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EMPIRICAL STUDY OF PERSONAL DETERMINANTS OF THE CHOICE OF COPING STRATEGIES OF SERVICEMEN

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ABSTRACT

Today, the activities of military units become especially important in conditions of instability in the country. Consequently, the study of the psychological characteristics of such people becomes expedient. Modern types of combat are requirements that often exceed the capabilities and resources of the military. This, in turn, creates a need for a special type of personality - stable, socially active, with a high level of self-regulation and the ability to withstand pressure from adverse factors [9].

In modern psychology, the individual way in which a person can cope with a complex, crisis situation is determined by the concept of coping behavior. The study of this concept is especially relevant for persons working in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Coping is a strategy of behavior in complex stressful situations, which is chosen by servicemen to deal with stress. This is a kind of response of the psyche, which is an adaptive mechanism at the time of negative impact. The choice of coping strategies is determined by a number of personality traits that determine the dominant pattern of behavior of a particular serviceman during decompression.

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Introduction. The problem of choosing coping strategies by the military is especially acute today. The activities of military units become especially important in conditions of instability in the world. The current state of affairs presents requirements that often exceed the psychological capabilities and resources of the military. This, in turn, creates a need for a special type of personality - stable, socially active, with a high level of self-regulation and the ability to withstand pressure from adverse factors [1].

The fighting in eastern Ukraine is hybrid, with widespread use of psychological pressure, manipulation, advocacy and misinformation. To date, this is causing an increase in psychogenic losses among personnel. The personality of a serviceman is undergoing changes in all areas. During decompression measures, it is found that more than 60% have signs of combat stress of varying severity. Thus, there are violations of behavioral self-regulation, uncontrolled aggression, panic attacks [6]. Accordingly, the choice of a productive and effective coping strategy becomes impossible due to violation of personal characteristics. It is important to teach servicemen to act properly in a stressful situation, to be able to control the choice of the necessary coping. Active change of the situation by the serviceman should become more adaptive than adaptation to it. Positive coping strategies help to improve mental health, reduce risk factors for disease and mitigate their effects [7]. Thus, successful coping strategies in difficult living conditions allow the serviceman to overcome life crises, severe stressful situations. Such strategies are generally related to the resource of the individual or the potential, the stock of its various structural and functional characteristics that provide general activities and specific forms of behavior, response and adaptation [2].

The purpose of the article is to study the personality traits of servicemen, which determine the choice of coping strategies.

Materials and Methods. Research methods are theoretical (analysis, synthesis, generalization, systematization), empirical (surveys, observations, testing, interviews), methods of mathematical statistics (to establish the type of data distribution -Kolmogorov-Smirnov criteria, to establish connections - Pearson's criterion, Student's criterion, multiple regression analysis - Fischer's criterion). The following diagnostic tools are used in the work: Questionnaire of self-control methods (adaptation of WCQ method) by R. Lazarus and S. Folkman in adaptation by T.L. Kryukova, E.V. Kuftiak, M.C. Zamyshlyeva; personal questionnaire "SACS" (S. Hobfall); five-factor personality questionnaire; methods of multifactor study of R. Kettel's personality; Freiburg personal questionnaire; method of diagnosing the level of Spielberger-Khanin anxiety [8].

The study involved 150 servicemen of the Air Force, the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Diagnosis was performed in three stages, during the fighters' decompression measures.

Results.

Table 1. The results of diagnostics of coping strategies according to the method of S. Hobfol in servicemen

№	Strategies Overcoming	Model of behavior (actions)	Expression of overcoming models		
			Low (% of respondents in %)	Medium (number of respondents in %)	High (number of respondents in %)
1.	Active	Assertive actions	16 (11%)	56 (37%)	78 (52%)
2.	Prosocial	Entering social contact	24 (16%)	36 (24%)	90 (60%)
3.	Prosocial	Seeking social support	64 (43%)	42 (28%)	44 (29%)
4.	Passive	Cautious actions	91 (61%)	21 (14%)	38 (25%)
5.	Direct	Impulsive actions	5 (3%)	40 (27%)	105 (70%)
6.	Passive	Escape	17 (11%)	113 (75%)	20 (14%)
7.	Indirect	Manipulative actions	48 (32%)	40 (27%)	62 (41%)
8.	Antisocial	Antisocial actions	26 (17%)	41 (27%)	84 (56%)
9.	Antisocial	Aggressive actions	11 (7%)	9 (6%)	130 (87%)

From table 1 it can be noted that the active coping strategy, in particular assertive actions have a high degree of expression in 52% of subjects. Such soldiers actively and consistently defend their interests, openly declare their goals and intentions, while respecting the interests of the environment. In 37% of respondents this strategy is expressed at a medium level, in 11% - respectively at a low level.

Entering social contact as a dominant behavioral strategy is presented in 60% of respondents. They use social relations in order to jointly and effectively address the critical situation. This is a very good indicator for a military unit, as any task is based on interaction and joint activities, especially in the context of hostilities.

The search for social support in 43% of servicemen is low. They are not inclined to share their own experiences, do not discuss feelings and emotions with others, react negatively to compassion. Only 29% of respondents use this model of behavior as dominant. They try to find social support in stressful situations, share their experiences with others and experience the situation together. It is worth noting that seeking social support and entering into social contact are prosocial strategies for coping with stress, aimed at jointly dealing with a stressful situation. They are not prone to long reflection and planning of their own actions, they easily take risks. After a long stay in a combat zone, servicemen lose their sense of caution, the danger is not felt as acutely as in a peaceful life. 25% of respondents have a high degree of use of the precautionary model. Soldiers think for a long time and carefully weigh all possible solutions, try to avoid risk, long prepare for active action in difficult situations.

Impulsive actions are expressed at a high level in 70% of respondents. They are characterized by a tendency to act on the first impulse, under the influence of external circumstances or emotions, without prior consideration of their actions, weighing all the pros and cons and making the most appropriate and reasonable decisions. Only 3% of respondents have a low score on the scale.

The model of behavior "escape" has the highest score on the average degree of expression - 75% of respondents. As a rule, they try to avoid decisive action, require great tension and responsibility for the consequences, there is a desire to move away from the conflict situation, postpone the solution of the problem, think about something else, distract from other activities and activities.

Use of manipulative actions, as the leading coping, is defined at 41% of servicemen. There are intentional and hidden motivations of another person to experience certain states, decisions and actions necessary to achieve the initiator of their own goals. It should be noted that 32% of respondents have a low score on this scale.

Antisocial behavior as a leading model is represented by 56% of respondents. Soldiers are characterized by a tendency to go beyond socially acceptable limits and restrictions, egocentrism, the desire to satisfy their own desires, regardless of the circumstances and interests of others. A low score on the scale is present in 17% of respondents.

87% of servicemen have a pronounced pattern of aggressive actions. This is the most pronounced strategy in the group. Researchers use aggressive actions aimed at other people, which are manifested in the tendency to feel negative feelings in failures and conflicts with other people, to blame others for something, to feel feelings, anger, irritation, internal tension, frustration, dissatisfaction. Only 7% have a low scale. Another 6% have an average degree of expression of aggressive actions.

S. Hobfall's method allows to build a "portrait" of models of overcoming behavior, based on the analysis of individual data of respondents. We present a medium-group "portrait" of the models for the studied sample on figure 1.

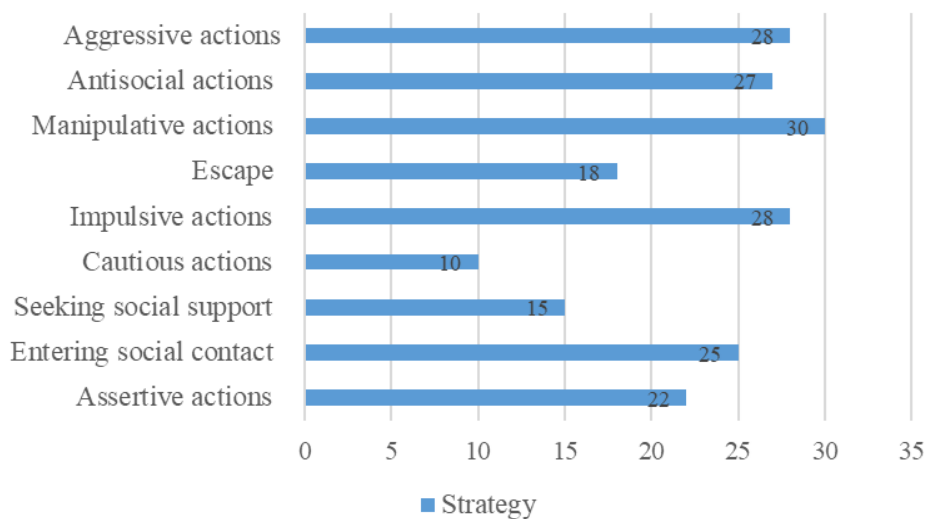


Fig. 1. Middle-group "portrait" of models of overcoming behavior according to the method of S. Hobfall

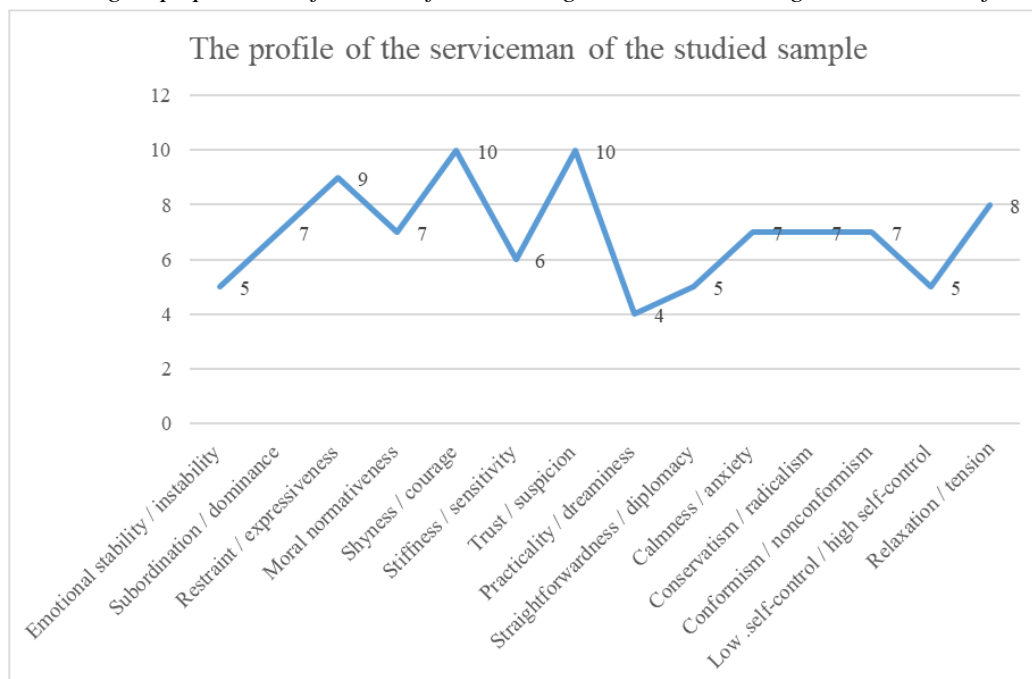


Fig. 2. Average group profile of the individual according to the method of R. Kettel

From Figure 2 it can be noted that by factor A "Closedness-sociability" the sample can be described as quite restrained, isolated, critical, cold. Soldiers are reluctant to make contact, keep their distance. The indicator for the factor "Intelligence" is at an average level, is characterized by specificity and some rigidity of thinking, reduced efficiency.

The emotional stability / instability factor also has an average. The subjects are characterized by emotional instability, quite easily exposed to negative psychological influences. Prolonged stay in the combat zone provokes constant emotional strain, due to which control over the emotional sphere is reduced. Some servicemen are prone to uncontrolled emotional reactions that occur under the influence of the slightest impulses and stimuli. Others use the "switching off" of all emotions, sometimes to the complete alienation of feelings and experiences. Thus, the mechanisms of psychological protection, which are aimed at maintaining mental health, are activated.

The restraint-expressiveness factor is high. The servicemen of the studied sample are active, quite impulsive, quite expressive in communication with each other, demonstrate emotional leadership in the team.

"Moral norms" are presented at an average level. Soldiers are characterized by perseverance, they can be relied on in difficult situations, which is a necessary aspect of the professional activities of the military. They are conscientious, responsible, have a developed sense of duty, consciously follow moral rules and regulations.

The "shyness-courage" factor has the highest rate in the group and characterizes the subjects as bold, resourceful, willing to take risks and cooperate, able to make independent decisions.

According to the factor of "rigidity-sensitivity", the group indicator is average and does not determine sentimentality, self-confidence, severity, practicality, sometimes a certain rigidity and rigidity in relations with others, rationality and logic of actions.

"Suspicion" has the maximum value. The average serviceman of the sample is characterized by distrust, doubt, stubbornness, focus on the actual "I". There is caution in action, autonomy of social behavior.

Indicators of the factor "practicality-dreaminess" mean practicality, determination, conventionality and diligence. Soldiers are exposed to external, real circumstances, solve problems quickly enough. However, there is excessive prosaicness and concreteness of thinking.

The factor of "straightforwardness-diplomacy" is expressed at the average level and characterizes servicemen as open, straightforward, direct, quite emotional. Manifestations of tactlessness are possible, because the military team has its own laws communication is often not normative. But it should be noted that during hostilities you do not have to think about tact, interaction sometimes occurs even at the level of gestures, without a verbal component.

Factors "calm-anxiety", "conservatism-radicalism", "conformism-nonconformism" »Have the same indicator. Respondents can be described as quite anxious, anxious, some have depressive symptoms. At the same time, servicemen in their activities are quite critical of the environment, approach problems from an analytical point of view and try to find a way out of even difficult situations, with the help of their own decisions and ideas.

The self-control factor is presented at the average level. Soldiers are able to control their emotions and behavior, but there is a dependence on moods and their own desires.

The factor of "relaxation-tension" is high. The subjects are characterized by a tendency to stress and excitability, there is frustration and irritability, which occur for no apparent reason. It is worth noting that the professional activities of the military require courage, as the work involves constant risks to life.

Conclusions. The choice of coping strategies by servicemen is largely determined by a number of personal characteristics. During the treatment of a stressful situation, servicemen use various copings. In general, it should be noted that the choice of coping strategies for servicemen is being actively studied at the stage of decompression measures. The right choice of coping strategy determines the successful completion of the task in complex languages. Knowing the personal determinants of coping, you can adjust the actions of the military in stressful conditions, affecting the personal qualities. Prospects for further research in this area are to develop programs for the development of coping mechanisms in the military, which will increase stress resistance, psychological endurance, the ability to psychologically resist the negative psychological impact.

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Declaration of Interest Statement. I have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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