV. CONCLUSION

1. The majority of employees (43.8%) belong to the group of satisfactory adaptive abilities of the individual, the success of adaptation in this group depends largely on the external environment.
2. More than 30 % of the specialists extreme profile, have the complex of symptoms of mental distress, including the following manifestations: physiological, psychological, socio-group, professional activity.
3. The development of mental maladjustment among extreme profile of activity specialists is influenced by a system of factors: professional (profile of professional activity – division of operational investigative activity, stress conditions of official activity – participation in business trips to the North Caucasus region, stay in stressful conditions, high level of organizational stress, specificity of activity, work experience – up to 5 years and over 15 years); social (lack of family and children, the presence of 3 or more children, low level of education, a tendency to limit social contacts); individual psychological (personal resources – the use of inadequate coping strategies, low overall adaptive capacity, inadequately inflated self-esteem, low rates of mental abilities; somatic disorders, high level of anxiety, signs of depression, neuropsychiatric instability).
4. Psychological profile of maladjusted professionals includes increased aggression, conflict, impulsivity, expressed mental stress, high anxiety, a tendency to frequent change of mood, addictive symptoms, misconduct.

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