

Professional health of instructor-officers with different service experience

Ivan M. Okhrimenko¹, Olga G. Marchenko², Olena Yu. Sashurina², Olha M. Pasko³, Liudmyla M. Prudka³, Tetyana V. Matiienko³, Inha A. Serednytska³

¹ NATIONAL ACADEMY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, KYIV, UKRAINE

² KHARKIV NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, KHARKIV, UKRAINE

³ ODESA STATE UNIVERSITY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, ODESA, UKRAINE

ABSTRACT

Aim: To investigate the levels and indicators of professional deformation in instructor-officers with different service experience as a negative factor in their professional health.

Materials and Methods: The research, which was conducted in 2022-2023, involved 136 instructor-officers of the National Academy of Internal Affairs aged 25-55 years with different service experience (up to 5 years – 21 people, 5-10 years – 45 people, 10-15 years – 42 people, over 15 years – 28 people).

Results: The dynamics of the levels of professional deformation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions depending on the experience of their service activities have been determined, and the peculiarities of the manifestation of key professional and psychological indicators that affect their professional health in the course of their service activities have been revealed.

Conclusions: Professional deformation can be manifested at the initial, middle, and deep levels. The experience of service activities makes adjustments to the formation of professional deformation in instructor-officers because deformational changes in personality occur under the constant influence of the conditions of the profession. With the increase in experience, they become more adapted to stressful phenomena and tense situations of service activities, but the degree of desire to change the type of activity increases. The decrease in proactive attitude and selectivity of contacts during the performance of professional tasks is often accompanied by exhaustion, which indicates a progressive tendency to the development of deformational changes in instructor-officers.

KEY WORDS: professional health, professional deformation, instructor-officers, service activities

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INTRODUCTION

Health is one of the main prerequisites for the self-realization of a person, and his or her significant achievements in various activities, including professional activities. Concerning the performance of professional activities by a person, experts [1, 2] distinguish the concept of “professional health”, which is characterized as an integral component of general health, combining all its main components. In the scientific literature, professional health is interpreted by scientists [3] as a complex characteristic of human health in specific conditions of professional activities, characterized by adaptation to the influence of factors of the professional environment, provided with a functional reserve of the body sufficient to perform a certain type of professional activities, manifested in the form of a state of physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Professional health is one of the factors of professional suitability,

an important condition for performance, an indicator of the “quality” of professional life and professional longevity, and the ability to withstand the negative factors that accompany this activity [4, 5]. One of the negative factors of any professional activity is occupational deformation [6, 7]. The problem of professional deformation is especially acute for sociometric professions, which include instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific learning environment (HEIs with SLE). The service activities of instructor-officers are full of tense (stressful) situations, which contribute to their professional deformation [8-10]. Professional deformation is quite often the cause of the formal performance of functional duties and official powers [11, 12]. At the same time, there may be cases of development of certain deformational changes that are social and psychological and affect the health and longevity of specialists, becoming a significant obstacle to further service and

educational activities. First of all, stereotypes of behavior and negative habits appear, mechanisms of perception of work colleagues change, and communication with participants of educational relations becomes more difficult [13, 14]. However, under the influence of specific conditions of professional activities, not only the behavioral model of an instructor-officer but also psychological characteristics (signs of intellectual exhaustion, emotional burnout, etc.) can be subject to changes. These processes cause negative changes in the parameters of personal characteristics and professional health of instructor-officers, which significantly limits the possibility of realizing the potential of specialists and distorts the results of its implementation. Therefore, the study of the levels and indicators of professional deformation in instructor-officers is necessary for the early diagnosis of negative personal changes under the influence of service activities.

AIM

The aim is to investigate the levels and indicators of professional deformation in instructor-officers with different service experience as a negative factor in their professional health.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research, which was conducted in 2022-2023, involved 136 instructor-officers of the National Academy of Internal Affairs aged 25-55 years with different service experience (up to 5 years – group 1 (n = 21); 5-10 years – group 2 (n = 45); 10-15 years – group 3 (n = 42); more than 15 years – group 4 (n = 28)).

Research methods: theoretical analysis and generalization of literary sources, psycho-diagnostic testing, survey, statistical methods. Psycho-diagnostic testing was conducted according to the methodology for diagnosing professional deformation. This methodology allowed us to identify the initial, intermediate, and advanced levels of professional deformation in the individual. The respondents were asked to answer 30 statements related to their professional activities. Carefully reading each of them, the instructor-officers answered as follows: “almost never” – 0 points; “sometimes” – 1 point; “often” – 2 points; “always” – 3 points. The answers were recorded on a special form. The following calculations were made using the key: first, the sum of points scored on each of the 5 main deformation indicators was primarily determined (specific statement numbers corresponded to the number of the deformation indicator), then the total sum of points was calculated. The total number of points scored demonstrates

the appropriate level (initial, intermediate, advanced) and stage (formation, development, consolidation) of professional deformation in instructor-officers.

The survey was conducted according to the author's questionnaire (10 questions), which contained two blocks for determining professional and psychological indicators of instructor-officers' deformation. Each question has four answer options (“never”; “sometimes”; “often”; “always”). All respondents had the opportunity to select one of the answer options. Each question in the questionnaire survey reflected a corresponding professional or psychological indicator of activities. For example, the question “Is your work full of stressful events?” reflects the indicator of “presence of stressful events” during educational activities; “Are you satisfied with the results of your work?” demonstrates the indicator of “satisfaction of respondents with their work”, etc. We conducted the comparative analysis between the groups of respondents, the main criterion of which was the length of pedagogical experience of instructor-officers in higher educational institutions. We did not take into account the age characteristics of the respondents.

Statistical methods were used to systematize, process, qualitatively and quantitatively evaluate the data obtained, present the results in tabular forms, and formulate reliable conclusions. The results were expressed as percentages. This research followed the regulations of the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki and ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. Informed consent was received from all respondents who took part in this research.

RESULTS

The results of the study of the levels of professional deformation in instructor-officers are shown in Fig. 1.

Group 1 includes instructor-officers who do not have significant deformational changes (61.9 %). They are at the stage of adaptation and are only adjusting to the conditions of their service activities. This group is characterized by active absorption of professional activities and dominance of professional orientation through the adoption of new standards of behavior. In groups 2 and 3, the average level of deformation is determinative (55.5 % and 57.1 %, respectively). These individuals have gone through a period of adaptation to their service activities by testing their ability to self-regulate their behavior and lifestyle; they have gained experience that facilitates the performance of professional tasks. During this period, instructor-officers already have certain negative manifestations, but they do not correlate with deformation. The instructor-officers of group 4 have significant indicators of a deep

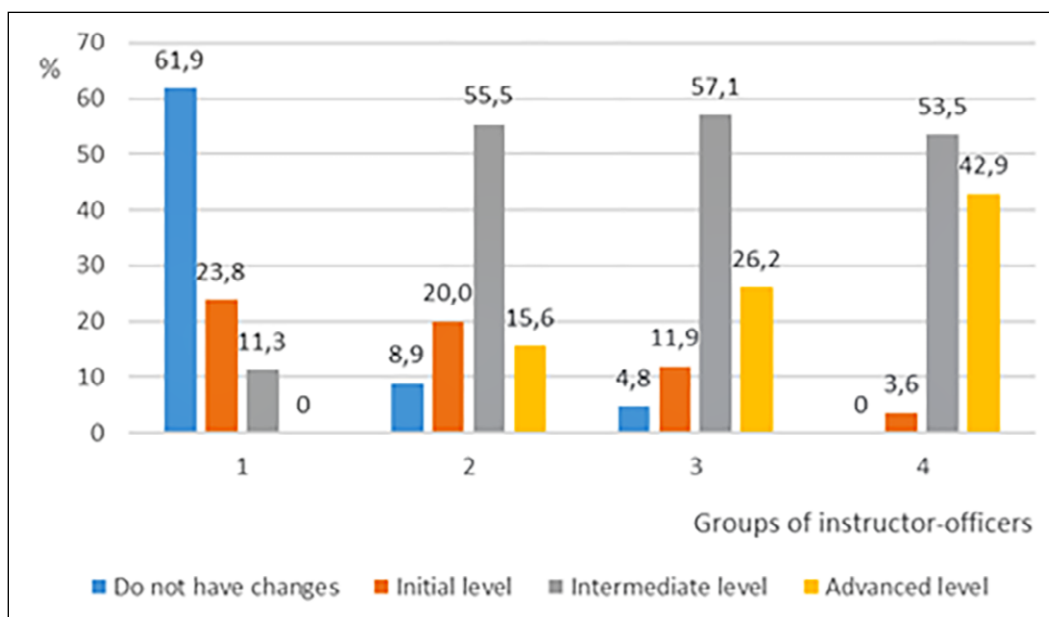


Fig. 1. The correlation of levels of professional deformation in instructor-officers with different experience of service (n = 136), %.

level of professional deformation (42.9 %). This level radically changes the personality of a professional: the progression of negative behavioral patterns, the rooting of unfavorable qualities, and the confrontation between individual qualities in the psychological structure of the personality. The deformation takes the form of fanatical dedication to work, and more and more often there is a justification of oneself and one's standpoints.

The author's questionnaire for determining professional and psychological indicators of deformation in instructor-officers was used to establish the conditions for the emergence and development of deformation changes. The key standpoints to be studied included the definition of professional and psychological indicators of deformation manifested during the pedagogical activities of instructor-officers, namely: excessive tension; state of nervousness; presence of stressful phenomena; manifestations of proactive attitude during the performance of professional tasks; emotionality and empathy; rapport; exhaustion; job satisfaction; desire to change the line of work; desire to resign. The results are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Rapport dominates in Group 2 instructor-officers (46.7 % in the "often" option), which is quite natural, as these respondents have passed all stages of adaptation and can position themselves better in relationships. Instead, Group 1 is just going through the stages of entering the profession, so the level of their rapport is insignificant (23.8 %). In Groups 3 and 4, instructor-officers are gradually moving away from excessive and constant professional contacts (31.0 % and 21.4 % in the "often" option). They point out that they spend too much energy with this model of behavior, which is why such contacts are mostly situational.

Such indicators as the presence of stressful phenomena and proactive attitude are in a cause-and-effect relationship because stressful phenomena and situations can provoke excessive proactive attitude and additional efforts in the performance of professional tasks. Respondents with 5 years or more of educational experience have already learned to cope with their stress, compared to less experienced instructor-officers (the latter have the highest rates in the "often" and "always" options – 33.3 % and 9.5 %, respectively). A similar situation is observed in the indicator referred to as "proactive attitude to performing professional tasks". This means that more experienced instructor-officers have already managed to develop their model of behavior, and therefore do not show an excessive proactive attitude (in the "often" option, respondents with 10-15 and more than 15 years of experience show approximately the same indicators – 23.8 % and 21.4 %).

It was also found that instructor-officers of group 1 do not have a conscious desire to change their line of work (62.0 %), let alone resign (80.9 %). At the same time, instructor-officers with more years of service are increasingly thinking about changing their jobs (33.3 % of respondents in group 3, 42.9 % in group 4). It was found that excessive tension and nervousness are evident in instructor-officers of group 1 (often 42.9 % and 47.6 %, respectively). Over time, excessive tension and nervousness become less pronounced. These indicators in the "often" option are less typical for instructor-officers with more experience in the service activities: 5-10 years – 35.6 % and 37.8 %; 10-15 years – 31.0 % and 33.3 %; more than 15 years – 25.0 % and 21.4 %. Hence, it can be argued that the tension in instructor decreases as they master the profession and gain experience.

Table 1. Correlation of professional indicators of deformation in instructor-officers as a negative factor of their professional health (n = 136), %

Professional indicators of deformation	Frequency of manifestation	Groups of instructor-officers			
		Group 1 n = 21	Group 2 n = 45	Group 3 n = 42	Group 4 n = 28
Presence of stressful phenomena	a	14.3	20.0	28.6	46.5
	b	42.9	42.2	38.1	28.5
	c	33.3	28.9	21.4	14.3
	d	9.5	8.9	11.9	10.7
Cooperativeness	a	9.5	4.4	7.1	10.7
	b	52.4	33.3	47.6	53.6
	c	23.8	46.7	31.0	21.4
	d	14.3	15.6	14.3	14.3
Proactive attitude during the performance of professional tasks	a	4.8	8.9	9.5	14.3
	b	28.6	37.7	52.3	53.6
	c	47.6	35.6	23.8	21.4
	d	19.0	17.8	14.3	10.7
Desire to change the type of activities	a	62.0	35.6	21.4	17.9
	b	19.0	37.7	40.5	28.5
	c	9.5	15.6	23.8	35.7
	d	9.5	11.1	14.3	17.9
Desire to leave the higher educational institution	a	80.9	66.7	19.1	10.7
	b	9.5	13.3	35.7	25.0
	c	4.8	11.1	33.3	42.9
	d	4.8	8.9	11.9	21.4

Legend: a – never; b – sometimes; c – often; d – always.

To some extent, a similar trend can be seen in the indicator of emotionality and empathy. While for instructor-officers with up to 5 years of experience, this indicator is quite stable (with 47.6 % in the “often” and 23.8 % in the “always” options). Young instructor-officers are more emotional and open in their relationships with colleagues and military students. At the same time, more experienced instructor-officers are quite reserved and more cautious in expressing their emotions. A significant number of respondents preferred the “sometimes” option (in group 2 – 44.4 %; in group 3 – 47.6 %; in group 4 – 42.8 %). This can be seen as a possibility of accumulation of negative emotions that will be carefully hidden, but sooner or later can provoke an “explosion” and strong internal agitation.

At the same time, the data show that the instructors of groups 3 and 4 are exhausted (often in group 3 – 33.3 %; in group 4 – 32.1 %). For comparison, instructor-officers with less experience (in groups 1 and 2) have a lower rate of exhaustion (19.0 % and 26.7 %).

Respondents in group 1 often feel satisfied (52.4 %). However, over time, service related obstacles, as well as significant physical and mental stress, can reduce the degree of satisfaction with the profession. In particular,

45.2 % of respondents in group 3 and 46.4 % in group 4 only sometimes feel satisfied with their jobs.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis and synthesis of the literature [1-3], we have found that the concept of “professional health” is defined as an integral characteristic of the functional state of the body, the mental state of the individual, which is characterized by the dynamic harmony of internal experiences and the associated efficiency and success of professional activities. The syndrome of professional deformation is a natural phenomenon for those categories of specialists who work with people and whose activities are impossible without business communication [11, 12]. At the same time, it has been determined that the presence of unfavorable factors in professional activities can cause a progressive feeling of dissatisfaction with the profession, internal tension, a sense of psychological discomfort, and self-doubt. With the repetition of unfavorable work or pedagogical situations, such mental states can be consolidated and turn into stable personality traits (for example, proneness to conflict, irritability, suspicion, indifference to others

Table 2. Correlation of psychological indicators of deformation in instructor-officers as a negative factor of their professional health (n = 136), %

Psychological indicators of deformation	Frequency of manifestation	Groups of instructor-officers			
		Group 1 n = 21	Group 2 n = 45	Group 3 n = 42	Group 4 n = 28
Excessive tension	a	9.5	11.1	23.8	32.1
	b	33.3	40.0	33.3	35.7
	c	42.9	35.6	31.0	25.0
	d	14.3	13.3	11.9	7.2
State of nervousness	a	9.5	15.6	21.4	28.5
	b	28.6	33.3	31.0	42.9
	c	47.6	37.8	33.3	21.4
	d	14.3	13.3	14.3	7.2
Emotionality and empathy	a	4.8	6.7	16.7	17.9
	b	23.8	44.4	47.6	42.8
	c	47.6	31.1	23.8	21.4
	d	23.8	17.8	11.9	17.9
Exhaustion	a	14.4	13.3	7.1	7.2
	b	47.6	44.4	40.5	35.7
	c	19.0	26.7	33.3	32.1
	d	19.0	15.6	19.1	25.0
Job satisfaction	a	4.8	6.7	16.7	17.9
	b	19.0	31.1	45.2	46.4
	c	52.4	44.4	28.6	25.0
	d	23.8	17.8	9.5	10.7

Legend: a – never; b – sometimes; c – often; d – always.

and to work in general) [5, 6, 15]. These mental formations of the personality begin to manifest themselves in professional activities and communication, thereby causing the emergence of unusual ways (models) of behavior. All this leads to a deterioration in the professional health of instructor-officers and a reduction in their professional longevity.

The conducted questionnaire survey allowed us to identify the following key professional and psychological indicators in the activities of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions: excessive tension; state of nervousness; presence of stressful phenomena; manifestations of proactive attitude during the performance of professional tasks; emotionality and empathy; rapport; exhaustion; job satisfaction; desire to change the line of work; desire to resign. Thus, in particular, the level of instructor-officer's stress resistance depends on how often he or she transfers negative emotions to his or her professional (colleagues, cadets) or social (family or friends) environment. In addition, it became possible to establish the sociability (rapport) of the instructor-officers' personality, which can underlie such traits of their behavior as openness, tolerance, proneness to conflict, or aggressiveness. It is also im-

portant to determine the respondents' desire to resign and terminate their service activities, as well as to find out the level of their satisfaction with the teaching profession. If the desire to resign or change the line of work occurs frequently, then we can talk about the presence of professional deformation that blocks the development of the individual as a professional. At the same time, an indifferent or, on the contrary, fanatical attitude to one's career causes a sense of anxiety. After all, in such circumstances, the instructor-officer does not strive to acquire the appropriate competence, which slows down his or her professional development and contributes to deformation (performing duties using outdated approaches, ignoring new methods of pedagogical work, etc.).

The results of the questionnaire survey are of some concern, as frequent thoughts about changing the line of work indicate an average level of deformation and become an obstacle to further professionalization of specialists. It would be logical to assume that such instructor-officers do not see any prospects for their service activities and remain at the same level of professional development, working with little enthusiasm or even in a reluctant manner. At the same

time, similar deformational changes in personality can, on the contrary, contribute to the instructor-officer's constant tension and anxiety, because his or her views and standpoints are formed based on a progressive desire to change the line of work as soon as possible, to achieve success in another field (implementation of own business projects, consulting practice, etc.). This confirms the conclusions of many scientists [16-18], whose works note that professional deformation causes an exacerbation of personality manifestations that arises as a result of several conditions related to service activities.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been established that in the pedagogical activities of instructor-officers, professional deformation does not develop so rapidly, but its manifestations can be quite pronounced with the experience gained. The instructor-officers have dynamics of levels of professional deformation: from initial to deep. With little experience (up to 5 years), the professional and psychological indicators of instructors' deformation are

insignificant, which is caused by the adaptation period of their formation. Instead, instructor-officers become more confident with more experience but some indicators (the presence of stress, proactive attitude to performing professional tasks, exhaustion, etc.) show a progressive tendency to the development of deformational changes. Constant repetition of actions, teaching the same academic subject areas, frequent lack of opportunities for personal development, and periodic conflicts at work contribute to the progression of the desire to leave the higher educational institution with specific learning environment. This requires appropriate corrective psychological measures, without which cases of deviant behavior (e.g., substance abuse as a way to overcome stress or compensate for exhaustion) may become widespread, which is certainly detrimental to professional health and an obstacle to further work.

PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is planned to develop a program of measures to prevent professional deformation in instructor-officers to strengthen their professional health.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare no conflict of interest

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Ivan M. Okhrimenko

National Academy of Internal Affairs

1 Solomyanska Square, 03035 Kyiv, Ukraine

e-mail: ivango-07@ukr.net

ORCID AND CONTRIBUTIONSHIP

Ivan M. Okhrimenko: 0000-0002-8813-5107 [A](#) [B](#)

Olga G. Marchenko: 0000-0002-8040-9687 [A](#) [E](#)

Olena Yu. Sashurina: 0000-0003-4857-7645 [A](#) [E](#)

Olha M. Pasko: 0000-0001-9555-1101 [C](#) [D](#)

Liudmyla M. Prudka: 0000-0001-5440-2361 [C](#) [D](#)

Tetyana V. Matiienko: 0000-0001-9695-2222 [D](#) [F](#)

Inha A. Serednytska: 0000-0002-8839-2453 [E](#) [F](#)

[A](#) – Work concept and design, [B](#) – Data collection and analysis, [C](#) – Responsibility for statistical analysis, [D](#) – Writing the article, [E](#) – Critical review, [F](#) – Final approval of the article

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