

PNP 2021
Personality in Norm and in Pathology**FEATURES OF PROFESSIONAL SELF-ATTITUDE IN SUBJECTS
EXPERIENCING "ADULTHOOD CRISIS"**

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Abstract

The experience of age-related normative crises is one of the factors affecting the self-attitude as a professional. In the study, it is represented as the "adulthood crisis". To study this, we conducted a survey that involved government civil officials aged 39 to 44 years. In the study, we used a set of author's methodologies: "Experiencing a crisis by a person" and "Subjective self-attitude as professionals". The studies have shown that an increase in the indicator "age" comes with an increase in the crisis load, which is expressed in emotional imbalance, pessimism, and reevaluation of the subject's professional path, which in turn affects the professional self-attitude of the subject. It was found that those surveyed expressed the profile "Constructive experience of crisis with a favorable prognosis", combined with a "balanced" type of self-attitude as a professional. They are characterized by a good awareness of their professional and personal-professional qualities, however, there is a change in the indicator of personal activity, due to a decrease in the level of claims, the fixation on professional self-development, and career development. With that, the subject is satisfied with what has been achieved, without striving for more to achieve. In subjects experiencing their crisis with a "balanced" self-attitude, the professional type of work motivation is combined with its instrumental and patriotic types. To prevent the onset and destructive experience of the "adulthood crisis", it is necessary to use age-related resources, to form and maintain an "active-positive" self-attitude as a professional.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Adulthood crisis, experience, level of claims, professional, professional self-development, self-attitude



1. Introduction

The professional labor sphere is an integral part of human life. This implies experiencing and living through normative age-related crises by subjects of labor activity along with professionalization and its stages. The features of experiencing acute, critical moments inherent in a particular age of the subject of labor activity leave an imprint on their self-attitude as a professional, thereby determining the level of their claims, fixation on professional self-development, satisfaction with themselves, their professional choice, and career in general. This problem is of particular importance in the civil service system, in particular when experiencing the normative adulthood crisis, which occurs "halfway" through a professional career. As Slobodchikov and Isaevnote (2000):

an adult person reaches a height of the professional activity, acquires both authority among co-workers and a noticeable social status. During these years, a person has sufficient experience in social and labor activities; he/she has great prospects for personal and professional growth. For those whose career develops in accordance with a typical professional cycle, it's halfway is a time of strengthening their professional position – a person adapts to their workplace and realizes real opportunities of their career (pp. 345-346).

Thus, to overcome the crisis, personal and professional changes (reflected in the professional self-attitude) that occur meanwhile will depend on both labor efficiency and the employee's feeling of professional and psychological well-being

2. Problem Statement

In scientific terms, normative crises issues experience them and their impact on life and work (including professional) of the person were addressed in the works by Ananiev (1980), Ananiev (1999), Kulikov (2004), Kardum et al. (2016), Slobodchikova and Isaev (2000), etc.; the issue of personal and professional self-attitude was raised in the studies by Abdollahi et al. (2014), Ayala Calvo and García (2018), Carrara (2018), Epishin et al. (2020), Kulikov (1997), Mazzetti et al. (2020), Dukhnovsky (2021), etc.

At the same time, the following fact calls for attention. Despite psychological studies within the civil service field, the problem of studies into the features of professional self-attitude among civil servants experiencing a normative adulthood crisis is studied insufficiently. In particular, relevant issues are whether employees' age-related characteristics are interrelated with the parameters of their crisis profile and self-attitude as a professional; what features and types of professional self-attitude are expressed in subjects experiencing and not experiencing the normative adulthood crisis.

With reference to our research, based on the provisions presented in the works by Ananiev (1999), Tolochek (2017), Povarenkov (2018), Kulikov (1997), we shall understand self-attitude as a professional as being self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-regulation, and self-awareness, manifested in perceiving and accepting oneself as a professional, as well as in the fixation on professional self-development and career development of the subject within professional (including future) activities (Dukhnovsky, 2021).

By "crisis" we shall understand a personal-situational phenomenon in a human life, which is phenomenological by nature. A moment or an event in one's life acquires "crisis load" just through

experience, and most importantly only while experiencing (Dukhnovsky, 2016). As Ananiev (1999) noted, the matter of fact is that "the event itself does not matter from the point of view of its external characteristics and its emotional intensity, but what does matter is the way of processing, overcoming and its impact on the further life of a person" (p. 3). When experiencing a crisis, it is important to "get the deep feel of it, perhaps even intuitively", to realize a certain limiting point, a "boundary line", which is reflected in the crisis profile of the person. As per our concept, the "crisis profile" is determined by the ratio of the "situational response" value, which determines the crisis load of the subject, and the "psychological stability" indicator, which determines the presence (absence) of personal preventive resources – adaptive and compensatory abilities to overcome the crisis constructively (destructively).

3. Research Questions

3.1. Are there any differences of psychological indicators of the civil servants who are in adult life crisis and those who are not in the crisis?

3.2 Is there the relationship between the indicators of psychological crisis and the age of the civil servants?

3.3. Are there differences in professional self-attitude of the civil servants, experiencing and not experiencing a crisis?

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to explore the psychological characteristics of the adult life crisis of the civil servants.

5. Research Methods

The study involved 103 civil servants. The age of those surveyed ranges from 39 to 44 years old, which refers to the period of adulthood with the risk of the eponymous normative adulthood crisis onset according to the opinion of Slobodchikov and Isaev (2000). The civil service work experience of the surveyed ranges from 10 to 15 years. All of them are Russian citizens, apparently healthy, examined at the psychologist's request.

In the psychodiagnostic examination, the following methods were used:

- "Personal experience of the crisis" is to reveal the depth of the crisis experience, as well as the person's crisis profile and its characteristics, to determine the further development forecast of the examined person (Dukhnovsky, 2016).
- "Subjective self-attitude as a professional" is to assess the degree of substantial characteristics in self-attitude as a professional (activity – passivity, positivity – negativity), based on a combination of the level of claims, perception, and acceptance of oneself as a professional, as well as the fixation on professional self-development. Based on the assessment of the activity-positivity ratio, the types of self-attitude as a professional were diagnosed. The person's activity (passivity) value is a vigor of aspirations for achieving professional goals, for changing the situation in the desired direction (Kulikov 1997). It is determined by the degree of the level of

claims and the fixation on professional self-development. The person's positivity (negativity) value is expressed in the degree of self-perception and self-acceptance of oneself as a professional, as factors (conditions) for professional development, including career development and the achievement of goals desired in professional life. Thus, it is possible to distinguish five types of self-attitude as a professional: 1) active-positive self-attitude, 2) passive-positive self-attitude, 3) balanced attitude, 4) active-negative self-attitude, 5) passive-negative attitude (Dukhnovsky 2021).

The selection of methods is determined by the following. First, they meet the primary purpose and objectives of the study. Second, they meet primary psychometric requirements for professional psychological test development (Furr & Bacharach, 2010), including the "Russian National Standard for Personnel Screening" (Baturin, 2015).

6. Findings

Based on the data obtained with the "Psychological crisis experiencing" (PCE) method, the examined sample was divided into two groups. The division criterion was the "situational response index" indicator showing the value of the crisis load. The results are presented in Table 1. Group 1 is indicated as "subjects not experiencing a crisis", Group 2 as "subjects experiencing a crisis".

Table 1. Average values of the indicators "situational response index" and "psychological stability" in subjects experiencing and not experiencing a crisis

"PCE" methodology scales	Means	
	Not experiencing a crisis	Experiencing a crisis
Emotional imbalance	13,2±2,8 (46)	27,6±5,7 (66)
Pessimism	11,2±3,3 (45)	28,0±6,2 (73)
Negative balance	16,0±2,9 (46)	28,4±3,1 (70)
Demobilization	9,7±2,6 (43)	19,3±2,6 (58)
Opposition	13,0±2,1 (46)	23,4±3,8 (63)
Disorganization	15,0±3,4 (46)	27,8±2,3 (66)
Situational response index	65,3±6,2 (43)	164,4±18,0 (60)
Psychological stability	30,5±2,3 (58)	30,2±4,1 (58)

Note: Standard scores (T-scores) shown in parentheses

Group 1 includes subjects with the crisis profile "Psychological health with a favorable prognosis" (n=72, average age 40.4±6.9 years, total service experience 20.4±8.0 years, work experience in office 8.3±4.8 years). They are characterized by a low situational response index combined with a high psychological stability index. There is a lack of crisis experience, high vigor and low emotionality, a favorable mental state and emotional well-being (potential denial of serious psychological problems), harmonious interpersonal relationships.

Group 2 is represented by the subjects with the profile "Constructive crisis experience with a favorable prognosis" (n=31, average age 42.3±7.2 years, total service experience 25.2±5.9 years, work experience in office 10.3±6.5 years). The profile has an increased situational response index combined with high psychological stability indicators. This is characteristic of experiencing an acute crisis. The

subjects experience low vigor and high emotionality; an unfavorable mental state; a person's subjective ill-being experience; disharmonious interpersonal relationships.

The data presented in Table 1 show that the most pronounced situational responses in subjects experiencing a crisis are emotional imbalance, negative balance, and pessimistic situational response. As per the "PCE" method scales, the indicators are at a high level (when converting raw values to standard values ranging from 60 to 73 T-points). It is worth noting that these indicators are particular indicators of the crisis experience.

Accordingly, the crisis experienced in the examined subjects comes with:

- the predominance of negative emotions over positive ones; high commitment to perceive and process negative external signals and danger signals; socializing cutback and its degree; increased fatigue and asthenization. All of that is accompanied by the increased significance of negative stimuli, while the positive stimuli significance drops sharply (emotional imbalance response);
- assessment of the current situation as being practically and potentially unfavorable; a decreased level of optimism, self-esteem, a sense of unimportance and importance of one's own capabilities; de facto planning gives way to gloomy forecasts (pessimistic situational response);
- a high level of criticism, realistic judgments, where one's own views, positions, and attitudes (towards something or someone) are very persistent and difficult to influence from beyond; there is a rational "summing up of life results", an assessment of the professional path passed, a comparison of positive and negative events in life, including professional ones; there may be internal conflicts that are objectively insoluble, a restriction of adaptive activity (negative balance response).

Despite the mentioned above, in our opinion, the positive point is a "positive" nature of the profiles described. This is achieved due to such characteristics as the psychological stability of the person. As shown in Table 1, this indicator in the subjects examined ranges from average-high level (from 55 to 58 T-points). Subjects with pronounced psychological stability are characterized by self-belief, belief in their capabilities, they are inherent in the satisfaction of basic life needs (self-fulfillment, self-esteem, self-affirmation); they are able to compare the level of tension with the resources of their psyche and body, to resist life difficulties, adverse pressure of circumstances.

Thus, psychological stability acts as a preventive resource (adaptive-compensatory ability) of those examined for the constructive overcoming of normative age-related crises.

In the course of our research, we established the interdependence of the scale indicators of the "Personal crisis experience" methodology with the indicator "age" and career satisfaction of the subjects examined. The findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlations between scales indicators of the "Psychological crisis experiencing" (PCE) methodology and the indicators "age" of those surveyed

Temporal characteristics	"PCE" methodology scales	
	Situational response index	Psychological stability
Age	0,23*	0.17

Note: * – correlation coefficients at $p \leq 0.05$

The data presented in Table 2 show a direct correlation between age indicators and the situational response index. Accordingly, with an increase in age comes an increase in the crisis load on the subject of labor activity. At the same time, noteworthy is the fact that there are no significant correlations between the indicator "age" and the indicator "psychological stability" of the person, which, in our opinion, depends more on the acquired life experience than on the biological age of those surveyed.

Thus, in phenomenological terms, we observe a "merger" of the normative adulthood crisis (in the periodization of Slobodchikov and Isaev, 2000) with the manifestation of the professional crisis. At this age stage, on the one hand, the subject is focused on achieving socially significant goals, serving a particular organization, on the other hand, on achieving financial well-being.

In addition, at this age, in combination with work experience, there is a contradiction "expressed in the fact that with high intellectual activity and productivity under common conditions of professional work, a person experiences serious difficulties in mastering new types of activities" (Slobodchikov & Isaev, 2000, p. 350). This is reflected in the self-attitude as a professional. In particular, the correlation analysis data showed that with aging, the examined subjects show a decrease in the level of claims and attitudes to professional self-development combined with a positive self-attitude as a professional (correlation coefficients range from -0.30 to -0.27, with $p < 0.05$).

The "merger" of the professional and age crisis reveals itself in the fact that the subject begins to notice he/she is no longer able to achieve results comparable in its importance to his/her achievements in the past and sometimes begins to feel "stagnation" in life. There are thoughts that the best and most productive period of life is already over, and so little has been done. The youth dreams and expectations come to mind, and their comparison with the current achievements begins, usually not in favor of the latter. Sometimes melancholy and gloomy thoughts occur: life has passed in vain, nothing has been gained" (Slobodchikov & Isaev, 2000, p. 355). This explains the distinct manifestation in subjects experiencing a normative age crisis, indicators of emotional imbalance, pessimism, and negative balance included in the situational response index as a value of the crisis load on the subject of labor activity.

Thus, the awareness of the discrepancy between professional dreams, plans (including life plans) and the course of their implementation, including the results can be considered the main age-related impact on the crisis onset.

Further, we let us consider the self-attitude as a professional in those subjects experiencing and not experiencing a crisis. The results obtained by the "Subjective self-attitude as a professional" (SSP) method are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Average values per the method "Determining the self-attitude as a professional" (SSP) in subjects experiencing and not experiencing a crisis

"SSP"methodology scales	Means	
	Not experiencing a crisis	Experiencing a crisis
The level of claims	51,5±9,2 (7)	34,4±4,8 (3)
Fixation on professional self-development	55,4±7,2 (7)	47,8±6,1 (5)
Activity	104,9±15,3 (7)	82,3±6,0 (4)
Self-perception as a professional	54,0±4,8 (8)	53,5±5,7 (8)

Self-acceptance as a professional	55,2±5,7 (8)	47,4±9,6 (6)
Positive view	110,2±12,2 (7)	101,0±10,2 (6)
Fixation on career development	38,6±5,0 (5)	24,8±5,6 (2)

Note: Standard scores (T-scores) shown in parentheses

These values of activity and positivity, shown in Table 3, let us identify the dominant types of self-attitude as a professional in subjects experiencing and not experiencing a crisis. Thus, the group of subjects not experiencing the normative adulthood crisis shows an active-positive self-attitude as a professional. Indicators of activity and positive view are at increased and high levels (ranging from 7 to 8 stens). The subjects are characterized by a high level of claims, combined with self-acceptance and formed positive perceptions about themselves as professionals, a pronounced fixation on professional self-development. Whereas the group of subjects experiencing a crisis shows the dominant type of professional self-attitude is a balanced one. The indicators of the activity level, including the level of claims and fixation on professional self-development, as well as the values of positive view (self-acceptance and self-perception as a professional), are expressed at the average level (values on the "SSP" method scales range from 5 to 6 stens). Reduced activity and positive view let one carry out the professional activity at the necessary level, despite dissatisfaction with oneself as a professional, as well as with many significant aspects of life, including the professional situation. This is also evidenced by the data presented in Table 4.

The correlation analysis data presented in Table 4 shows the relation between the self-attitude as a professional and the indicators of the crisis profile of the person.

Table 4. Matrix of indicators intercorrelations on the "Self-attitude as a professional" (SSP) methodology scales with indicators of the crisis profile

"SSP" methodology scales	"PCE" methodology scales	
	SR	SR
The level of claims	-0,26*	-0,26*
Fixation on professional self-development	-0,46*	-0,46*
Activity	-0,40*	-0,40*
Self-perception as a professional	-0,06	-0,06
Self-acceptance as a professional	-0,16	-0,16
Positive view	-0,14	-0,14
Fixation on career development	-0,16	-0,16

Note: PPK – the scales of the "Personal crisis experience" methodology, SR – index of situational response, PS – psychological stability of the person; * – correlation coefficients at $p \leq 0.05$

The results presented in Table 4 indicate the following. The increase in the crisis load is accompanied by the decrease in the activity indicator self-attitude as a professional. In particular, in subjects, the desire for achieving professionally and personally significant goals decreases, the motivation of avoidance begins to prevail, combined with a focus on solving simpler, standard tasks that do not require additional efforts and abilities ("level of claims" indicator). There is also a decrease in the desire for developing their personal and professional skills (resources, abilities), to improve professional competence there may be rigidity in professional activity, lack of commitment to search for and use new information in their professional activities (indicator "fixation on professional self-development").

Attention is drawn to the negative correlations between the "activity" indicator, including the fixation on professional self-development and the level of claims ("SSP" method) and the indicator "psychological stability of the person" ("PCE" method). Accordingly, there is an increase in the level of psychological stability (shown in Table 1) due to a decrease in the level of claims and fixation on professional self-development. This fact is explained by the following. The decrease in professional activity allows one to spend their personal-psychological and professional-psychological resources more "sparingly", by setting and achieving exactly those goals, solving exactly those professional tasks that do not exceed the capabilities and abilities of the subject of labor activity (and possibly knowingly below them).

At the same time, the data of the correlation analysis show direct correlations between the psychological stability indicator and the indicators self-perception and self-acceptance as a professional. Thus, a good awareness and possession of their own personal and professional-psychological qualities (abilities and resources), positive feelings experience (pride, respect, confidence, satisfaction) about themselves, their personal and professional-psychological qualities (abilities, resources), positive self-attitude as professionals improve psychological stability of the subject of labor activity, their persistence, balance, and resilience, which in turn according to Kulikov (2004) "allows one to resist difficulties in life, unfavorable pressure of circumstances, to maintain health and performance in various ordeals" (p. 92).

7. Conclusion

The data resulting from empirical studies allow us to state the following. With the increased crisis load, as evidenced by the situational response index, the "activity" parameter in self-attitude as a professional, and, in particular, the "level of claims" indicator is the most susceptible ones to change. Also noteworthy is the indicator "fixation on career development", the average decreased and low values of which can be a condition that maintains a favorable (or close to it) self-attitude, due to a decrease in activity in achieving the desired career status (thereby the subject "protects" himself/herself from potential failure). Another explanation for these indicators may be the awareness of real "organizational" capabilities, the awareness that the career development limit has been reached.

Accordingly, a decrease in activity in self-attitude as a professional will be one of the indicators of normative age crisis experiencing, which assessment can be used to organize early prevention of crisis risks and their destructive course.

While the parameter "positive view" in self-attitude is a compensating factor, allowing one to maintain positive self-esteem, belief in oneself as a professional, in one's personal and professional qualities. This is evidenced by the crisis profile of the person, which is characterized by a favorable prognosis in those surveyed. Based on this, we believe that a positive view as a self-attitude parameter is a resource that allows one to constructively experience crises.

An important point is that the experience of the normative adulthood crisis is accompanied by a transformation of the self-attitude as a professional, which we refer to as being "balanced". In particular, there is a change in the personal activity indicator, due to a decrease in the level of claims, the fixation on professional self-development and career development. With that, the subject is satisfied with what has been achieved, without striving for more to achieve. In our opinion, this fact contributes to keeping the

psychological stability. The matter of fact is that a decrease in professional activity allows one to "save" one's own strength by measuring up the goals having set with the resources of the psyche and body, as well as to set goals and solve professional tasks that do not exceed the level of psychological and professional-psychological qualities available to the subject. In turn, this does not require additional resource costs for their professional self-development. Another factor is experiencing positive feelings (pride, respect, confidence, satisfaction) about oneself as a professional, good awareness, and possession of one's own personal and professional-psychological qualities (these characteristics determine the indicator of a positive self-attitude).

In the course of our study, we have shown that in phenomenological terms, there is a merger of the normative adulthood crisis of civil servants with the professional crisis experiencing. This is also reflected in the self-attitude as a professional (decreased both the level of claims and the fixation on professional self-development). In turn, this requires the subject to reformulate professional and life goals, within the framework of a more "realistic and restrained point of view and the awareness of the limited lifetime" (Slobodchikov & Isaev 2000, p. 360).

We believe that the study results should be used for the development and implementation of psychological prevention programs for destructive normative age crisis experiences in civil servants, as well as the development and maintenance of active-positive self-attitude as a professional. In turn, this is one of the necessary conditions for professional and psychological well-being and personnel risks minimization in the subjects of labor activity.

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