

Ethnopsychological peculiarities of coping strategies of law enforcement officers of the Commonwealth of Independent States

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Abstract. Coping strategies are actualized in the official activities of law enforcement officers by situations that have an element of injustice, lack of time, difficulties in life situations, unpredictability and uncertainty of official tasks, the peculiarities of relations with management. By studying the ethno-psychological characteristics of coping strategies, the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) psychologists will provide adequate psychological assistance select competent methods and techniques aimed at the impact of destructive coping strategies and the development of constructive ones. The study aims to research and compare personality coping strategies in different ethnic groups of DIA officers of the CIS countries. The hypothesis of the research: one of the manifestations of ethnopsychological features of the personality of DIA officers of the CIS countries can be considered the differences in the set of coping strategies. The scientific novelty of the research: for the first time, the ethno-psychological peculiarities of coping strategies of the personality of DIA officers of the CIS countries, which are included in the implementation process of professional activity, were studied and revealed. SACS questionnaire was used for the study (S. Hobfall, 1994). The results of the comparative analysis showed significant differences on all scales of the methodology, except for the scales of “entering into social contact” and “cautious actions”, which can be positively assessed, since DIA officers of the studied ethnic groups do not seek to achieve their goals exclusively by influencing the human consciousness by covert, deceptive and violent tactics.

Keywords: ethnopsychology, ethnic groups, multi-ethnic societies, internal security, stress

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1 Introduction

Professional activity of internal affairs bodies (DIA) employees is associated with increased responsibility high mental and physical overload. Its characteristics do not always meet the needs and desires of employees, whether this is due to irregular working hours, high demands, or a lack of internal resources of employees before performing the tasks assigned. This most often leads to various coping strategies as personal defense reactions.

The study of coping strategies in DIA officers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (hereinafter CIS) is legal psychology's rather interesting and topical scientific task [1-8].

In the works of scientists (Yu.V. Bromley, R. Benedict, F. Boas, I.G. Gerder, L.N. Gumilev, S.V. Lurie, A.A. Nalchajyan, Yu.P. Platonov, et al.), the ethnopsychological features of personality are analyzed, which are understood as a social and psychological phenomenon, through which the connection between the individual's mind and the environment is realized.

The problematics of the ethnopsychological features of the individual's coping strategies has been sufficiently studied to date [9-12]. The need to deal constructively with conflict, stressful and problematic situations is a significant task for all of us and is also quite relevant and professionally significant for psychologists providing professional assistance. At the same time, questions concerning the correlation of ethnopsychological features and coping strategies of the personality of DIA officers of the CIS countries have been insufficiently studied.

Due to the study of ethnopsychological features of coping strategies, the psychologists of the units will be able to provide adequate psychological help, select competent methods and ways aimed at the impact of destructive coping strategies, and develop constructive ones [13-15].

The study aims to research and compare personality coping strategies in different ethnic groups of DIA officers of the CIS countries.

The study's hypothesis consists of the assumption that one of the manifestations of ethnopsychological features of the personality of DIA officers of the CIS countries can be considered the differences in the set of coping strategies.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that for the first time, the ethnopsychological peculiarities of personal coping strategies of DIA officers of the CIS countries (the Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan), which are included in the process of professional activity, have been studied and revealed.

2 Materials and methods

The traditional view of the nature of ethno-psychological features of defensive reactions of the individual implies the presence of certain differences in the conditions of its formation, in the structure of relations, and cultural features of its environment. We used the "SACS" questionnaire proposed by S. Hobfall in 1994 based on the multiaxial model of stress coping behavior, designed to study coping behaviors and strategies, that is, stress-coping behavior, as types of human reactions to overcome stressful situations to achieve the study's aim. We used the N-Kruskal-Wallis test to identify significant differences between ethnic groups. The sample analysis is based on the sequential ranking of values, followed by the calculation of the average rank for each of the samples.

A comparative analysis of scores on the SACS questionnaire showed differences between samples on this test for almost all indicators, except for two scales: entering into social contact and cautious actions. Descriptive statistics and the results of comparative analysis are presented in Table 1.

The empirical base of the research was formed by the DIA employees of the Republic of Azerbaijan (38 people), Republic of Armenia (32 people), Republic of Belarus (26 people), Republic of Kazakhstan (78 people), Kyrgyz Republic (85 people), Russian Federation (77 people), Republic of Tajikistan (62 people), Republic of Uzbekistan (38 people).

The total sample of subjects was 438 employees in different positions.

3 Results

Table 1. Empirical values of the N-Kruskal-Wallis criterion according to the “SACS” methodology

| Scale name | Azerbaijanis | Armenians | Belarusians | Kazakhs | Kyrgyz | Russians | Tajiks | Uzbeks | Empirical values criteria | Significance level |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|---------|--------|----------|--------|--------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Assertive actions | 19.2 | 22.7 | 21.2 | 22.2 | 21.1 | 21.9 | 20.9 | 21.0 | 19.28 | 0*** |
| Engaging in social interaction | 24.3 | 22.8 | 24.0 | 22.6 | 23.0 | 24.3 | 22.6 | 24.9 | 24.32 | 0.102 |
| Search for social support | 23.6 | 23.4 | 22.0 | 22.4 | 24.2 | 23.3 | 22.0 | 24.1 | 23.62 | 0.036* |
| Cautious actions | 23.0 | 23.1 | 22.0 | 22.7 | 22.5 | 21.8 | 22.2 | 23.7 | 23.02 | 0.786 |
| Impulsive actions | 18.0 | 19.6 | 18.2 | 18.8 | 20.4 | 18.5 | 20.8 | 21.8 | 18.08 | 0*** |
| Avoidance | 17.7 | 17.5 | 14.8 | 18.4 | 18.3 | 14.2 | 20.2 | 20.5 | 17.72 | 0*** |
| Manipulative actions | 17.3 | 17.2 | 18.3 | 19.2 | 18.7 | 18.0 | 20.5 | 20.5 | 17.32 | 0*** |
| Antisocial actions | 11.0 | 12.6 | 17.0 | 17.5 | 16.8 | 15.6 | 19.2 | 18.4 | 11.06 | 0*** |
| Aggressive actions | 17.4 | 15.8 | 14.2 | 15.2 | 17.2 | 12.7 | 18.0 | 18.5 | 13.40 | 0*** |

Note:

* – $p < 0.05$ (differences are statistically significant)

** – $p < 0.01$ (differences are statistically significant)

*** – $p < 0.001$ (differences are statistically significant)

4 Discussion

Let us discuss the results on the scales. “Assertive actions” – significant differences were found, as evidenced by empirical criterion values = 19.28 and significance level = 0***. The highest indicators are observed in the groups “Armenians” = 22.7 and “Kazakhs” = 22.2, and the group “Azerbaijanis” contains the lowest indicators = 19.2. The results of comparative analysis on this scale allow noting that the DIA officers of the Republic of

Armenia and the Republic of Kazakhstan more actively defend their interests openly declare their goals and intentions while respecting the interests of others.

"Search for social support" – the highest values were found in the group "Kyrgyz" = 24.2 and "Uzbeks" = 24.1, and the lowest values in the group "Tajiks" = 20.1 and "Belarusians" = 20. It can be said that in stressful situations, DIA employees of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan are most likely to share their experiences with others, discuss the situation, and find sympathy and understanding from them.

"Impulsive actions" – the highest values are presented in the group "Uzbeks" = 21.8; the data indicate an "average" level of impulsive actions. Impulsive actions consist of a person's tendency to act at the first impulse, under the influence of external situations or emotions, without first thinking through his actions.

"Avoidance" – the highest results in the group "Tajiks" = 20.2 and "Uzbeks" = 20.5. According to the primary data, the results indicate an "average" level of avoidance, but it showed a high severity compared to the rest of the group. This model of behavior means avoidance of decisive actions, which require a lot of tension responsibility for the consequences. Avoiding, a person puts off solving a problem, distracted by other activities. Avoidance refers to "passive" strategies for coping with stressful situations.

"Manipulative actions" – the highest values are noted in the groups "Uzbeks" = 20.5 and "Tajiks" = 20.5. Overall group indicators are presented at the "average" level in all groups studied; therefore, DIA officers of the studied countries to a lesser extent use manipulative actions, which are aimed at the deliberate and hidden inducement of another person to experience any states, making decisions that are necessary to achieve the initiator only his goals.

"Antisocial actions" – there are meaningful differences here. The maximum value is observed in the group "Tajiks" average value = 19.2. It is important to note that according to the primary indicators, the data of the "Tajiks" group indicate a moderate degree of asocial behavior. High rates of antisocial behavior are characterized by a tendency to go beyond socially acceptable limits also consist in satisfying their desires without regard for the interests and circumstances of others. This scale refers to "antisocial" strategies of coping with stressful situations.

"Aggressive actions" – significant differences were found. The highest results in the comparison are expressed in the groups "Tajiks" = 18.0 and "Uzbeks" = 18.5. According to the results of the primary indicators, the data refer to a medium degree of severity. Aggressive actions manifest themselves in a tendency to feel negative feelings toward others when one's failures and conflicts occur, to feel irritation, anger, and disappointment in other people. In general, the studied scale refers to "antisocial" coping strategies.

5 Conclusion

The results of the comparative analysis showed significant differences on all scales of the SACS methodology, except for the scales of "entering into social contact" and "cautious actions", which can be positively assessed, since DIA officers of the studied ethnic groups do not use this strategy, which involves achieving their goal exclusively by influencing the human consciousness by covert, deceptive and violent tactics.

Representatives of the Azerbaijani ethnic group serving in the IAB are characterized by a coping behavior strategy: the search for social support, which is the most constructive. To a lesser degree, they are characterized by the strategy of behavior "antisocial actions", which is also positive, since ill-considered, impulsive actions bring unpleasantness to themselves and others.

The representatives of the Armenian ethnic group serving in the DIA revealed the strategy of coping behavior “assertive actions”, which is the most constructive in the activities of DIA employees, involving the active assertion of their interests, an open statement of their goals and intentions while respecting the interests of others. To a lesser extent, the strategy of “antisocial actions” behavior was revealed, which is also positive.

For representatives of the Belarusian ethnic group, the most typical behavioral strategy is “search for social support”. To a lesser extent, the “avoidance” behavior strategy was revealed. Note that the low rates on the “avoidance” scale are a positive fact since high rates imply avoidance of decisive action, which is not desirable for the activities of DIA officers, where tasks must be accomplished, and actions must be as decisive as possible.

Representatives of the Kazakh ethnic group who serve in the DIA in stressful situations are characterized by a coping strategy – “assertive actions”, which is constructive. Aggressive and antisocial actions were identified to a lesser degree, which is also constructive.

The following stress coping strategies were identified among the Kyrgyz ethnic group serving in the DIA: “seeking social support” and “impulsive actions”. It should be noted that impulsive actions are expressed at the average level according to the primary indicators. Still, compared with the rest of the studied groups, the results are the highest.

For representatives of the Russian ethnic group in stressful situations, the most characteristic behavioral strategy is “seeking social support”. The lowest expression was revealed on the scale: “The lowest values on the “avoidance” scale are a positive fact”.

To a greater extent, the Tajik ethnos in stressful situations uses strategies to overcome difficulties: “impulsive actions”, “manipulative actions”, and “avoidance”. These indicators are not constructive strategies, but it should be noted that according to the primary analysis, the results on the scales are average; based on this, we cannot talk about the high expression of these scales, but only in comparison with the studied groups, they are the most frequently used behavioral strategies. To a lesser extent, the behavior strategy is used: “antisocial actions”.

To a greater extent, the Uzbek ethnic group is characterized by the following coping strategies: “seeking social support”. This behavioral strategy is the most constructive in the activities of DIA employees, involving the desire to share their experiences with others, discuss the situation, find their sympathy and understanding; “impulsive actions” and “manipulative actions” are not constructive strategies, but it should be noted that according to the data of the primary analysis, the results on the scales are average indicators, based on this we cannot talk about the high expression of these scales. Still, only compared with the studied groups they are the most frequently used behavioral strategies.

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