

SOCIOPSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE CONSTRUCTS OF THE PERSONAL SELF-CONCEPT OF SERVICEMEN

СОЦІОПСИХОЛОГІЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ТА ЇХНІЙ ВПЛИВ НА КОНСТРУКТИ ОСОБИСТІСНОЇ Я-КОНЦЕПЦІЇ ВІЙСЬКОВОСЛУЖБОВЦІВ

The relevance of the problem of studying the sociopsychological characteristics of servicemen and the possible influence of these characteristics on the components of their personal self-concept is determined by significant psychotraumatic factors due to constant encounters with rather extreme and superphysical conditions of military service in active combat operations. Given this situation, military personnel are exposed to significant psycho-emotional and psychophysical stress and overload, which led to the empirical study of the socio-psychological and characteristic characteristics of these individuals and the possibility of their influence on the constructs of the personal "self-concept". The article, which aimed to empirically study the sociopsychological characteristics of military personnel and the possibilities of their influence on the constructs of the personal "self-concept", identified the possibilities of influencing certain constructs of the personal "self-concept" by age, gender and characteristic features, the presence and intensity of combat experience and direct participation in hostilities, conditions of professional duties, the presence and number of injuries, family and communication relationships, psychological overload and other features.

The sample of respondents was formed using a traditional survey with a specially designed questionnaire to study the sociopsychological characteristics of military personnel in crisis conditions of active combat operations. This approach is used in most modern empirical studies of combatants. The sample of servicemen consisted of 129 people who received rehabilitation measures.

The statistical calculation of the results was carried out using a package of statistical software programs: Microsoft Excel 365, Statsoft Statistica 10.0 and IBM SPSS 25.0 for Windows.

Key words: *military personnel, «self-concept», sociopsychological features, characterological features.*

Актуальність проблеми вивчення соціопсихологічних особливостей військовослужбовців та можливі впливи даних характеристик

на складники їхньої особистісної «Я-концепції» визначається значними психотравмуючими чинниками через постійні зіткнення з досить екстремальними та надфізичними умовами несення військової служби в умовах ведення активних бойових дій. З огляду на дану ситуацію, військовослужбовці наражаються на значні психоемоційні та психофізичні перенапруження і перенавантаження, що й зумовило дослідження емпіричним шляхом соціопсихологічних та характерологічних особливостей цих осіб та можливості їхнього впливу на конструкти особистісної «Я-концепції». У статті, метою якої було емпіричне вивчення соціопсихологічних особливостей військовослужбовців та можливостей їхнього впливу на окремі конструкти особистісної «Я-концепції» віко-статевих та характерологічних особливостей, наявності та інтенсивності бойового досвіду та безпосередньої участі в бойових діях, умов виконання професійних обов'язків, наявності та кількості поранень, родинних та комунікативних взаємовідносин, психологічних перенавантажень та інших особливостей.

Вибірка респондентів дослідження була сформована з використанням традиційного опитування за допомогою спеціально розробленого опитувальника вивчення соціопсихологічних особливостей військовослужбовців, що знаходилися в кризових умовах ведення активних бойових дій. Даний підхід використовується в більшості сучасних емпіричних досліджень учасників бойових дій. Вибірку військовослужбовців становили 129 осіб, що отримували реабілітаційні заходи.

Статистичний розрахунок отриманих результатів проводився за допомогою пакету статистичних прикладних програм: Microsoft Excel 365, Statsoft Statistica 10.0 та IBM SPSS 25.0 для Windows.

Ключові слова: *військовослужбовці, «Я-концепція», соціопсихологічні особливості, характерологічні особливості.*

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Introduction. Recently, due to the open military aggression, events full of quite negative and stressful influences have been taking place in our country. This situation has provoked the fact that a rather significant segment of the population of our country almost instantly lost their homes, relatives and friends, jobs, livelihoods, permanent residence and was forced to stay under enemy fire in the area of active hostilities [1]. The impact of these stressors on the health of the population provokes relevant disorders characterized by negative psycho-emotional, psychophysiological and psychophysical reactions and the possible development of psycho-emotional disorders

(psychotraumatic and neurotic disorders, stress reactions, nervous breakdowns, PTSD, etc.), which disrupts all areas of personal life.

Among the entire population that was forced to experience these psycho-emotional and psychophysiological stresses, there is a significant cohort of people who constantly encounter them due to participation in active hostilities [2]. First of all, this contingent includes military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine who defend our country from armed aggression, whose entire professional activity is characterized by a significant impact of psycho-emotional and stressogenic overloads and the effect of various over-

time psychophysical factors due to extremely extreme conditions [3]. Servicemen are forced to constantly face death, the danger of injury, psychophysical and psycho-physiological overloads and other difficulties that have a known destructive impact on their personal sphere, significantly transforming it and changing personal “self-conceptual” components and provoking some pathological distortion [4]. In the future, this situation can cause significant socio-psychological maladjustment of such persons, which is primarily manifested by communicative “distortion” in the surrounding “communicative circle” [5].

Statement of the problem. The modern psychological definition of the concept of “self-concept” highlights personal unity and integrity from the standpoint of subjectivization of the inner world, which determines how an individual positions and sees himself in the surrounding society. In defining the conceptual components of this issue, the interest from the point of view of modern psychology is primarily seen in the determinants of the formation of personal motives and drives that form a certain “self-concept” personality and the specifics of its development in different ontogenetic periods of personality formation [6].

The “self-concept” appears as a certain aggregate indicator of the formed ideas of a person about himself or herself and the surrounding society, which includes relevant beliefs, values, assessments and behavioral drives that form an important component of self-awareness, which is directly involved in physical and physiological personal self-regulation [7]. Given that the individual “self-concept” participates in physiological processes of self-regulation, it allows the individual to manage personal communication processes, in a certain way building and training the ability to choose the right behavioral strategy in constantly changing environmental conditions. These processes in a certain way form a “positive” personal representation both for oneself and for others, which has a positive impact on objective personal cognition and self-esteem, the corresponding internal and external “coherence” and forms the prerequisites for the development of positive and rational thinking by operationalizing these processes in terms of personal self-awareness [8].

As for the real life activity of a person, in this process, self-awareness is manifested by the integral structure of individual internal psychological processes and self-expressions (self-knowledge, emotional and value orientations, regulation of behavioral orientations, etc.) in the interaction of a person with the environment, which are responsible for the self-organization of the main structural characteristics of the “self-concept”: emotional and evaluative (“self-attitude”), cognitive (“self-image”) and behavioral (“self-act”), to which Furman adds the fourth structural component – spontaneous and spiritual.

In the study of the personal “I” as an object of society, there are four main components of the concept: spiritual, material, social and bodily,

which form an individual unique personal “image”. Thus, the “spiritual self” is a certain set of religious, philosophical, political, moral and ethical principles and attitudes of a person; the “material self” is everything with which a person identifies himself/herself (personal property, place of residence, family, parents, friends, etc.); the “social self” includes the social role of a person and his/her place in society and social recognition and respect; the “physical self” determines the physical “image” of a person and his/her biological needs [9–11]. All this is fully determined by personal characteristics, which include cognitive, emotional and behavioral concepts that are combined into a personal holistic image, a certain individual “self-concept” that structurally belongs to the individual and plays a certain functional load: synthesizes experience and forms the mental and psychological “core” of the subject in terms of life prospects, accompanies all mental processes and properties and states of the person in his or her professional [12] and everyday activities, “transforms” personal needs and urges into motivated and active activity [13].

A fairly significant number of scientists prove that the “self-concept” has a significant impact on professional personal activity [10]. In the study of the personal “self-concept” of civil servants [14], A. I. Guseva defines their “Professional resource”, which characterizes the personal “self-concept” characteristics that are necessary for effective professional activity:

- intellectual resource: qualitative intellectual expressions and mental abilities that characterize the ability to conduct a dialogue and choose alternative ways of solving problems;
- emotional resource: personal and situational anxiety, emotional and stress-resistant personality and the ability to respond to psychological external and internal influences in a certain psychological way;
- resource of plasticity: the ability to plan activities in advance, insight and a certain “readiness” for changes and innovations (radicalism);
- volitional resource: subordination to existing behavioral norms and rules, business activity and initiative, professional determination, perseverance, risk-taking, ability to make independent decisions and volitional self-control;
- communication resource: the ability to be open and socially active, sociability, collegiality, desire for professional interaction and cooperation, sensitivity and friendliness to others, energy and humanity;
- physical resource: absence of psychological risks and shifts, neurotic and depressive manifestations, aggressive actions and conflict reactions.

In his research, Shevtsov A. identifies the structural elements of the “self-concept” and their characteristics among combatants [15], which was also proved by scientists of the Educational and Research Laboratory of Extreme and Crisis Psychology of the National Center for the

National Defense and Security of Ukraine [16], who pointed out the influence of the “self-physical” component on the possibilities of social adaptation of veterans after participation in hostilities [17–21]. These definitions prove the increasing importance of the “self-physical” construct in the personal structure of the “self-concept” of servicemen and change its structural composition [22, 23], provoking transformational changes in other constructs and causing disharmonization of the “self-concept”.

In our opinion, the level of professional “self-concept” has a significant personal role in the process of personal realization and completely determines the daily activities of a professional. This is especially true for the professional and daily activities of military personnel, especially if they are in active combat, which determines their professional activities in modern realities.

It should be noted that the professional “self-concept” of servicemen as a single and integral element has not been widely studied so far from the existing point of view of the importance of the cognitive concept of a professional, which is responsible for a significant share of the influence on the formation of the professional “self-concept” of servicemen and their professional identity. Because of this, the following professional qualities were given significant priority in terms of the importance of forming the professional qualities of servicemen within the framework of the worldview through the prism of the phenomenon of the professional self-concept: combat and technical abilities, professional knowledge and skills, and other psychophysiological factors that are formed with the consideration of cognitive abilities and are used by a specialist to perform his/her professional duties in a quality manner while performing military service. This has led to the fact that other determinants of a socio-psychological and characteristic nature have been virtually ignored by researchers. Although, moral, ethical, psychological, physical, family and other constructs that form the personal and professional “self-concept” of servicemen also have a significant impact on their professional activities, which is a significant gap in existing modern domestic research [24].

In view of this, we determined the main **purpose of the study**, which was to empirically study the sociopsychological characteristics of military personnel and the possibilities of their influence on the constructs of the personal “self-concept”.

Research methods and methodology. The sample of respondents was formed using a traditional survey with a specially designed questionnaire to study the sociopsychological characteristics of military personnel in crisis conditions of active combat operations. This approach is used in most modern empirical studies of combatants. The sample of servicemen consisted of 129 people who received rehabilitation measures.

The statistical calculation of the results was carried out using a package of statistical software

programs: Microsoft Excel 365, Statsoft Statistica 10.0, and IBM SPSS 25.0 for Windows.

The distribution of quantitative traits was assessed visually by the graphical method and using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Lillifors, and Shapiro-Wilk criteria. The results showed differences from the normal distribution, so nonparametric statistics were used.

To characterize the central tendency and variability of quantitative features, the mean value (M) and standard square deviation (SD, σ) were determined. The results were presented as $M \pm SD$.

Results. In accordance with the main purpose of our study, we empirically analyzed the socio-epidemiological and psycho-characteristic features of servicemen who were under the influence of conditions that were particularly dangerous for their psychophysiological sphere, characterized by a significant impact on the physical, emotional, professional and other constructs of their “self-concept” phenomenon.

Thus, it should be noted that among the entire contingent of respondents who were in crisis conditions of performing their professional duties (being in active combat), their socio-epidemiological characteristics revealed a significant predominance of the male contingent compared to the female (91.5 and 8.5%, respectively) – Table 1. These features determine a significant impact on the physical component of the phenomenon of the “self-concept” of servicemen.

It should be noted that the majority of military personnel belonged to the age group of 30–45 years (49.6%) compared to those under 30 years (25.6%) and 45 years and older (24.8%). In turn, the vast majority of respondents were urban residents (55.0%), as opposed to rural (34.9%) and those living in small towns (0.1%) – Table 1.

In addition, we determined the professional service characteristics of the respondents – Table 2. These characteristics have an impact on the professional self-concept component of servicemen.

Table 1

Socio-epidemiological characteristics of respondent servicemen in crisis conditions (n = 129; abs., %)

Indicator	Abs.	%
Gender		
Men	118	91,5
Women	11	8,5
Age		
Up to 30 years	33	25,6
30–45 years	64	49,6
45 and above years	32	24,8
Place of residence		
City	71	55,0
Urban village	13	10,1
Village	45	34,9

Table 2

Professional service characteristics of the respondent servicemen in crisis conditions (n = 129; abs., %; M ± SD)

Indicator	Abs.	%
Military rank		
Ordinary	84	65,1
NCOs	22	17,1
Officer	23	17,8
Professional activity		
Years in military service	2,47 ± 3,06 (M ± SD)	
Months in military service since the beginning of the invasion	15,6 ± 6,15 (M ± SD)	
Psychological situation in the team		
Conflicting	4	3,1
Tense	14	10,9
Friendly	48	37,2
Neutral	56	43,4
Unsatisfactory	3	2,3
Other	4	3,1
Performance of professional duties		
Very good	21	16,3
Fine	61	47,3
Satisfactorily	36	27,9
Unsatisfactorily	7	5,4
Other	4	3,1

It was expected that there was a significant prevalence of privates (65.1%) compared to NCOs (17.1%) and officers (17.8%). At the same time, all the surveyed servicemen had a rather long combat experience, having spent a considerable amount of time in active combat (15.6 ± 6.15 months) and being exposed to negative overtime psycho-emotional, physical and physiological overloads that provoked the transformation of their “self-concept” concepts. In general, taking into account the overwhelming majority of mobilized servicemen among the surveyed servicemen, the total period of their service was only 2.47 ± 3.06 years – Table 2.

At the same time, there was a significant proportion of respondents who, in addition to psycho-emotional overload related to the performance of their professional duties, had a tense (10.9%), conflict (3.1%) and unsatisfactory (2.3%) psychological situation in the team. In addition, 37.2% of people considered the psychological environment in the team to be friendly, 43.4% – neutral, and 3.1% – other (Table 2).

In turn, the majority of respondents (47.3%) said that they were coping well with their professional duties, and a smaller part – quite well (16.3%). At the same time, there were servicemen who stated that they were coping with their professional duties mediocresly (27.9%) and unsatisfactorily (5.4%) and otherwise (3.1%) – Table 2.

It should be noted that among all respondents, the vast majority had sanguine and phlegmatic personality types (40.3% and 35.7%, respectively), as opposed to melancholic (1.6%) and choleric (12.4%) – Table 3. These typological features were expected to define servicemen as mobile, labile, quick to react, easily experiencing failures and troubles with persistent aspirations, more or less constant mood and weak external expression of mental states and may have been somewhat transformed in response to being in crisis conditions of active combat operations, which indicates the impact on the psychophysical concepts of the personal “self-concept” of servicemen.

In turn, according to the characteristics of the family composition of the respondents’ servicemen who were in crisis conditions of performing their professional duties, we also identified certain features – Table 4. These peculiarities determine the psychological component of the phenomenon of personal “self-concept” of servicemen.

Table 3

Typological personal characteristics of servicemen-respondents who were in crisis conditions (n = 129; abs., %)

Personality type	Abs.	%
Melancholic	15	11,6
Choleric	16	12,4
Phlegmatic	46	35,7
Sanguine	52	40,3

Thus, the overwhelming majority of servicemen had a family (80.6%), as opposed to those who did not (19.4%) and lived with a partner (67.4%) compared to those who lived alone (15.5%) or with other family members (with a brother or sister – 3.1%, grandparents – 2.3%, children – 0.8% or other family members – 13.2%) – Table 4.

Table 4

Characteristics of the family composition of the respondents’ servicemen in crisis conditions (n = 129; abs., %)

Indicator	Abs.	%
The presence of a family		
Present	104	80,6
Absent	25	19,4
Residence		
Lonely	20	15,5
With partner	87	67,4
Brother/sister	4	3,1
Granny/Grandfather	3	2,3
Children	1	0,8
Other	17	13,2

In turn, in the family circle, a friendly (71.3%) and neutral (17.8%) psychological situation was most often reported, as opposed to a tense (4.7%) and unsatisfactory (5.4%) one – Table 5. These features also have a significant impact on the psychological concept of the phenomenon of the personal “self-concept” of servicemen.

Table 5
Characteristics of the family atmosphere of servicemen-respondents in crisis conditions (n = 129; abs., %)

Indicator	Abs.	%
Psychological situation at home		
Conflicted	1	0,8
Tense	6	4,7
Friendly	92	71,3
Neutral	23	17,8
Unsatisfactory	7	5,4
Common in the family		
Discussion of problems	62	48,1
Making decisions	78	60,5
Walking around	66	51,2
Communication on various topics	74	57,4
Other	4	3,1
Material level		
High	5	3,9
Above average	14	10,9
Average	81	62,8
Below average	23	17,8
Low	4	3,1
Very low	2	1,6

At the same time, the majority of respondents noted good family communications. Thus, respondents most often noted joint decision-making (60.5%) and communication on various topics (57.4%), walks (51.2%) and discussion of problems (48.1%). The vast majority of servicepersons reported their material conditions as average (62.8%) and below average (17.8%). Only 3.9% and 10.9% of respondents reported high and above average material conditions, respectively, and 3.1% and 1.6% of servicemen reported low and rather low material conditions, respectively (Table 5).

In turn, the majority of respondents noted tobacco abuse (61.2%) and a fairly significant number (9.3%) indicated alcohol abuse. At the same time, a third of respondents (33.3%) had no bad habits at all, and a small number (3.1%) reported vape and drug (0.8%) and other (1.6%) substance abuse. The average duration of harmful habits was 11.99 ± 11.41 years (Table 6). These characteristics determine the impact on the physical component of the phenomenon of the personal self-concept of servicemen.

Table 6

Characteristics of the prevalence of harmful habits of servicemen-respondents in crisis conditions (n = 129; abs., %; M ± SD)

Bad habits	Abs.	%
Absent	43	33,3
Smoking	79	61,2
Vapes	4	3,1
Alcohol	12	9,3
Narcotic substances	1	0,8
Other	2	1,6
Duration of bad habits, years	$11,99 \pm 11,41$ (M ± SD)	

In addition, the respondents noted certain psychological and professional peculiarities of performing their professional duties, indicating a rather high frequency of stressful situations in the performance of their professional duties, which 20.9% of respondents face 1–2 times a week and 20.2% every day. At the same time, 14.7% of respondents noted their frequency several times a month, 11.6% – several times in six months, 7.0% – 1–2 times a week, and 25.6% of respondents did not experience stressful situations – Table 7. These concepts affect the psychological, professional and physical components of the personal self-concept of servicemen.

At the same time, the majority of respondents noted a long period of participation in active hostilities. Thus, 34.9% stated up to 6 months of such participation, 31.0% – more than 12 months, and 24.0% – 6–12 months. Only 10.1% of respondents did not take direct part in active combat operations (Table 7).

It should be noted that almost half (49.6%) of the respondents served directly on the contact line, and 20.2% – on the first line. In addition, 11.6 and 0.8 percent of respondents served on the second and third lines of defense, respectively, and 14.0 and 3.9 percent of respondents reported serving in the rear and other places of service (Table 7).

In turn, only 36.4% of respondents stated that they had no injuries, while the vast majority of respondents (50.4%) reported having one injury, as opposed to two (10.9%), three (1.6%) and four or more (0.8%). At the same time, 21.7 percent reported significant severity of injury, and 18.6 percent reported moderate severity. Light injuries were reported by 23.3% of respondents (Table 7).

In addition, we have identified the characteristics of night rest and general health of the respondents – Table 8. These characteristics have a direct impact on the physical component of the personal self-concept of servicemen and women, directly affecting the professional concept.

For example, a significant number of respondents noted the presence of health deterioration due to changes in weather conditions. Very frequent deterioration was reported by 16.3% of respondents, and frequent deterioration – by

Table 7

Characteristics of the performance of their professional duties by respondents-servicemen who were in crisis conditions (n = 129; abs., %)

Indicator	Abs.	%
Frequency of stress reactions		
Absent	33	25,6
Every day	26	20,2
1–2 times a week	27	20,9
Several times a month	19	14,7
1–2 times a month	9	7,0
Several for six months	15	11,6
Duration of participation in active hostilities		
Not participating	13	10,1
Up to 6 months	45	34,9
6–12 months	31	24,0
More than 12 months	40	31,0
Military service on the:		
The line of contact	64	49,6
The first line	26	20,2
Second line	15	11,6
The third line	1	0,8
Rear placement	18	14,0
Other	5	3,9
Number of injuries		
Absent	47	36,4
1	65	50,4
2	14	10,9
3	2	1,6
4 and more	1	0,8
Severity of the last injury		
Absent	47	36,4
Serious	28	21,7
Moderate severity	24	18,6
Light	30	23,3

15.5%. At the same time, 35.7% and 10.9% of respondents rarely and very rarely reported deterioration, and 21.7% of respondents reported no deterioration (Table 8).

It should be noted that a significant number of the surveyed servicemen (43.4%) reported rather insufficient (up to 6 hours) and low (6–8 hours, 50.4%) duration of night sleep. In contrast, a rather small number of respondents (4.7% and 1.6%, respectively) considered the duration of night sleep to be sufficient (8–10 hours and more than 10 hours) (Table 8).

In terms of the qualitative characteristics of nighttime rest, the respondents also reported low scores. Thus, the majority of respondents felt only half-rested after a night's sleep (58.9%) and the majority did not feel rested at all (14.7%). At the same time, 21.7% of respondents reported feeling completely rested after sleep, and 4.7% reported other feelings. It should also be noted that only

Table 8

Characteristics of recreation and general health of servicemen-respondents who were in crisis conditions (n = 129; abs., %)

Indicator	Abs.	%
Deterioration of health in response to weather changes		
Not available	28	21,7
Very often	21	16,3
Often	20	15,5
Rarely	46	35,7
Very rarely	14	10,9
Length of nightly sleep		
Up to 6 hours	56	43,4
6–8 hours	65	50,4
8–10 hours	6	4,7
10 and more hours	2	1,6
The degree of rest after sleep		
Fully	28	21,7
Halfway	76	58,9
Not at all	19	14,7
Other	6	4,7
Quality of sleep		
Sufficient	39	30,2
Insufficient	31	24,0
Restless	34	26,4
Insomnia	16	12,4
Bad dreams	15	11,6

30.2% of respondents reported sufficient sleep, and the majority of them reported insufficient sleep (24.0%) or restlessness (26.4%) or insomnia (12.4%) or bad dreams (11.6%) – Table 8.

Conclusions. The conducted empirical study of the sociopsychological and characteristic features of servicemen identified the possibilities of influencing certain constructs of the personal “self-concept” by age, gender and characteristic features, the presence and intensity of combat experience and direct participation in hostilities, conditions of professional duties, the presence and number of injuries, family and communication relationships, psychological overload and other features.

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