

Professional Mobility as a Model for Overcoming Maladaptive Forms of a Person's Psychological Defence in Conditions of Professional Development Crises

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Abstract: The article deals with the results of the analysis of the person's professional mobility as a comprehensive tool for overcoming the professional crises. It also determines the existence of many unascertained psychological problems in its structure. One of these problems is the problem of overcoming maladaptive forms of a person's psychological defence based on his professional mobility in stressful conditions of the professional development crises.

Stressful uncertainty in the professional crisis and the high ambivalent tension, which the person is experiencing, characterize the specialist's maladaptive development according to the "catastrophic" scenario. In the conditions of the professional development crisis a specialist cannot leave it adaptively and flexibly due to a limited number of rigidly patterned professional barriers and behaviour models. Such maladaptive patterned movement of a specialist towards the disintegrational destruction of the whole system of his professional development can be overcome constructively on the basis of his professional mobility model, selection and realization of the further professional movement vector. We consider the interactive strategy of a specialist's behaviour for constructive overcoming professional crises in the system of his professional development, based on the development of the ability of directed transitions to new professional movement trajectories in the points of the system bifurcation, as the professional mobility.

Keywords: *person's professional mobility; professional crises; synergetic system; trajectory of professional development; bifurcation points.*

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1. Introduction. Topicality.

The experience of studying the concept 'a person's professional mobility' by psychology shows the versatility and complexity of its structure as a psychological phenomenon. In the context of overcoming the specialist's professional development crises, the phenomenon of a person's professional mobility can be considered as a comprehensive psychological tool for their effective overcoming. This promising approach shows that the scientific study of this phenomenon requires in-depth analysis of many insufficiently studied scientific and psychological directions. One of them is the issue of overcoming maladaptive forms of a person's psychological defence based on his professional mobility, under the influence of stress-related factors, professional crises. It should be noted that the very essence of the concept 'a person's mobility' characterizes the complex of multilevel changes in mental programs of human action algorithms. However, in the professional activity context there is a question which is still open to further study: what models of a specialist's mental organization in conditions of uncertainty, as a stress factor during professional development crises, determine the psychological basis (mechanisms) for an active-adaptive search and regulation of a multivariate choice concerning an effective vector of professional-mobile changes and activities for a specialist.

Since the end of the twentieth century, the problem of professional mobility is actively studied by researchers from various fields of scientific knowledge, including psychology which pays much attention to it. In-depth study of professional mobility as a complex psychological phenomenon at its various levels, individual and social, identifies new opportunities for effective psychological solutions, considering the synergetic specifics of the complex system development and many urgent tasks in various areas of scientific and practical activities. In particular, these are the areas of employment, general and higher education, vocational training, labour mobility, labour efficiency, problems of improving the future employees' professional training quality as well as their retraining in terms of the dynamics of labour market requirements, problems of assistance effectiveness in overcoming personal and professional crises of a modern specialist's development, problems of building and developing the career and solving many other important aspects of a person's professional development.

The study of a person's professional mobility in the context of the synergetic specifics of the processes, which determine it, singles out a new and promising scientific approach to the professional mobility problem in

both the socio-professional system of the society in general and the more individualized professional development system.

The scholars say (Hanaba et al., 2020) that a person's professional mobility takes place in the process of his professional training. Education should respond to socio-cultural changes flexibly and proactively as well as to update the forms of education organization. The development of education should be based on the creation of new knowledge and skills instead of consuming ready-made information, on self-education and self-transformation to realize one's own life potential (Hanaba et al., 2020).

The issue of a person's professional crises (crises of professional development) taking into account the professional mobility processes in the context of a synergetic approach is considered in the works of E. Zeer (2006), N. Surgund (2016). It opens new perspectives for studying and improving the technology of forming a specialist's ability to make constructive changes in forms, content, and professional activity in conditions of uncertainty, during the period of normative and non-normative professional crises. The article is aimed at determining (on the basis of a synergetic approach) the strategy of formation and actualization of a future specialist's professional mobility during his professional training at a higher educational institution.

2. Review of research on the topic

In recent decades, the professional mobility concept is in the focus of such scientific fields as pedagogy, sociology, and psychology.

Personal development in general and professional development presupposes the presence of normative and non-normative crises as a natural process, which is determined by a person's continuous development on the one hand and by his socio-professional environment on the other. K. K. Platonov (1986) believes that it is realized at the levels of both a person's inner space and his outer space. According to E. Zeer (2006) a synergetic system has such basic characteristics as openness, self-organization, self-development, nonlinearity, imbalance, and variety of development paths. This system operates in a dynamic "space of a person's professional development" (Zeer, 2006, pp. 18-22). In such a system in critical moments of development – "bifurcation points" of professional crises – on the professional mobility basis there is a change in the vector of a specialist's professional development as a way to overcome the crisis, says N. Surhund (2017). Such changes in the professional career trajectory help to overcome

its destruction trend, but the conditions for ensuring the processes of such overcoming professional crises require the further study (Surhund, 2017).

It should be noted that the progress of a person's professional development crises occurs in the conditions of increasing imbalance in the established system of professional order (job duties and rights; motives, goals and means of work, working conditions in the production environment; the system of social and professional relations and relevant status positions, etc.) and other system determinants – personal, individual-biological and age characteristics, factors of leading activity and professional training (education) (Surgund, 2016). The increase in imbalances and fluctuations in this structure determines the increase in the degree of a specialist's multi-level uncertainty regarding the prospects of further professional movement, which causes the progress of the professional development crisis (professional crisis) (Zeer, 2006). Such psychological uncertainty of a specialist concerning his professional activity stability, based on the violation of the established information flows at all the levels of the system functioning leads to a subconscious and conscious increase of a person's high ambivalent tension, high level of contradictions, internal discomfort, and anxiety (Zelinska, 2010). The growth of a high level of uncertainty, ambivalence in a person's external sphere (in particular, information inconsistency in the professional sphere) determines the stressful disturbance of the adaptation balance system and the development of disintegration processes in a specialist's motivational, affective-cognitive, and behavioural spheres. Because of information influence ambivalence, uncertainty can cause stressful disturbances in a person's stability, in the development of his personal and professional crises. In modern conditions, the psyche of many people turns out to be insufficiently plastic for adequate adaptation to the rapid changes in the conditions of modern life in the social and professional spheres, especially in the situation of changes in professional activity (Surhund, 2016).

L. Sushentseva and M. Havryliuk (2016) say that in new and especially in crisis situations for a person, he needs active self-transformation to realize his life potential effectively, and in his professional activities – to overcome his personal-professional crisis processes in a mobile way (Sushentseva & Havryliuk, 2016).

It is worth paying attention to V. A. Bodrov's position (2000) concerning the crisis phenomena of a person's professional (labour) activity, which are caused by the uncertainty development as a base for information stress and stressful disturbances in professional activity. Under conditions of a person's professional activity, information stress is determined by a system

of activities in complicated conditions which are characterized by different dynamics of saturation, violation and/or uncertainty of information processes. Information violation and/or uncertainty about the mental image of activity is accompanied by distortion of the mechanism for activity regulation and its dynamics and disorganizes the system of professional activity processes. The psychological system of activity also includes the mental qualities of the activity subject, which are important for his activity success. The information basis of the activity is also influenced by a specialist's subjective perceptions about the reality, about the essence of those information processes that determine the professional activity functioning in the socio-professional system. The uncertainty of this information leads to a person's stressful maladaptation in conditions of the interaction dynamics variability between social and professional environments. At the level of consciousness, the information basis of activity is formed and functions at three levels: perceptual, cognitive and image operational. During professional (labour) activity, all three levels function because of interconnection and interaction. Violation and/or uncertainty of information processes at any of these levels leads to a decrease in reliability and stability of a specialist's activity and the development of mental tension, information stress (Bodrov, 2000).

In the professional activity, the processes of human adaptation to the stress effects, which are determined by the maladaptive nature of the employee's professional activity factors, determine the professional stress development. O. M. Khodakivska (2010) considers such stress as a mismatch between the professional environment requirements and a person's individual resources; as an adaptive response of a person, who is included into the professional activity system, to professionally caused complications and uncertainty (Khodakivska, 2010).

From a general point of view, under stressful influences, the body reaction lies in the physiological and psychological manifestations of the body adaptive activity reactions. In response to the effect of the maladaptive factor, which causes the stressful nature of such an impact on a person, he mobilizes his forces and reserves actively at various functional levels (physiological, mental, behavioural) to combat it to adapt to the created conditions/situations quickly (Miller, 1976).

M. Horovitz, N. Wilner & W. Alvarez (1979) focus their attention on the fact that the level of a person's stress, who adapts to stressful influences, is caused by a complex of objective and subjective factors (individual-biological, environmental, social factors, degree of readiness, etc.). The nature of the stress impact on a person can be determined not only directly

by the force of these maladaptive loads, but also by the factors of their totality, dynamics, duration, uncertainty, as well as the level of a person's subjective perception of the danger level (Horovitz et al., 1979). Considering the social nature of human interactions, B. K. Houston (1987) indicates that under conditions of stress dynamics a person's adaptive activity reactions are aimed at overcoming contradictions with social and/or professional environments to overcome crisis phenomena in a person's development (Houston, 1987).

The complex dynamics of our consciousness processes is considered by N. Surhund (2018) as a result of multi-level synergetic interaction of internally determined human factors (biological, age, cognitive, character, emotional factors, etc.) and factors of external influence (natural, energetic, social, professional, informational, etc.). Such complex multi-level interaction is synergetic in nature and is implemented at the level of interrelationships of the synergetic system determinants of a person's professional development to overcome professional crises. The nature of the concept essence 'professional mobility' is *'inconvenient'* for the mind, quite contradictory as it constantly focuses on *the need for change* (Surchund, 2018).

B. K. Houston (1987) underlines that the need for constant change brings this contradictory information from the comfort zone to the discomfort zone of consciousness, which (according to the law of Freud-Festinger's consciousness activity) begins to distort this contradictory 'inconvenient' information, or even removes it from the consciousness, that is, it moves it from the conscious access zone to the zone of unconsciousness (Houston, 1987). This happens due to defence mechanisms. According to A. Freud (1992) basic mechanisms of psychological defence are displacement, denial, projection, suppression, regression, isolation, substitution, idealization, rationalization, sublimation (Freud, 1992). Thus, information with the characteristics of 'professional mobility' for a person's consciousness receives the 'negative' modality and it is possible to actualize it, that is, to overcome maladaptive forms of psychological defence from this 'negative' information, on the basis of synergetic-psychological technology of its development in training a modern future specialist.

The purpose of the article is to present the results of the theoretical analysis of the synergetic approach principles in the system of a person's psychological defence to overcome the professional development crises, which define new opportunities for his training in the structure of the future specialist preparation. The article is also aimed at analysing the psychological problems of overcoming maladaptive forms of a person's

psychological defence in the context of the dynamics of a specialist's professional development crises considering the synergistic principles of a person's professional mobility.

3. Statement of the main material

3.1. Patterning of personal and professional constructs of a specialist's psyche

The specialist's personality is considered by N. Surgund (2016) as a result of synergistic interaction of individual-personal factors and the system of social and interpersonal relationships during both professional training and professional activity.

According to D. E. Super (1976) the process of a person's professional development (a person's career development) covers the main period of human life, which characterizes a person's professional activity "in the life span from student to pensioner" (Super, 1976, p. 4). Professional development is a complex process that involves the individual (internal) and socio-professional (external) components, and it occurs during a person's life in the conditions of his professional activity variability. According to E. Zeer (2006), in the 'space of a person's professional activity' this process reflects dynamics of the professional development general stages – professional orientation, professional choice, professional training, professional adaptation, professional growth, professional skill, socio-professional self-actualization, retirement from professional activities by age, etc. (Zeer, 2006, p. 39).

During the dynamics of the professional development stages of the labour subject the specialist is formed not only as a professionally competent and qualified executor of certain labour functions in a certain area of professional activity, but also a carrier of professional culture, which is 'sewn into' a certain professional-organizational system of interactions. In this system, in the process of professional training and professional activity (in the process of a person's professional development) specialists acquire a certain psychological organization of professional behaviour as a mandatory element of their professional culture. In professional development, such an organization of a specialist's psyche, based on his individual qualities and personal characteristics, is acquired in the process of mastering professional models (mental programs) of algorithms for professional and corresponding socio-professional actions. Such formation of a specialist's personality (Zeer, 2006; Surhund, 2016) occurs during synergetic interaction of complexes of personal factors, tasks, and conditions in professional activity (professional

training, professional activity, labour dynamics) and the system of social and interpersonal interconnections that accompany a person's professional development. The formed in this way and mastered mental model of a specialist's 'self-image', together with the appropriate algorithm (pattern) of professionally conditioned behaviour of the labour subject becomes a structural component of the specialist's personality.

We emphasize that this model of specialist's behaviour characterizes the consolidation of both the professional competence components (along with professional knowledge, skills, and abilities) and certain patterns and constructs of his individual psychological organization in his personal-professional "self-image". In the professional development process these unified personal-professional constructs of a specialist's psyche are formed according to fixed professional stereotypes, socio-professional attitudes, norms and rules of a specialist's behaviour, professional-psychological barriers, defence strategies, etc.

I. O. Baklytskyi (2008) determines that when a specialist acquires certain patterned personal-professional constructs of the psyche organization – obligatory elements of his "self-professional" mental model – it provides efficiency, safety, and reliability of professional activity, overcoming unfavourable functional states that negatively affect the quality of professional activity (Baklytskyi, 2008). According to V. A. Tolochek (2008) the psychologically fixed algorithm of a specialist's professional behaviour is aimed at ensuring the performance of his professional tasks and overcoming the difficulties arising in a unified professional framework that is limited by functional responsibilities and the need to perform professional tasks (Tolochek, 2008).

At the same time, this understanding of the processes enables us to assume that the formation of personal-professional "self-image" on the basis of standardized professional qualification requirements, stereotypes of practical professional activities and the appropriate psychological normalization of individual and socio-professional behaviour also determines the consolidation of a certain type of a specialist's psyche defence response pattern to stress – to maladaptive professional and socio-professional conditions and situations with different dynamics (from short-term to long-term), to unstable and disturbing circumstances due to destabilizing changes and increasing imbalance of "the person's professional activity space" and uncertainty of its dynamics.

3.2. The system of a person's psychological defence in stressful conditions of professional development crises

According to our approach these patterned personal-professional constructs of the specialist's psyche (attitudes, professional norms and rules, professional stereotypes of thinking, professional-psychological barriers, defence personal and socio-professional reactions, etc.) act as established components of the specialist's behaviour model (mental model of a professional's 'self-image'). According to L. Yu. Subbotina (2013) under conditions of increasing maladaptive processes in the professional activity such constructs of the psyche are transformed for the second time into various forms of psychological defence, which structurally determine the system of a person's psychological defence. The author says that at the subconscious level these forms as the system components determine the patterns of blocking the needs for various increasing changes in professional activity by the specialist's professionally organized psyche, his resistance to deviations from the average, relatively stable level of professional activities and socio-professional life. Such counteraction is defined as one of a person's psychological defence adaptive forms to stressful life circumstances, which potentially have a threat to a specialist's professional activity stability. The task of reducing a person's psycho-emotional stress defines this type of specialist's adaptive behaviour as an adaptive way of responding to stressful circumstances and situations in professional activities the stressful situation of uncertainty in a specialist's personality crisis development (Subbotina, 2013).

Adaptation is the main function of psychological defence and determines specific defence behaviour patterns, which a person uses. L. Yu. Subbotina (2013) considers that the adaptive function has a regulatory and system-forming effect of forming defence behaviour. At the same time, the relationship between adaptation and psychological defence is two-way. The structure of the psychological defence mechanisms acts as a factor that determines the formation of a person's adaptive complex and the conditions that influence this formation. The relationship between adaptation and psychological defence has also a mutually regulatory effect. Self-regulation is expressed depending on the formation of the psychological defence structure from the prolonged stress experience. The effect of the formed defence structure as a personal system is directly reflected in the specialist's professional activity.

L. Yu. Subbotina (2013) believes that adaptive and regulatory functions of a specialist's psychological defence are reflected in the structure

of psychological defence as a system that has a level organization and is integrated into the general structure of the psyche. Defence mechanisms provide 'the first level' defence, that is, provide motivational and emotional assessment of the situation. The psychological defence system is formed into 'the second level' structure, which provides an integrated regulation of a person's activities and behaviour under stress (stable style of defence response, further transformation into a coping strategy). The basic function of psychological defence is to remove pragmatic uncertainty and form an adaptive action program for these conditions. Defence mechanisms are regulatory-monofunctional, and due to their structure, they are integral entities and are characterized by systematic properties, since they have motivational, interactive, and cognitive components (Subbotina, 2013).

According to the approach of R. S. Lazarus (1991), defence mechanisms and coping behaviour are combined with the concept of 'a person's psychological defence' to overcome stresses. In this context, coping is considered as a means of a person's psychological defence from psycho-traumatic events. These tools are human-made and affect behaviour (Lazarus, 1991). L. Yu. Subbotina (2013) is inclined to believe that these are close concepts, but the concept 'coping' is broader in its content than the concept 'defence mechanism'. Psychological defence and coping behaviour are considered as the most important forms of a person's adaptive processes and ways of responding to stressful situations, while the defence mechanisms act as a person's stable constructs and are included in behavioural strategies of coping behaviour (Subbotina, 2013).

L. Yu. Subbotina (2013) believes that psychological defence has several regularities. Attention is drawn to the fact that one of the most important regularities, which are typical for the psychological defence functioning, is the transformation of the hierarchical structure (dominant and background mechanisms), depending on the anxiety intensity. As anxiety intensifies, under certain conditions of increased maladaptation, intersystem connections weaken, and many defence mechanisms return to the background norm. At the same time, the activity of those dominant mechanisms that remained in the original set increases sharply, causing a 'hypertrophied patterning of behaviour'. The research (Subbotina, 2013) confirmed that during the long-term effects of stressful conditions (including uncertainty), there is a psychological defence destruction in certain defence mechanisms, which acquire a relative independence of functioning that leads to the corresponding deformation of a person's behaviour. The behaviour is modified into the form that is characteristic of the dominant defence mechanism – aggressive, isolating, intellectualized and

others. This behaviour pattern extends to the whole personality and determines his response to the situation. The variability of a person's behaviour decreases sharply, it is patterned in a relatively narrow range. At the level of operating mechanisms, this can be observed in the disintegration of psychological defence general system and the manifestation of separate, unrelated defences and dyads of defence (the combination of two defence mechanisms in a rigid pair, which provokes a single behavioural model) of an extremely limited set. The consequence of such a patterned deformation of a person's defence behaviour is his limited and reduced adaptation to various social and professional situations, which are under stressful effects. The higher a person's stressful experience, the fewer adaptive defence mechanisms, and fewer connections he uses. Due to the collapse of a person's psychological defence system integrity the destructiveness of adaptive behaviour is observed not only under conditions of stressful impact on it, but also during its natural development, in the development of age crises (Subbotina, 2013).

This study is aimed at determining the optimal and effective form of strategy in the education system for updating future specialists' professional mobility during their professional training in higher educational institutions.

This study is promising for both personal and professional development (career development), and it is also important in terms of both theoretical and practical aspects of its application in institutions of higher education, vocational training and retraining of specialists.

The results of this study provide strong evidence of the need for preliminary formation of a specialist's ability to effectively overcome maladaptive forms of psychological defence that arise in situations of dynamic changes in the labour market. Formation should take place in the process of acquiring professional education based on professional mobility.

We believe, the formation in the education system of a proactive model of a future specialist's professional and mobile behaviour using a complex of psychological and pedagogical measures, helps a specialist to overcome the destructive and stereotyped psychological defences effectively in stressful conditions of uncertainty during the development of professional crises.

4. Conclusions

During increasing maladaptive processes in stressful conditions of uncertainty in the process of a person's professional development, crises patterned constructs of a specialist's psyche are transformed into

maladaptive forms of psychological defence. Such forms prevent him from using a wide range of adaptive capabilities, narrow the constructive possibilities for overcoming professional barriers and patterned professional behaviour. In this case a specialist's professional mobility is considered as his ability to make self-directed choices and transition to a new vector of professional movement by providing possibilities in the training process to activate the function of 'the cognitive unconscious' for the implementation of the professional development multivariance.

Thus, a specialist's professional mobility in a normative or non-normative crisis acts as a vector that provides a calmer and smoother transition from one cycle of a specialist's professional development to another. At the same time, it is possible for a specialist to avoid 'catastrophic' career development, when it is destroyed due to his inability to go beyond a set of professional behaviour stereotypes and such a situation does not provide a constructive gradual trajectory of professional development under conditions of uncertainty. The proposed model of a specialist's professional mobility involves the situation acceptance by constructing and applying appropriate cognitive mechanisms, the flexibility in using a wide range of a specialist's adaptive capabilities, overcoming and breaking professional barriers, etc.

Thus, we consider the specialist's behaviour strategy, which is based on the development of the ability to make directed transitions to new professional movement trajectories in the bifurcation points of the system, to overcome professional crises of different genesis successfully, as a specialist's professional mobility. Additionally, the specialist's formed professional mobility acts as an attractor in the synergetic system of his professional development and it can optimize the professional movement based on a person's pre-formed readiness for effective variety of professional changes.

Thus, the person's professional mobility can be defined as an effective model for overcoming maladaptive forms of a person's psychological defence under the stressful influence of uncertainty in the synergetic dynamics of professional development crises in the person's professional development system. The prospects for further research are to study the cognitive mechanisms of ensuring a specialist's professional mobility as his conscious ability to get changed constructively in the uncertainty of professional activity content and forms in the dynamics of professional development crises.

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