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PECULIARITIES OF PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT MANIFESTATION AMONG POLICEMEN IN THE ASPECT OF PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGICAL SPECIFIC

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПРОЯВУ ПРОФЕСІЙНОГО ВИГОРАННЯ ПРАВООХОРОНЦІВ ЗАЛЕЖНО ВІД ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОЇ СПЕЦИФІКИ ОСОБИСТОСТІ

Great number of researches by both domestic and foreign researchers are devoted to the study of so-called “burnout syndrome”, which is a combination of emotional, mental and physical exhaustion of employees. Despite this fact, the relevance of studying this problem among law enforcement officers is increasing every year. The idea of studying professional burnout in the aspect of specific, so-called negative personality traits or the “dark” triad of the individual, the components of which are Machiavellianism, non-clinical narcissism and non-clinical psychopathy, rises great interest.

This article is devoted to the problem of detecting professional burnout among law enforcement officers, as well as the impact of the so-called “dark” triad of personality on the occurrence of burnout syndrome among this category of employees.

The history of studying the psychological phenomenon of the “dark” triad personality traits, as well as the peculiarities of manifestation of its each component are considered.

The following results were obtained on the basis of the conducted empirical research. Most respondents are diagnosed with the presence of professional burnout 1–3 degrees, while among all phases of the syndrome resistance phase is the most common (found in 30% of subjects). The presence of Machiavellianism was determined among 80% of respondents, while the manifestations of non-clinical narcissism and non-clinical psychopathy among 25% and 15% of respondents, accordingly.

Statistically significant results were obtained between the indicators of burnout syndrome and the components of the “dark” triad personality traits. Thus, each phase of burnout syndrome is characterized by manifestation of non-clinical psychopathy; there is statistically significant correlation between the phases of professional burnout and some indicators of narcissism (belief in own uniqueness and manipulation in interpersonal relationships) as well as between rates of Machiavellianism scale and burnout syndrome among law enforcement officers.

Key words: burnout syndrome, phases of burnout, “dark” triad personality traits, law enforcement officers.

Дослідженню так званого «синдрому професійного вигорання», що являє собою поєднання емоційного, психічного та фізичного виснаження працівників, присвячена велика кількість робіт як вітчизняних, так і зарубіжних дослідників. Попри цей факт, актуальність вивчення такої проблеми у представників правоохоронних органів не зменшується, а дедалі збільшується з кожним роком. Особливо цікавим є уявлення про професійне вигорання залежно від розвитку специфічних, так званих негативних особистісних характеристик, або тріади «темних» рис особистості, компонентами якої є макіавеллізм, неклінічний нарцисизм та неклінічна психопатія.

Ця стаття присвячена проблемі виявлення професійного вигорання у представників правоохоронних органів, а також впливу наявності так званої «темної» тріади особистості на виникнення вигорання у такої категорії співробітників.

Розглянуто історію вивчення психологічного феномена тріади «темних» рис особистості, а також особливості прояву кожної з її складників.

На базі проведеного емпіричного дослідження отримано такі результати. У більшості респондентів діагностується наявність професійного вигорання 1–3 ступенів, при цьому серед усіх фаз синдрому найбільш поширеною є фаза резистенції (виявлено у 30% досліджуваних). Наявність макіавеллізму визначено у 80% опитуваних, тоді як прояви неклінічного нарцисизму та неклінічної психопатії у 25% та 15% досліджуваних відповідно. Отримано статистично значущі результати між показниками синдрому вигорання та складниками тріади «темних» рис особистості. Так,

прояви неклінічної психопатії є характерними для кожної з фаз професійного вигорання; спостерігається статистично значущий кореляційний зв'язок між фазами вигорання та деякими показниками нарцисизму (віра у власну унікальність та маніпуляція в міжособистісних стосунках); а також отримано певний статистично значущий зв'язок між проявами макіавеллізму та показниками професійного вигорання серед працівників правоохоронних органів.

Ключові слова: синдром професійного вигорання, фази професійного вигорання, «темні» риси особистості, представники правоохоронних органів.

Problem identification. The beginning of the 21st century – the period of rapid changes in all spheres of life, the current realities of today (economic instability, high level of unemployment, military conflicts and especially Pandemic caused by COVID-19) negatively affect the mental health of the population and worsen the psychological state of the society all over the world.

It is known that burnout syndrome most often “affects” the representatives of various socio-economic professions, where the subject of activity is constantly involved in the problems of emotionally disadvantaged partner. Police officers are in the special “risk group” because their activity is associated with high level of responsibility, the presence of constant stressors, excessive emotional tension as well as situations that are life- and health-threatening.

Despite the large number of researches of burnout syndrome from different points of view (K. Maslach, 1993, 2014; V. Boyko, 1996; J. VanHorn, V. Schaufeli, R. Bürke, 1997; O. Rukavishnikov, 1998; V. Orel, 2001; I. Arshava, 2002; L. Karamushka, E. Nosenko, N. Grisenko, 2010) and among law enforcement officers in particular (A. Budanov, 1992, 1994; B. Medvedev, 1996; S. Beznosov, 1997; O. Timchenko, 2003; E. Potapchuk, 2004; O. Krapivina, 2004; Don Kurtz, 2008; I. Motsonelidze, 2010; S. Vyshnichenko, 2014; Khairulin, 2014) the study of the “dark” triad personality traits of the police officers, as well as the analysis of the relationship between the components of the triad – Machiavellianism, non-clinical narcissism and non-clinical psychopathy, and the emergence of burnout syndrome still remains outside the scientific interests.

The history of the “dark” triad personality traits study began in the mid-1990s, when J. McHoskey suggested that indicators of non-clinical psychopathy, non-clinical narcissism and Machiavellianism were closely correlated.

The term “dark triad” entered the categorical apparatus of psychological science only at the beginning of the twenty-first century, in 2002, thanks to the study of student group led by D. Polhus and K. Williams. The characteristics included in the triad show negative correlation with emotional intelligence, friendliness and honesty – the tendency to deceive. We can assume that all personality traits included in the “dark triad” affect the sphere of interaction of the

individual with society, interpersonal relationships and attitudes [1; 2].

This problem becomes extremely important in the aspect of professional burnout among law enforcement officers.

Modern scientific views do not allow to form a full-fledged idea of professional burnout from specific, “negative” personal characteristics. The study of such characteristics arouses considerable scientific interest.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the study of peculiarities of professional burnout manifestation among law enforcement officers, especially the influence of “dark” personality traits on the occurrence of burnout syndrome.

The main material. So, consider the “dark” triad personality traits more detail. Psychopathy – a set of stable innate personality traits, which are based on disharmony, imbalance or instability of mental processes. Psychopathy is manifested mainly by inadequate behavioral, lack of social adaptation and is usually not accompanied by expressed psychopathological disorders [4].

Narcissism – excessive egomania as well as the sense of self-importance. Due to Z. Freud, narcissism is the state in which ego itself is chosen as the object of love and worship. Some manifestations of narcissism are present in most people, but when they become enlarged, they can be a symptom of schizophrenia, personality changes or some other diseases [5].

Machiavellianism of the individual means a stable characterological feature, which is manifested in the tendency to manipulate other people in interpersonal relationships in order to achieve own purely selfish goals.

It is important to note that the first fundamental psychological study of this problem was conducted in the 1970s by American researchers R. Christie & F. Geis. They analyzed political treatise “The Prince” (1532) written by Italian philosopher N. Machiavelli and with the help of content analysis identified the main beliefs and attitudes of the author, based on which they created a method for diagnosing Machiavellianism as a permanent personality trait [6].

There are 3 main psychological components within the concept of “Machiavellianism”:

1. Cynical attitude towards other people as if they are weak and dependent on social pressure. Machi-

avellians tend to treat other people with suspicion, emotional alienation, focusing not on their partner, but on their own benefit that they can get from him.

2. Features of the behavioral sphere and the use of manipulative techniques in the process of interpersonal interaction. It is important to note that the Machiavellian always manipulates consciously in order to achieve his own benefit, while using sophisticated techniques of flattery, deception, bribery. It is no coincidence that one of the meanings of this term translates as “unscrupulous”.

3. Ignoring social morality, when it interferes with achieving the desired results [7].

To determine the features of the manifestation of burnout syndrome among law enforcement officers, as well as the impact of “dark” personality traits on the occurrence of professional burnout, we conducted the empirical research in several stages. The sample consisted of police officers from Dnipro and Dnipropetrovsk region. The total number of subjects – 30 people (23 men and 7 women): operatives, investigators, traffic police officers, drivers, etc., the average age of the subjects is 35 years, with work experience from 2 to 15 years.

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

1) “Diagnosis of emotional burnout” method by V. Boyko [3];

2) to study the triad of “dark” personality traits – the method “PEN” by H. Eysenck adapted by A. Shmelyov (psychoticism scale) [8]; the questionnaire “Narcissistic Personality Traits” by O. Shamshikova, N. Klepikova [9]; scale “Mach – IV” by R. Christie, F. Geys adapted by V. Znakov [10].

The main purpose of the first part of our research was to identify burnout syndrome among police officers as well as diagnose “dark” personality traits among this category of professional workers. So, most respondents were diagnosed with professional burnout of the first – third degrees due to the results

of “Diagnosis of emotional burnout” inventory by V. Boyko [3]. The distribution of the subjects by phases of professional burnout was the following: tension phase – 10% of respondents; resistance phase – more than 30% of respondents; exhaustion phase – 20% of respondents.

Also, the features of manifestation of the “dark” triad personality traits were determined using the above mentioned tools and the following results were obtained: the presence of Machiavellianism is diagnosed in 80% of subjects, manifestations of non-clinical psychopathy – in 15% of respondents, in turn, manifestations of non-clinical narcissism is characterized 25% of subjects.

The second part of our research was dedicated to the studies of relationship between the presence of “dark” personality traits and the occurrence of burnout syndrome among law enforcement officers. The results of the empirical research were processed with the help of r-linear Pearson correlation coefficient.

It was found that there is statistically significant correlation between indicators of burnout and manifestations of Machiavellianism among police officers (correlation index 0.61, $p < 0.01$). It is possible to assume that law enforcement officers, who are diagnosed with certain symptoms or phases of burnout, tend to be cynical about their subjects – with suspicion or emotional alienation; use manipulative techniques in the process of interpersonal interaction in order to achieve their own goals. Analysis results of correlations between indicators of non-clinical narcissism and the rate of burnout syndrome are presented in table 1.

As we can see, the higher the rate of burnout is, the less police officers have faith in their own uniqueness, they don’t have desire to be understood only by those people from the environment who occupy high status in the society. At the same time, there is a positive correlation between the rate of burnout and desire to manipulate others in the aspect of the interpersonal relationships.

Table 1

Analysis results of correlations between indicators of non-clinical narcissism and burnout syndrome (using the r-linear Pearson correlation)

| Burnout phases | Components of narcissism | Correlation index |
|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Tension | Grand sense of self-worth | 0.03 |
| | Depth of imagination | -0.22 |
| | Belief in own uniqueness | -0.42* |
| Resistance | Need of constant attention and admiration | 0.14 |
| | Expecting special attitude | 0.05 |
| | Manipulation in interpersonal relationships | 0.36* |
| Exhaustion | Lack of empathy | 0.03 |
| | Feeling of envy | -0.04 |
| | Impertinent behavior | 0.30 |

Note: * – statistically significant differences at $p < 0.05$

**Analysis results of correlations between indicators of non-clinical psychopathy
(scale of psychoticism due to “PEN” method by G. Eysenck) and phases of professional burnout**

| “PEN” method by G. Eysenck | Burnout phases | Correlation index |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Scale of psychoticism (non-clinical psychopathy) | Tension | 0.41** |
| | Resistance | 0.48* |
| | Exhaustion | 0.43** |
| | Total index of burnout syndrome | 0.44** |

Note: * – statistically significant differences at p 0.01

** – statistically significant differences at p 0.05

Results represented in table 2 indicate that peculiarities of non-clinical psychopathy manifest on each phase of professional burnout.

This suggests that police officers are characterized by the emergence of unstable emotional state with tendency to affective response and high level of psychopathization, which is manifested in impulsive behavior and aggressive attitude towards the social environment.

Analysis of the data obtained in the empirical research allows us to make the following **conclusions**:

1. Despite the growing number of studies of burnout syndrome among police officers, this problem is still relevant, which is objectively related to the conditions and specifics of the professional activities of this contingent of employees.

2. The “dark” triad personality traits, which includes Machiavellianism, non-clinical narcissism and non-clinical psychopathy, affects the sphere of interaction of the individual with society, interpersonal relationships and attitudes.

3. Modern scientific views do not allow to form a full picture of professional burnout from personality specific, “negative” characteristics, so the study of “dark” triad of police officers is extremely important.

4. According to the results of the empirical research, manifestations of symptoms of burnout syndrome among police officers were diagnosed: tension phase – 10% of respondents; resistance phase – more than 30% of respondents; exhaustion phase – 20% of respondents.

5. Statistically significant results were obtained between the indicators of the triad of “dark” personality traits and burnout syndrome among police officers.

We foresee the prospects of further research in more detailed study of specific negative personality characteristics (the triad of “dark” personality traits) as well as positive traits of police officers and its role in process of professional burnout formation, efficiency and mental disorders among law enforcement officers.

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