

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Motivational factors influencing the effectiveness of law enforcement officers' work depending on their years of service

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To examine the motivational factors influencing the effectiveness of modern law enforcement officers' work with varying levels of their professional experience.

Materials and Methods: The research involved 127 law enforcement officers with varying lengths of service: up to 5 years – 28 individuals (Group 1), 5-10 years – 38 individuals (Group 2), 10-15 years – 35 individuals (Group 3), over 15 years – 26 individuals (Group 4). Research methods: theoretical analysis and generalization of literature sources, questionnaire, psycho-diagnostic methods, statistical methods.

Results: The most pronounced manifestation of socio-psychological motivational factors was found among law enforcement officers with up to 5 years of experience, professional-psychological factors – among those with 5-10 years of experience, and individual-professional factors – among those with 10-15 and over 15 years of experience. It was found that 50.0 % of law enforcement officers with up to 5 years of experience and 52.6 % with 5-10 years of experience demonstrate a high level of job satisfaction.

Conclusions: The research shows that as law enforcement officers gain practical experience, they become more motivated to succeed in their service activities. Yet, they increasingly try to avoid failures and mistakes. Job satisfaction becomes more pronounced when the underlying motivation for their service activities aligns with their own expectations (social relationships, working conditions, resources, and career advancement). A lack of adequate motivation and adaptive qualities among law enforcement officers to the specific conditions of their service activities can be a source of negative consequences for their mental and physical health.

KEY WORDS: motivation, law enforcement officers, experience, service activities, psychophysical health

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INTRODUCTION

Researchers' interest in studying motivation stems from the fact that gaining insight into the nature of motivational phenomena, the patterns of their formation, and their variability enables prediction and enhancement of the effectiveness of human activities across various spheres [1, 2]. The service activities of law enforcement officers are no exception; their primary tasks include ensuring the proper protection of human rights and freedoms, combating crime, and maintaining public order and public safety, which take on specific significance in conditions of war and active hostilities [3]. These extremely complex tasks require not only a high level of professionalism but also, for law enforcement officers, a deep understanding of and adherence to

established legal and moral norms, rapid information processing, and timely and effective decision-making in their professional activities [4]. At the same time, given the ongoing changes in the nature and rhythm of work during wartime, as well as the increased stress and risks to life, the issue of maintaining the motivation of law enforcement officers in their professional activities has become increasingly relevant [5]. The motivation of these specialists is of great importance not only for the effective performance of their service duties but also for the effectiveness of the law enforcement system as a whole, upon which the safety of people and society at large depends [6, 7].

Researchers [8] assert that a decline in a law enforcement officer's professional motivation can lead to a

loss of human capital. Another discouraging fact is that, as research findings [9, 10] indicate, the number of young police officers resigning voluntarily has nearly doubled in recent years, posing a threat to police organizations' staffing levels. At the same time, stressful and unfavorable working conditions can increase team conflict, reduce work efficiency, and negatively affect staff health [11]. Therefore, a lack of proper motivation and adaptive qualities among law enforcement officers to the specific conditions of their professional service can typically lead to negative consequences for both mental and physical health [12, 13].

AIM

The aim is to examine the motivational factors influencing the effectiveness of modern law enforcement officers' work with varying levels of their professional experience.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

The research involved 127 law enforcement officers (aged up to 45) who served in the National Police in various non-managerial officer positions. Empirical data were collected at Lviv State University of Internal Affairs (LSUIA, Lviv, Ukraine), where respondents attended advanced training courses. The data were processed at the Department of Theoretical Psychology of LSUIA. The research was conducted in 2024-2025. The criteria for including participants in the experiment were defined as follows: holding officer-level positions in the police, relevant professional experience (up to 5 years – 28 individuals (Group 1), 5-10 years – 38 individuals (Group 2), 10-15 years – 35 individuals (Group 3), over 15 years – 26 individuals (Group 4). The exclusion criterion was the participant's voluntary desire to withdraw from the research at any time. Research limitations: the age of law enforcement officers, their physical and mental health status, marital status, education, and salary level were not inclusion criteria and were not taken into account during the research.

RESEARCH METHODS

theoretical analysis and generalization of literature sources, questionnaire, psycho-diagnostic methods, statistical methods. The method of theoretical analysis and generalization of literary sources was used to conduct an analytical review of scientific sources on the outlined range of issues (24 sources (2016-2025)

from MedLine, Scopus, Web of Science databases were analyzed).

The survey was conducted to identify the key motivational factors that either encourage or, conversely, hinder the effective performance of law enforcement officers. The survey was conducted using the author's questionnaire, consisting of two sections of questions (1 – incentives for effective work; 2 – job satisfaction), each of which identified the corresponding motivational factors. Specifically, the first section considered the following factors: socio-psychological (team-building recreational activities; support from colleagues and management; the opportunity to express one's opinion and have it taken into account by the team); individual-professional (vacation; additional days off; career growth; monetary bonuses for achieved results); professional-psychological (favorable working conditions; adherence to the work schedule; improvement of relationships within the team). The section of questions regarding job satisfaction (Section 2) established the corresponding level: low (depression and apathy toward work; pessimism regarding career prospects); average or neutral (work proceeding as usual); high (satisfaction with working conditions; positive attitude of supervisors toward work; improved team relationships). Each question in both sections had four response options (a – "never"; b – "sometimes"; c – "often"; d – "always"). All respondents had the opportunity to select one of the response options.

The following psycho-diagnostic methods were used in the research: D. McClelland's "What Drives You?" to identify the sources of motivation, as well as "Measuring the Motivation to Succeed" and "Diagnostics of Motivation to Avoid Failure" by T. Ehlers [7, 14]. D. McClelland's "What Drives You?" method consists of 15 statements designed to identify a law enforcement officer's attitude toward work, satisfaction with it, and relationships within the team and with management. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement with each statement on a five-point scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. Based on the method's results, the law enforcement officer's level of motivation was assessed across three dimensions: desire to succeed, desire for power, and desire to be part of the organization. The "Measuring the Motivation to Succeed" method by T. Ehlers method of 41 questions to which respondents were asked to answer "yes" or "no." Scores were calculated according to the test key. Based on the results, the following indicators of the level of motivation for success were determined: high level – over 21 points; average level – 11–20 points; the respondent does not always clearly define the motives behind their actions but demonstrates persistence in

Table 1. The distribution of motivational factors for effective performance among law enforcement officers with varying levels of professional experience (n = 127), %

Motivational factors	Frequency of occurrence	Law enforcement officers' groups			
		Group 1 (n = 28)	Group 2 (n = 38)	Group 3 (n = 35)	Group 4 (n = 26)
Socio-psychological factors	a	3.5	7.9	14.3	19.2
	b	28.6	39.5	42.9	46.2
	c	50.0	36.8	31.4	23.1
	d	17.9	15.8	11.4	11.5
Individual-professional factors	a	17.9	13.2	5.7	7.9
	b	35.7	34.2	27.1	30.6
	c	32.1	36.8	48.6	42.3
	d	14.3	15.8	18.6	19.2
Professional-psychological factors	a	7.1	7.4	11.4	15.4
	b	42.9	34.7	42.9	42.3
	c	32.1	39.5	28.6	26.9
	d	17.9	18.4	17.1	15.4

Legend: a – never; b – sometimes; c – often; d – always
Source: compiled by the authors of this study

achieving goals; low level – the respondent exhibits a low level of motivation for success (1 to 10 points). The “Diagnostics of Motivation to Avoid Failure” method consists of 30 rows of three words, from which one must be selected in each row. Points are awarded according to the test key. The result determines the level of motivation to avoid failure, with a higher score indicating a higher level of motivation to avoid failure: 2-10 points – low level; 11-16 points – average level; 17-20 points – high level; over 20 points – very high level of motivation to avoid failure.

STATISTICAL METHODS

The statistical method was used to process the experimental data obtained. The reliability of the difference between the indicators presented in percentages was determined using Pearson’s Chi-square (χ^2) criterion. The significance of the difference was set at $p<0.05$. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 10.0 software adapted for medical and biological research.

ETHICS

The procedure for organizing the study and the topic of the article were previously agreed with the Committee on compliance with Academic Integrity and Ethics of the LSUIA. Also this study followed the regulations of the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki. Informed consent was received from all participants who took part in this study.

AI STATEMENT

The author states that no AI tools were used in writing this article.

FRAMEWORK

This scientific article was carried out according to the plan of the research work of the Lviv State University of Internal Affairs for 2021-2027 «Psychology of the personality of a specialist in wartime and post-war rehabilitation» (state registration number 0122U002532).

RESULTS

The analysis of the motivational factors influencing law enforcement officers’ performance revealed an uneven distribution of these factors. Specifically, regarding the incentive category, a trend is observed whereby law enforcement officers with more years of service experience are increasingly losing interest in socio-psychological motivational factors (from 50.0 % for employees with up to 5 years of experience to 23.1 % for those with over 15 years of service experience (in the “often” category) (Table 1). This refers to support from colleagues and management; the opportunity to express one’s own opinion and have it taken into account by the team; time off with colleagues; and so on. This can be explained by the fact that a focus on social relationships within the work team is a priority primarily for young law enforcement officers (with up to 5 years of experience), who are in the stage of socio-psy-

Table 2. Levels of motivation among law enforcement officers, taking into account their professional experience and priority factors (n = 127), %

Priority motivating factor / Significance of the difference	Law enforcement officers' groups and their motivation levels											
	Group 1 (n = 28)			Group 2 (n = 38)			Group 3 (n = 35)			Group 4 (n = 26)		
	L	I	H	L	I	H	L	I	H	L	I	H
Desire to achieve success in general	25.0	42.9	32.1	10.5	34.2	55.3	14.3	34.3	51.4	15.4	34.6	50.0
χ^2 , p	1-2: 13.062; <0.001			2-3: 0.725; >0.05			3-4: 0.061; >0.05			1-4: 7.072; <0.001		
Desire for power	46.4	35.7	17.9	23.7	31.6	44.7	8.6	34.3	57.1	11.6	34.6	53.8
χ^2 , p	1-2: 19.074; <0.001			2-3: 8.680; <0.001			3-4: 0.545; >0.05			1-4: 38.872; <0.001		
Belonging to an organization or leader	21.4	21.5	57.1	21.1	36.8	42.1	31.4	37.2	31.4	42.3	30.8	26.9
χ^2 , p	1-2: 6.285; <0.001			2-3: 3.580; <0.01			3-4: 2.561; <0.05			1-4: 19.368; <0.001		

Legend: L – low level; I – intermediate level; H – high level.; χ^2 - Pearson's Chi-square criterion value; p – probability value

Source: compiled by the authors of this study

Table 3. Manifestations of motivation among law enforcement officers based on their service experience (n = 127), %

Types of motivation / Significance of the difference	Law enforcement officers' groups and levels of motivation											
	Group 1 (n = 28)			Group 2 (n = 38)			Group 3 (n = 35)			Group 4 (n = 26)		
	L	I	H	L	I	H	L	I	H	L	I	H
Motivation to success	21.5	46.4	32.1	13.1	34.3	52.6	8.6	40.0	51.4	11.7	34.5	53.8
χ^2 , p	1-2: 8.815; <0.001			2-3: 1.384; >0.05			3-4: 0.934; >0.05			1-4: 10.125; <0.001		
Motivation to avoid failure	28.6	50.0	21.4	21.1	31.6	47.3	11.4	34.3	54.3	7.8	34.5	57.7
χ^2 , p	1-2: 15.045; <0.001			2-3: 3.488; <0.01			3-4: 0.778; >0.05			1-4: 31.387; <0.001		

Legend: L – low level; I – intermediate level; H – high level.; χ^2 - Pearson's Chi-square criterion value; p – probability value

Source: compiled by the authors of this study

chological adaptation (50.0 % in the "often" category and 17.9 % in the "always" category). At the same time, professional-psychological motivational factors that stimulate their work are becoming increasingly relevant (favorable working conditions; adherence to the work schedule; improved relationships within the team, etc.) (the highest percentage among the groups of respondents was found among law enforcement officers with 5-10 years of service experience – 39.5 % in the "often" category and 18.4 % in the "always" category). For them, it is important to have a certain stability in their work routine, as this category of respondents is in the active phase of their professional careers, where acquired competencies are combined with the capacity for further development. Regarding individual-professional motivational factors for effective law enforcement work (career advancement; monetary bonuses for achieved results, etc.), these factors predominate among respondents with greater professional experience (10-15 and

over 15 years of service in law enforcement agencies: 48.6 % and 42.3 % in the "often" category, as well as 18.6 % and 19.2 % in the "always" category). This suggests that utilitarian motivation predominates, as perceptions of the law enforcement profession and one's place within it are shifting at this stage.

To confirm or refute the findings presented above, we used D. McClelland's "What Drives You?" method to examine the role of certain motivational factors in the professional activities of law enforcement officers, as these factors potentially influence the effectiveness of their work. Using this method, we identified the frequency distribution of law enforcement officers' motivation levels for effective service activities (Table 2).

Thus, as demonstrated by the diagnostic assessment conducted using D. McClelland's "What Drives You?" method, law enforcement officers with up to five years of service experience exhibit a predominance of the motivational factor of belonging to an organization

Table 4. Comparison of job satisfaction levels among law enforcement officers with varying lengths of service (n = 127), %

Job satisfaction levels	Frequency of occurrence	Law enforcement officers' groups			
		Group 1 (n = 28)	Group 2 (n = 38)	Group 3 (n = 35)	Group 4 (n = 26)
Low	a	21.4	7.9	20.0	19.2
	b	42.9	42.1	48.6	38.5
	c	21.4	36.8	20.0	26.9
	d	14.3	13.2	11.4	15.4
Avarage	a	10.7	14.7	3.4	3.3
	b	28.6	31.6	22.3	14.3
	c	46.4	47.4	54.3	53.8
	d	14.3	15.8	20.0	28.6
High	a	10.7	6.3	11.4	7.7
	b	21.4	23.7	34.3	42.3
	c	50.0	52.6	42.9	30.8
	d	17.9	18.4	11.4	19.2

Legend: a – never; b – sometimes; c – often; d – always
 Source: compiled by the authors of this study

or leader (the high level in Group 1 is 57.1 %), which indicates a fairly high level of team orientation; in other words, the socio-psychological manifestations of their professional motivation become increasingly significant. As they gain experience in law enforcement (5-10 years), the respondents increasingly demonstrate a desire to achieve success in general (the high level in Group 2 is 55.3 %), which characterizes them as sufficiently motivated employees focused on success in their service activities. This indicator remains largely unchanged in groups of respondents with more work experience (10-15 years and over 15 years) – the high levels stand at 51.4% and 50.0%, respectively – though it is further influenced by another motivational factor: the desire for power. In Group 3 and Group 4, it is quite pronounced: high levels of 57.1 % and 53.8 %, respectively. The data obtained are corroborated by statistically significant differences among law enforcement officers with varying levels of service experience ($p < 0.01-0.001$). This position can be explained by the fact that, as they gain practical experience, law enforcement officers consider assuming managerial positions, primarily at the middle management level, and are thus capable of leading law enforcement organizations and taking on responsibility.

At the same time, the application of the methods referred to as “Measuring the Motivation to Succeed” and “Diagnostics of Motivation to Avoid Failure” by T. Ehlers confirmed the finding that, as they gain practical experience, law enforcement officers, on the one hand, maintain their motivation to achieve success – as we observed using the previous method – and, on the

other hand, strive to avoid failures and mistakes. This trend is particularly evident among respondents with 10-15 years of service (high level: 54.3 %) and over 15 years (57.7 %) (Table 3). Hence, more experienced respondents are characterized by greater moderation, caution, a moderate degree of risk-taking, and an understanding of the specifics of police work. In general, the tendency to avoid failure serves a protective function of the psyche and is prioritized according to situational factors. It is believed that professionals whose primary motivation is to avoid failure tend to avoid competitive situations. This is also due to the realism of participants’ perceptions, as the drive for success is a function of three variables: the motivation to succeed, the perceived probability of success, and the subjective appeal of success in a specific life or professional situation. The statistical analysis corroborated the obtained data: for both types of motivation, significant differences were found between the indicators of Group 1 and Group 4 ($p < 0.001$).

Using the second section of the author’s questionnaire, we analyzed law enforcement officers’ job satisfaction by years of service. It was found that in the early stages of professional development (up to 5 years) and as they gain more experience (5-10 years), law enforcement officers demonstrate sufficiently high levels of job satisfaction (50.0 % and 52.6 % in the “often” category) (Table 4).

This indicates relative satisfaction with working conditions, a positive attitude among managers and staff, and good team dynamics, among other things. Meanwhile, among those with more work experience (10-15

years and over 15 years), an average (neutral) level of satisfaction becomes more pronounced – work in a routine mode (the average-level indicator in the “often” category is 54.3 % and 53.8 %, respectively).

DISCUSSION

Under martial law, law enforcement officers' professional tasks have become significantly more complex [3]. Every day, they must carry out a large volume of diverse tasks under conditions of time and information shortages, uncertainty, active counter-offending, and the decision of people's fates. Against a backdrop of extreme conditions, danger, tension, and heightened responsibility, they must also maintain a positive professional image and public trust. All of this creates risks of neuropsychological overload and occupational stress among law enforcement officers [15, 16]. The strong negative impact of the nature of their work on a law enforcement officer's personality can lead to gradual disillusionment with the profession, loss of professional motivation, the emergence of psychosomatic illnesses, and so on. This has prompted research into motivational factors for effective performance and job satisfaction among law enforcement officers, as these factors determine the future application of appropriate psychoprophylactic measures.

As some researchers note [14, 17], the individual's motivational sphere is central to their orientation, including their professional orientation. This is also confirmed by our research, as the system of primary motivational factors can determine the effectiveness of service activities and overall job satisfaction. It is also worth noting that in the course of performing duties, motives – which are dynamic constructs – can transform; therefore, the professional activities of law enforcement officers can be characterized not only by primary but also by transformed motivation.

A motive is an integral way of organizing human activity, any of its impulses, the determinants of which are both internal and external causes [18]. According to researchers [19, 20], the connection between professional success and motivation is evident: for any employee, the motives for achieving success or avoiding failure become priorities. In our research, this connection and the relevance of the aforementioned motivation were also taken into account; however, they were further combined with such an indicator as the experience of law enforcement officers in their service activities. It can be argued that the motivational sphere of law enforcement officers directly depends on a combination of factors, at the core of which lies the satisfaction of basic needs through working conditions, which determines overall job satisfaction.

Researchers [5, 21] note that the performance of service duties by law enforcement officers requires a high level of psychological support, which necessarily includes stimulating motivation for their professional activities. According to our findings, the incentives for effective work among modern law enforcement officers may vary, including due to service experience, ranging from socio-psychological motivational factors (support from colleagues and management; recognition of one's own affiliation with the law enforcement structure) to the dominance of purely utilitarian motivation (career advancement; monetary bonuses for achieved results, etc.). At the same time, the overwhelming majority of modern law enforcement officers, being in the active phase of professional development, demonstrate the capacity for further growth.

Some researchers argue [22-24] that key factors in boosting police officers' motivation within the framework of psychological support for their work include the development of self-regulation and stress resilience skills, the organization of work processes and rest periods, the maintenance of social connections, and teamwork. The results of our research complement the information mentioned above, demonstrating that modern law enforcement officers systematically pay attention to these factors. At the same time, they feel engaged in the organization's activities, indicating sufficient satisfaction with their professional needs and interest in their work. Moreover, the more the underlying motivation for their service activities aligns with their own expectations, the more pronounced their job satisfaction becomes. Conversely, as the sense of disappointment with work in law enforcement agencies intensifies (indicated by average or even low levels of job satisfaction), the motivation driven by the desire to avoid failure increases. According to our data, this pattern is demonstrated by law enforcement officers with over 15 years of experience. This highlights the need to identify effective means of motivating law enforcement personnel, particularly in wartime conditions, as well as strategies to prevent the development of negative phenomena that hinder success and to cultivate interest in service duties.

CONCLUSIONS

A lack of proper motivation and adaptive qualities among law enforcement officers to the specific conditions of their service activities can be a source of negative consequences for mental and physical health. Service experience can determine the factors that motivate effective performance: among law enforcement officers with little work experience (Group 1), socio-psychological factors dominate;

(50.0 % in the “often” category and 17.9 % in the “always” category); professional-psychological motivational factors predominate in Group 2 (39.5 % in the “often” category and 18.4 % in the “always” category); individual-professional factors are more clearly evident in Group 3 and Group 4 (48.6 % and 42.3 % in the “often” category, as well as 18.6 % and 19.2 % in the “always” category). This trend is also evident across the motivation levels of law enforcement officers with varying levels of service experience: Group 1 exhibits a fairly high level of focus on the team and the organization (57.1 %), while Group 2 demonstrates a drive to achieve success in general (55.3 %); Group 3 and Group 4 also demonstrate a desire to achieve success in their work, though this is further influenced by a motivational factor such as the desire for power (57.1 % and 53.8 %, respectively). As they gain practical experience, law enforcement officers, on the one hand, maintain their motivation to succeed (primarily in Groups 2-4), and, on the other hand, try to avoid failures and mistakes (most frequently observed in Group 4).

It was found that the more the basic motivation for their service activities aligns with their own expectations, the more pronounced their job satisfaction becomes. With greater service experience, a sense of disappointment with work in law enforcement agencies gradually intensifies, resulting in an average or even low level of job satisfaction.

The research indicates the need to identify and implement effective measures to incentivize law enforcement officers and to systematically carry out activities aimed at preventing negative phenomena, as such practices can significantly contribute to success and foster interest in service activities.

PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is planned to investigate the dynamics of motivational factors in the service activities of law enforcement officers before and after performing service and combat tasks during wartime.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Authors declare no conflict of interest

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