

ROLE OF POSITIVE VALUES AND PERSONALITY TRAITS IN PREVENTING OF PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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Abstract

Despite the significant increase of scientists' interest towards investigation of police personnel burnout syndrome diagnostic and psycho prophylaxis problem, the issue study in aspect of positive psychology ideas still remains beyond the researchers' interests. Based on the fundamental provisions of positive psychology we can assume that certain positive values and its "strong" traits of personality may be the predictors of preventing the emergence of professional burnout among law enforcement officers. The objective of current research was to determine the characteristics of the burnout manifestations among police personnel and to identify the positive values generic to law enforcement officers, as well as to define the role of these values and certain personality traits in prevention of burnout among police officers. Using the r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient on a sample of 180 law enforcement officers enabled the definition of certain personal properties of police personnel which manifestations aggravate in every burnout phase (I – III). The common feature of all burnout phases is manifestation of such personal traits as neurosis, depression, shyness, emotional lability. Also, manifestation of such personality traits as irritability, spontaneous and reactive aggression, openness aggravates in II ("Resistance") and III ("Exhaustion") phases of professional burnout. As for police personnel positive values studies, we can assume that high level of "humanity", "wisdom" and "courage" virtues combined with the development of certain personality traits may be the predictors of burnout emergence among law enforcement officers.

Keywords: Professional burnout, positive psychology, values and generic "strong" personality traits, law enforcement officers, prevention of professional burnout

Introduction

Professional burnout syndrome has a long history of research (C. Maslach ,1993; 2012; 2014; W. Schaufeli, 1993;2014; M. Leiter 2001; V.Boyko,1996; V. Orel, 2001 and others) and has been widely studied among the representatives of different socio-economic professions: health workers, teachers, air traffic controllers, managers etc (S. Cordes, T. Dougherty, M. Blum,1997; C. Cherniss,1998; E. Demerouti , A. Bakker, F. Nachreiner ,W. Schaufeli , 2000; E. Greenglass, R. Burke, 2001; I.Arshava, 2002; G. Keinan, A. Maslach – Pines, 2007; I. Friedman, 2003; Y. Demirel,2005; C. Hayes , B. Weathington ,2007; E. Nosenko, N. Grisenko, 2010; M. Griffin , N.Hogan , E. Lambert ,2012; Y.-W. Lin .; 2013).

However, despite the mentioned facts, the relevance of actual problem research remains constant and even increases each year. In particular, importance of problem solution becoming especially urgent when it comes to law enforcement officials whose activity is connected with considerable stress and excessive emotional tension.

It is important to note a significant role played by extremely stressful occupational environment as well as sociopolitical and economic changes in society (negative and distrustful attitudes towards police officers during the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, military conflict in the east of the country, the beginning of law enforcement system reforms) in causing and support of constant emotional tension among police officers. All these events lead to employees' mental and physical health decline and cause disorders in social sphere.

Ever increasing number of studies dedicated to professional burnout among law enforcement officers, especially during the last decade (O. Timchenko, 2003; E. Potapchuk, 2004; G. Keinan , A. Maslach-Pines ,2007; D.Kurtz, 2008; R.Cieslak , J. Korczynska, J Strelau, M.Kaczmarek, 2008; I. Arshava, A. Baratyns'ka, 2014) demonstrates the need for more detailed research and definition of personality determinants that promote stress resistance; to identify the particular qualities of burnout symptoms; and the most important issue is to determine the predictors to prevent the emergence and progress of this occupational disorder among police personnel.

Researches by domestic and foreign scientists enable the definition the following personality determinants of stress resistance. For example, according to N.E. Vodopyanova and V.E. Orel, personal determinants of stress and burnout resistance are indicators like type B behavior, internal locus of control and active models of overcoming behavior.

In accordance with the results of R. Piedmont (1993) and L. Talbot (2000) researches, self-esteem and good sense of humor may be also tools for stress situations coping overcome. Researchers B. Perlman and E. Hartman classified such personal factors as introversion, reactivity, authoritarianism, low empathy level, motivational sphere characteristics (as well as dissatisfaction with professional activity) as belonging to the group of factors that promote emergence of stress and professional burnout.

It's important to emphasize that despite the significant increase of scientists' interest towards investigation of police personnel burnout syndrome diagnostic and psycho prophylaxis problem, the issue study in aspect of positive psychology ideas still remains beyond the researchers' interests.

Within the frames of actual issue studies, it's important to pay attention to the fundamental provisions and researches in the field of positive psychology.

As it is known, some of such fundamental provisions (M. Seligman, 2000) are studies of positive emotions role in successful human functioning, as well as relevance of personality traits individual differences investigations which provide the individual positive functioning.

According to the studies of positive psychology representatives A. Isen, F. Ashby and A. Turken (1999), mild positive emotions experienced by person enhance its thinking flexibility towards own behavior and cause aspiration to help others. The scientists have found that positive emotions experiences promote successful solution of different human problems.

Other representatives of positive psychology, B. Fredrickson and C. Brininhan (2005), made a series of researches which results displayed that personal experiences of positive emotions stimulate the seeing of much more prospects to manifest the personality activities, while experiencing the negative emotions inhibits constructive intentions connected with further behavior. Positive emotions also enhance the probability to demonstrate the positive behavior towards others and to promote development of positive relationships.

Analyzing the above material we can assume that certain personal traits of law enforcement officers may be the predictors of preventing the emergence of professional burnout; it necessitates the search for new approaches to actual problem solving – in particular, within the frames of positive personal values identification and search of their relationship with emergence and progress of police officers professional burnout syndrome.

Objective

The main purpose of current study was to determine the specifics of burnout manifestation among police officers; to identify the positive values

generic to police personnel and to define the role of these values and certain personality traits in prevention of professional burnout syndrome emergence among law enforcements officers.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of empirical research is assumption that certain positive values and corresponding "strong" personality traits combined with appropriate personal characteristics may be the factors preventing the professional burnout emergence among police officers.

Method

Participants

For the current research, volunteers were selected from the police personnel of Dnepropetrovsk and its area, representing different subdivisions – investigators, on-duty officers, inspectors, detectives, operators, drivers etc. Total number of testees includes 180 participants, both male and female, aged 23 to 45, with occupational experience 2 to 15 years.

Data tools

To answer the research questions the following data tools were used.

1) "***Diagnosis of emotional burnout***" method (V.V.Boyko, 1996). This inventory consists of 84 points combined in three scales designed to assess the formation of all the three burnout phases: "Tension", "Resistance", "Exhaustion";

2) "***Freiburg personality inventory***" (FPI) (Jochen Fahrenberg, Rainer Hampel, Herbert Selg, 1978) is a multifactor personality questionnaire designed to diagnose the personality conditions and traits important for social adaptation and behavior regulation process; adapted by A.O. Krylov, T.I. Ronginskiy (FPI, Form B, 1989).

3) «***Values in action***» (VIA) (K. Peterson, M. Seligman, 2004) adapted by E.Nosenko, L.Baysara (2008), designed to diagnose 6 positive values and 24 "strong" generic personality traits. It consists of 240 questions to be answered by Likert scale, from 1 ("very much like me") to 5 ("not like me at all").

Procedure

An empirical research was held in several stages (during 2012-2015) on the basis of the Psycho Prophylaxis Center of Ukrainian Internal Affairs Ministry in Dnipropetrovsk region. The main purpose of the first part of research was to identify the professional burnout syndrome among law enforcement officers and to study the specifics of its emergence and occurrence in this occupational group. The second part is dedicated to the

studies of police officers personal traits; certain positive values and "strong" personality traits generic to police representatives were also investigated.

For mathematical and statistical processing of research results, r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient was applied. Using this coefficient enabled us:

1) to identify the certain personality traits of law enforcement officials displayed and aggravated in every phase (I - III) of burnout (analysis of obtained results correlations was made using the "Diagnosis of emotional burnout " (V.V.Boyko) and Freiburg personality questionnaire "FPI" (Jochen Fahrenberg, Rainer Hampel, Herbert Selg);

2) to highlight the positive values able to serve as predictors of professional burnout emergence among police officers (analysis of obtained results correlations was made using the "Diagnosis of emotional burnout" (V.V.Boyko) inventory and "Values in action" (VIA) questionnaire by K. Peterson and M. Seligman).

Results and Discussion

Thus, it's possible to analyze the specifics of police officers professional burnout manifestation in every phase (analysis of obtained results correlations was made using the "Diagnosis of emotional burnout" inventory (V.V.Boyko) and Freiburg personality questionnaire "FPI" (Jochen Fahrenberg, Rainer Hampel , Herbert Selg), and represented in Tables 1-3).

As it is known, the first phase of professional burnout (by V.V. Boyko), "Tension", includes such symptoms as stressful circumstances experiencing, self dissatisfaction, feelings of "being cornered", anxiety and depression, and characterized by the feeling of hopelessness, emotional and intellectual stagnation, dissatisfaction by one's self and occupation chosen, inability to solve problems constructively.

According to results of our research, burnout phase I ("Tension") symptoms are currently forming, or already being generated, among 10% of participants (n = 20 police officers).

Results represented in Table 1 display that the first burnout phase is characterized by such symptoms as neurosis, shyness, depression and emotional lability. It witnesses that law enforcement officers are exposed to stress reactions to routine situations, being somewhat constrained and diffident; it may emerge as one of the possible causes of problems in further customization of social contacts. There is a significant threat of depressive and neurotic syndrome of asthenic type. High points by "emotional lability" scale indicate the instability of police officers emotional state, frequent mood swings, irritability, low level of self-regulation etc.

Table 1 Analysis results of correlation between indicators of police officers personal traits and "Tension" (I) burnout phase
(using the r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient)

Burnout phase	Personal traits	Correlation index
TENSION (I)	Neurosis	0,159**
	Spontaneous aggression	0,054
	Depression	0,228*
	Irritability	0,139
	Sociability	-0,158
	Serenity	-0,089
	Reactive aggression	0,068
	Shyness	0,189**
	Openness	0,037
	Extraversion-introversion	-0,131
	Emotional lability	0,232*
Masculinity-femininity	-0,099	

Note: * - statistically significant differences at $p < 0,01$

** - statistically significant differences at $p < 0,05$

Total number of participants – 180 police officers (63 female and 117 male).

Burnout phase II (by V.V. Boyko), "Resistance", includes such symptoms as inadequate selective type of emotional reactions, emotional and moral disorientation, expansion of emotions saving sphere and reduction of professional achievements. A common feature of this phase is emotional resources preserving (selective approach to emotional contact establishing, based on "want – do not want" principle; expansion of emotions saving sphere may even happen beyond the professional activities, in communications with family, friends etc).

Table 2 Analysis results of correlation between indicators of police officers personal traits and "Resistance" (II) burnout phase (using the r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient)

Burnout phase	Personal traits	Correlation index
RESISTANCE (II)	Neurosis	0,352*
	Spontaneous aggression	0,282*
	Depression	0,227*
	Irritability	0,359*
	Sociability	-0,121
	Serenity	-0,097
	Reactive aggression	0,245*
	Shyness	0,274*
	Openness	0,360*
	Extraversion-introversion	0,026
	Emotional lability	0,198*
Masculinity-femininity	-0,012	

Note: * - statistically significant differences at $p < 0,01$

Total number of participants – 180 police officers (63 female and 117 male).

It is important to note that among the law enforcement officers with formed (or already generated) burnout syndrome, more than 30% of participants (n = 65 police officers) were diagnosed with "Resistance" phase.

Obtained data represented in Table 2 displays that "Resistance" phase of police officers burnout is indicated by emergence of such symptoms as neurosity, spontaneous aggression, depression, irritability, reactive aggression, shyness, openness, emotional lability.

Therefore, for officers with this phase of professional burnout syndrome, typical symptoms are unstable emotional state with a tendency to affective reaction, high psychopathology level displayed in impulsive behavior and aggressive attitude towards social environment. High points by "Openness" scale may witness the trustful attitude towards others, or high level of trustfulness, because this scale has a function of the scale of lies here.

Results represented in Table 3 enable the analysis of certain personal traits manifestation being aggravated in last phase of burnout – "Exhaustion".

Table 3 Analysis results of correlation between indicators of police officers personal traits and "Exhaustion" (III) burnout phase (using the r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient)

Burnout phase	Personal traits	Correlation index
EXHAUSTION (III)	Neurosity	0,315*
	Spontaneous aggression	0,278*
	Depression	0,251*
	Irritability	0,320*
	Sociability	-0,11
	Serenity	-0,054
	Reactive aggression	0,217*
	Shyness	0,263*
	Openness	0,294*
	Extraversion-introversion	0,036
	Emotional lability	0,215*
	Masculinity-femininity	-0,05

Note: * - statistically significant differences at $p < 0,01$

Total number of participants – 180 police officers (63 female and 117 male).

As we know, the "Exhaustion" phase is indicated by decrease in the overall tone and weakness of the nervous system; it includes such symptoms as emotional deficits, emotional distancing, depersonalization and psychosomatic vegetative disorders (by V.V. Boiko).

For this phase of professional burnout, typical features are enormous growth of emotions saving sphere reaching the pathologic index; an officer almost completely excludes all emotions from the sphere of professional activity; there is also, an evident loss (complete or partial) of police officer interest to his subordinates and colleagues.

Accordingly to research results, the third burnout phase ("Exhaustion") symptoms are forming, or already generated, among 18% of participants (n = 24 police officers).

Thus, typical symptoms for police officers with "Exhaustion" phase are neurosis, spontaneous aggression, depression, irritability, reactive aggression, shyness, openness and emotional lability.

Analyzing the results by «VIA» (K.Peterson, M.Selihman, adapted by E.L. Nosenko, L.I. Baysara) and "Diagnosis of emotional burnout " (V.V.Boyko) inventories (tables 4-6) we discovered the statistically significant differences between the presence of certain individual values and professional burnout phases.

Table 4 Analysis results of correlation between indicators of police officers personal values and "Tension" (I) burnout phase (with the help of r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient)

Burnout phase	Personal values	Correlation index
TENSION (I)	Wisdom	-0,261
	Courage	-0,254
	Humanity	-0,498*
	Justice	-0,172
	Temperance	-0,177
	Transcendence	-0,288

Note: * - statistically significant differences at $p < 0,01$

Total number of participants – 40 police officers (17 female and 23 male).

The obtained data represented in Table 4 displays that alongside with symptoms generic to the first burnout phase ("Tension"), law enforcement officials also begin to lose the ability of friendly attitude to others; they feel difficulties in adjustment of relations, low level of social intelligence is evident, police officers become more rude and impatient both at work and in everyday life.

Table 5 Analysis results of correlation between indicators of police officers personal values and "Resistance" (II) burnout phase (with the help of r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient)

Burnout phase	Personal values	Correlation index
RESISTANCE (II)	Wisdom	-0,297
	Courage	-0,273
	Humanity	-0,237
	Justice	-0,191
	Temperance	-0,108
	Transcendence	-0,059

Note: * - statistically significant differences at $p < 0,01$

** - statistically significant differences at $p < 0,05$

Total number of participants – 40 police officers (17 female and 23 male).

According to research results, in the second burnout phase ("Resistance"), no statistically significant correlations with the universal human values were discovered using the "VIA" inventory (Table 5).

As it is known, in this phase we can see the resistance to stress expressed in form of emotional resources saving. Employees unconsciously try to overcome the emerging manifestations of burnout. Hypothetically, it may explain the absence of statistically significant negative differences between police officers values and the "Resistance" phase.

Table 6 Analysis results of correlation between indicators of police officers personal values and "Exhaustion" (III) burnout phase (with the help of r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient)

Burnout phase	Personal values	Correlation index
EXHAUSTION (III)	Wisdom	-0,384**
	Courage	-0,391**
	Humanity	-0,370**
	Justice	-0,304
	Temperance	-0,208
	Transcendence	-0,285

Note: ** - statistically significant differences at $p < 0,05$

Total number of participants – 40 police officers (17 female and 23 male).

The results represented in Table 6 give an opportunity to analyze the correlation between indicators of discovered positive values of law enforcement officers and final phase of professional burnout ("Exhaustion").

So, there is a negative correlation between "Exhaustion" phase and such values as "wisdom", "courage", and "humanity".

In phase III of burnout, emotions saving grows in magnitude, officer almost completely excludes all the emotions from the sphere of professional activity. Alongside with this, person loses the aspiring for knowledge, creativity, curiosity, courage, honesty, persistence in professionally important issues; there are noticeable symptoms of psychosomatic and vegetative disorders.

Thus, a theoretical review of an actual problem and results of empirical research represented in current article led us to the following conclusions.

Conclusion

1. Despite the ever increasing number of studies dedicated to professional burnout syndrome among police personnel, the problem still remains relevant due to objective conditions and specifics of this occupational group activity. The studying of personality determinants that promote the resistance to stress, as well as determining the features of professional burnout manifestation among police officers and identifying the

predictors of burnout prevention is extremely important, especially in period of military conflict and in connection with political and economic changes in society.

2. By results of the empirical research the symptoms of burnout syndrome were diagnosed among law enforcement officers, exactly "Tension" phase – among 10% of the participants; "Resistance" phase – more than among 30% of the participants; "Exhaustion" phase – among 18% of the participants.

3. Literature sources review and research results analysis enabled us to make an assumption that such personal traits as serenity, sociability, type B behavior, internal locus of control, active models of overcoming behavior and high level of "humanity", "wisdom" and "courage" virtues may be the factors of preventing burnout among law enforcement officers. In turn, spontaneous and reactive aggression, irritability, authoritarianism, low empathy, motivation sphere specificity, as well as dissatisfaction with occupational activity, may cause burnout syndrome.

The prospects of further research in this direction we foresee in deeper studying of the law enforcement officers' positive personal values as well as in investigating the features of these values and generic positive traits influence upon process of burnout, mental and efficiency disorders among law enforcement representatives.

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