



Peculiarities of Professional Deformation of Instructor-Officers of Higher Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The probability of professional deformation is the highest among representatives of socio-economic professions, which include the activities of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments. Professional deformation contributes to negative changes in the psychological traits of the individual. Over time, this phenomenon becomes an important obstacle in the further service and pedagogical activities of instructor-officers. The article aims to investigate the peculiarities of manifestation and levels of professional deformation in instructor-officers depending on the experience of their pedagogical activities. The research involved 136 instructor-officers aged 25-55 years with different experience in their pedagogical activities. It is determined that deformational changes in the personality occur under the constant influence of the conditions and experience of the mastered training profession and penetrate various areas of service and off-duty realization of instructor-officers. Professional deformation involves cognitive distortions and disorientation of the individual in the prospects of his or her life-sustaining activities; it leads to the development of specific (perhaps even deviant) manifestations. It can be manifested at the initial, intermediate, and advanced levels. It is proved that with the experience of pedagogical activities, deformational changes of instructor-officers only intensify, moving from the initial to intermediate and even advanced levels. The results of the research indicate the need to determine the level of deformational changes in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments in the early stages of their service to timely and comprehensively carry out measures for psycho-prophylaxis and psycho-correction, preventing further development of their professional deformation.

Keywords: professional deformation, instructor-officers, higher educational institutions, pedagogical activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

All types of human activities related to a person's chosen profession can and should contribute to the harmonious development of the individual, improving his or her psychological and physical condition. However, the specifics of professional activities, under certain conditions, can cause the development of negative phenomena in the psychological structure of a person, gradually leading to deformational changes. The probability of professional deformation is the highest among representatives of socio-economic professions, which rightly includes employees of pedagogical specialties (coaches, instructors, teachers, etc.).

Within the general understanding, the concept of professional deformation implies cognitive distortions, and disorientation of the personality, which arises as a result of the influence of internal and external factors of professional activities, and leads to the development of specific personality manifestations (Fedorenko, Dotsenko, Okhrimenko, Radchenko, & Gorbenko, 2020; Galbraith, Boyda, McFeeters, & Galbraith, 2021; Lockie, Orr, & Dawes, 2022). The impact of professional deformation can extend to mental processes, states, personality traits, and socio-psychological traits that manifest themselves in behavior. At the same time, according to some researchers (Kyrian, Nikolaesku, Stepanova, & Nenko, 2020; Volianiuk, Lozhkin, & Simkova, 2022), professional deformation is manifested precisely in the change of the parameters of the personal characteristics of a specialist, which ultimately distorts the manifestations of his or her functioning. Thus, we believe that the difficulties in clearly disclosing the essence of this phenomenon are related to the complexity of the structure and the number of forms of deformation manifestations in the process of particular professional activities of an employee.

The profession of instructor-officers is a complex system of various types of activities (pedagogical, methodological, organizational, educational, etc.) that are interrelated and interdependent. The central place in this system is occupied primarily by the socio-psychological and organizational regulation of educational relations.

Often, the professional activities of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments are full of tense (stressful) situations, which contributes to their professional burnout and deformation (Prontenko, et al., 2019; Shvets, et al., 2020; Valieiev, Polyvaniuk, Antonenko, Rebkal, Sobakar, & Oliinyk, 2019). Professional deformation is quite often the cause of the formal performance of functional duties and job responsibilities. There are also certain objective reasons for the development of deformational changes: the specific nature of normative labor regulation, insufficient funding for the organization of service activities, low salaries of instructor-officers with long working hours and a significant workload, the performance of functional duties that are not typical for instructor-officers, etc. At the same time, purely selfish motives of behavior and the desire for rapid promotion can lead to a distorted perception of the key professional objective.

The emergence of professional deformation can begin with socio-psychological as well as mental function transformations. Over time, these phenomena affect the health and longevity of a specialist and become a significant obstacle to further service and pedagogical activities (Afanasenko, Komar, Kuleshova, Mikheieva, Potapchuk, & Vasylenko, 2020; Cieślak, et al., 2020; García-Rivera, et al., 2020; Okhrimenko, et al., 2022; Wu, Liu, Li, Tian, & Tan, 2019). In particular, stereotypes of behavior and professional habits appear, mechanisms of perception of other members of the workforce and cadets are distorted, and communication with different participants in educational interaction becomes more difficult. However, not only the behavioral manifestations of the instructor-officer's personality change, even his or her self-image can be deformed (Ash, 2023; Bondarenko, et al., 2020; Ostapovich, et al., 2020; Prontenko, et al., 2020a).

In addition, the activities of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments are a separate type of intellectual applied work, which involves hyperactivity and the rich nature of communicative interaction (Okhrimenko, Perkatyi, Topchii, Andrusyshyn, & Ponomarenko, 2022). As a rule, it is associated with the need to process a significant amount of information, overcome psychological barriers when communicating with different categories of people, demonstrate volitional powers in making sometimes-difficult pedagogical decisions, and expose the personality to intense physical as well as psychological stress, etc. These processes lead to negative changes in the professional capabilities of the individual and his or her inclinations. Given the special working conditions of instructor-officers, it is quite logical to assume that professional deformation does not develop so rapidly in such socio-economic activities, but its manifestations can be quite pronounced with years and pedagogical experience.

Despite the long history of initial attempts to study the phenomenon of professional deformation of teachers, as well as a considerable amount of scientific research on the manifestations of this phenomenon in the pedagogical sphere, there is no single generally accepted opinion among scholars regarding the determinants and peculiarities of its emergence as well as development. Analyzing current trends and approaches, it can be argued that the theoretical foundations for defining professional deformation in instructor-officers of higher education institutions with a view to its further prevention have not yet been sufficiently studied and developed.

At the same time, the study of the peculiarities of professional deformation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments is necessary for early diagnosis of negative personal changes under the influence of specific professional activities (in particular, pedagogical), and also allows to improve its psychological support by establishing interaction with practical psychologists, optimize the processes of professional and psychological training of specialists, create a system of diagnosis and prevention of deformation manifestations in instructor-officers.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of the article is to investigate the peculiarities of manifestation and levels of professional deformation

in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments depending on the experience of their pedagogical activities.

The following tasks were defined:

- to investigate the levels and stages of professional deformation manifestation in instructor-officers;
- to determine the indicators of instructor-officers' anxiety during their pedagogical activities;
- to investigate the professional and psychological peculiarities of professional deformation manifestation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments in the process of their pedagogical activities.

Research methods: theoretical analysis and generalization of literary sources on the topic of the research, psycho-diagnostic survey to study the peculiarities of the syndrome of professional deformation manifestation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with different teaching experience, statistical methods.

The theoretical analysis and generalization of scientific and methodological literature on the topic of the research allowed us to formulate the essence of the problem of professional deformation, as well as to find out the reasons for its emergence and development in various fields of activities.

The psycho-diagnostic survey, which was conducted in 2021-2022, included the diagnosis of personal indicators of instructor-officers, and the formation of a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the formation and development of professional deformation in instructor-officers' pedagogical activities. The results of psychological indicators of instructor-officers were collected and statistically processed, and the peculiarities of their professional deformation were identified based on the higher educational institution with specific training environments. The research involved 136 instructor-officers of the National Academy of Internal Affairs aged 25-55 years with different experience in their pedagogical activities (up to 5 years – 21 people, 5-10 years – 45 people, 10-15 years – 42 people, more than 15 years – 28 people). The psycho-diagnostic survey was conducted in a period that was not related to the provision of educational services, in specially equipped classrooms, which excluded the possibility of external factors and unauthorized persons influencing the respondents.

Following the outlined tasks, we selected and used the following questionnaires for the research: 1) the methodology for diagnosing professional deformation (Barko, Okhrimenko, Ostapovich, Medvediev, & Sprynchuk, 2020b); 2) the methodology for measuring the level of anxiety (Queirós, et al., 2020); 3) the author's questionnaire for determining professional and psychological indicators of deformation in instructor-officers over the course of their pedagogical activities.

The methodology for diagnosing professional deformation allowed us to identify the initial, intermediate, and advanced levels of professional deformation in the individual. The respondents were asked to answer 30 statements related to their professional activities. Carefully reading each of them, the instructor-officers answered as follows: "almost never" – 0 points; "sometimes" – 1 point; "often" – 2 points; "always" – 3 points. The answers were recorded on a special form. The following calculations were made using the key: first, the sum of points scored on each of the 5 main deformation indicators was primarily determined (specific statement numbers corresponded to the number of the deformation indicator), then the total sum of points was calculated. The total number of points scored demonstrates the appropriate level (initial, intermediate, advanced) and stage (formation, development, consolidation) of professional deformation in instructor-officers.

The methodology for measuring the level of anxiety allowed us for the study of the level and nature of anxiety related to the employee's professional activities. The advantage of the chosen methodology is that it diagnoses not only general anxiety but also certain factors: experiencing social stress; frustration with career success objectives; fear of not matching the social or professional environment; low stress resistance. The questionnaire contains 50 statements to which respondents answer "Yes" or "No". Accordingly, if the statement characterizes instructor-officers, they write "Yes", if the statement is not characteristic of them, they write "No". In cases where it is difficult for the respondent to decide, "I don't know" is indicated. Such a test requires speedy work on statements without skipping them or making unnecessary additional notes. The period for working on the test is limited to 30 minutes. Only the number of "Yes" answers should be counted for statements 1-37, and the number of "No" answers should be counted for statements 38-50. "I don't know" answers are counted in all statements and their number is divided by the coefficient "2". The level of anxiety (low; average; above average; high) is determined by the sum of these three indicators.

The author's questionnaire for determining the professional and psychological indicators of instructor-officers' deformation consists of 10 closed questions, each of which has four answer options ("never"; "sometimes"; "often"; "always"). All respondents had the opportunity to select one of the answer options. Each question of the questionnaire reflected the corresponding professional and psychological performance indicator. For example, the question "Is your work full of stressful events?" reflects the indicator of "presence of stressful events" during pedagogical activities; "Are you satisfied with the results of your work?" demonstrates the indicator of "satisfaction of respondents with their work", etc.

In general, this questionnaire made it possible to identify the following key professional and psychological indicators in the activities of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions: excessive tension; the state of nervousness; the presence of stressful phenomena; manifestations of proactive attitude during the performance

of professional tasks; emotionality and empathy; cooperativeness; exhaustion; job satisfaction; the desire to change the type of activities; the desire to leave the higher educational institution with specific training environments. Thus, in particular, the level of instructor-officer's stress resistance depends on how often he or she transfers negative emotions to his or her professional (colleagues, cadets) or social (family or friends) environment. Normalized daily stress will not cause a deep deformation, but excessive stress will contribute to this phenomenon quite quickly. In addition, it became possible to establish the sociability (cooperativeness) of the personality of instructor-officers, which can underlie such traits of their behavior as openness, tolerance, proneness to conflict or aggressiveness. It is also important to determine the respondents' desire to resign and terminate their service activities, as well as to find out the level of their satisfaction with the pedagogical profession. If the desire to resign or change the type of activities occurs frequently, then we can talk about the presence of professional deformation that blocks the development of the individual as a professional. At the same time, an indifferent or, on the contrary, fanatical attitude to one's career causes a sense of anxiety. After all, in such circumstances, instructor-officers of higher educational institutions do not strive to acquire the appropriate competence, which slows down their professional development and contributes to deformation (performing duties using outdated approaches, ignoring new methods of pedagogical work, etc.). Otherwise, such a situation contributes to ignoring the position of colleagues and authorities; showing excessive initiative, which is inappropriate as well as dangerous and can result in negative consequences.

We conducted the comparative analysis between the groups of respondents, the main criterion of which was the length of pedagogical experience of instructor-officers in higher educational institutions. We mostly did not take into account the age characteristics of the respondents, because we proceeded from the position that it is individual psychological and professional indicators that determine the professional competence of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments. As the level of competence of instructor-officers increases, the probability of manifestation of deformational changes in personality increases. Statistical methods were used to systematize, process, qualitatively and quantitatively evaluate the data obtained, present the results in tabular forms, and formulate reliable conclusions. The results were expressed as percentages.

Taking into account the qualitative and quantitative indicators calculated by the submitted questionnaires, we have obtained a meaningful characterization of the manifestations and levels of professional deformation in the personality of instructor-officers. Due to this, it will be possible to determine effective individual and group measures for psycho-prophylaxis and psycho-correction of this category of pedagogical subjects in the future. This direction will be the subject of our next research on the outlined issues.

The research was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Regulation on academic integrity at the National Academy of Internal Affairs, which was developed on the basis of Ukrainian and global experience of ethical rulemaking. This document was approved by the Academic Council of the National Academy of Internal Affairs (protocol No. 5 of March 27, 2018) and put into effect by the order of the rector of the Academy (order No. 422 of March 30, 2018). Informed consent was received from all instructors-officers who took part in this research.

3. RESULTS

We proceeded from a specific group of respondents in interpreting the results of our research, taking into account the level of deformational changes they have already acquired. The results of the research on the levels of professional deformation in instructor-officers, which were studied using the first methodology, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation of the levels of professional deformation of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments (n = 136), %

Group of respondents	Level of deformation	Number of respondents
1	not observed at all	18.4
2	initial	46.3
3	intermediate	23.5
4	advanced	11.8

In particular, Group 1 includes instructor-officers who have no deformational changes. They are at the stage of adaptation and are just adjusting to the conditions of their profession and work. This group includes 18.4 % of respondents. This group is characterized by active absorption of professional activities as a consciously chosen profession, experiencing certain changes in their consciousness and professional orientation as a result of learning new standards of behavior and professional competence.

Group 2 is represented by instructor-officers who have an initial level of deformation (46.3 % of respondents). These individuals have gone through a period of adaptation to pedagogical activities due to their awareness and testing of the possibilities of self-regulation of behavior and lifestyle to the organizational and managerial,

methodological, and communicative conditions of the profession; they have gained experience that contributes to the fulfillment of their professional tasks. Their business qualities are noted and evaluated not only by themselves but also by their immediate professional environments (colleagues, cadets, etc.). At the same time, during this period, instructor-officers already have certain negative manifestations, but do not correlate them with professional deformation. Such instructor-officers adhere to the formed arbitrary and subjective identification of cadets' behavior and the established model of their behavior following the experience gained. It should be noted that the deformational changes of the initial period of deformation do not radically distort one's self-image.

Group 3 is a group of respondents with an intermediate level of deformation (23.5 %). The respondents in this group are fully immersed in professional environment and are considered professionals. While the initial level does not deform the self-image, the intermediate level is determined by significant deformational changes in the self-image as a professional. The reason is that dissonance between professional and personal qualities is observed in instructor-officers with a certain amount of time in the job experience who have fully mastered the specifics of the teaching profession. Having acquired sufficient specialization that forms proper pedagogical competence, instructor-officers sometimes ignore instructions and requirements on the organization of the educational process to satisfy their interests (being late for classroom hours, using the help of cadets for their purposes, loss of motivation to provide quality and full-fledged educational services, solving other issues during working hours, etc.)

Group 4 includes instructor-officers who have an advanced level of deformation (11.8 %). This level radically changes the personality of a professional: the progression of negative behavioral patterns, the rooting of professionally unfavorable qualities, and the confrontation between individual qualities in the psychological structure of the personality. The deformation takes the form of fanatical devotion to work to the detriment of everything else: family, relatives, and friends. In addition, such behavior increasingly involves justifying oneself and one's position.

If we take into account the criterion of instructional experience, the distribution of respondents according to the above levels of deformation looks like this (Table 2).

Table 2: Correlation between the levels of professional deformation in instructor-officers with different experience in pedagogical activities, (n = 136) %

Level of deformation	Instructor-officers with different experience in pedagogical activities			
	up to 5 years (n = 21)	5-10 years (n = 45)	10-15 years (n = 42)	more than 15 years (n = 28)
not observed at all	80.9	11.1	7.1	–
initial	19.1	82.2	52.3	–
intermediate	–	6.7	40.5	42.8
advanced	–	–	–	57.2

As we can see, the experience in pedagogical activities makes adjustments to the formation of the appropriate level of professional deformation in instructor-officers. The obtained results show that the initial level of professional deformation in instructor-officers is formed mainly in the presence of 5-10 years of experience (82.2 %). In addition, the analysis of the results made it possible to determine the overall probability of professional deformation depending on the stage of the initial level of deformation formedness (formation, development, consolidation) (Figure 1).

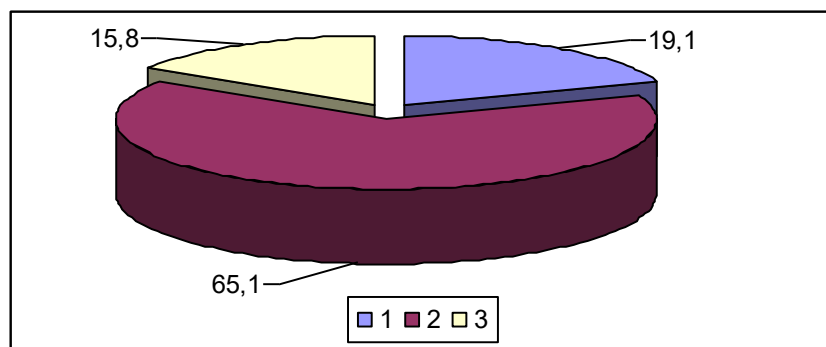


Figure 1: Correlation of the stages of the initial level of professional deformation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments (n = 136; 1 - formation, 2 - development, 3 - consolidation), %

The results presented in Figure 1 show that the stage of “development” of the initial level of professional deformation dominates among the studied respondents (65.1 %). In its presence, instructor-officers can arbitrarily and subjectively interpret the effectiveness of their service activities and perform a socio-professional role when off-duty. This category of respondents is also characterized by situations in which they are almost always guided by the opinion of their superiors and are concerned with pleasing them. They subjectively interpret the requirements of educational activities and can situationally manipulate the consciousness and behavior of cadets as subjects of the pedagogical process.

The research indicators also indicate a person’s discursive direction in establishing stereotypical objectives and views of pedagogical activities (the “consolidation” stage, which is inherent in 15.8 % of respondents). This may be preceded by a professional stereotype learned over time, which consists of manifestations of intolerance towards colleagues and cadets. It should be noted that instructor-officers may be characterized by sufficient self-confidence and self-interest at this stage. Often, a purely business-like instructional style can be transferred to off-duty areas of life. If such a process is not influenced in time, such instructor-officers will gradually become “hardened”, which determines the risk of inadequate perception of others (colleagues and cadets) through the prism of personal interests. The respondents prefer to stay at the workplace after the end of the working day, which may indicate their relative social and professional isolation.

Although the stage of “formation” is primary for the initial level of professional deformation (inherent in 19.1 % of respondents), it already demonstrates certain changes in the personality of instructor-officers. It is accompanied by a subjective assessment of one’s actions, as well as the lifestyle and behavior of others; emotional coloring of service and / or pedagogical activities, simplification of events and phenomena around them.

The intermediate level of professional deformation is inherent mainly in instructor-officers with 10-15 years of pedagogical experience (40.5 %) and more than 15 years (42.8 %). Instructor-officers with such professional experience are characterized by changes in their self-image. Accordingly, they acquire the social role of an educationalist and live it outside of their service activities. The communication of such instructor-officers acquires a business-like manner, even in everyday life. Seriousness as a personality trait is constantly present. The stages of the intermediate level of deformation formedness (formation, development, consolidation) were revealed (Figure 2).

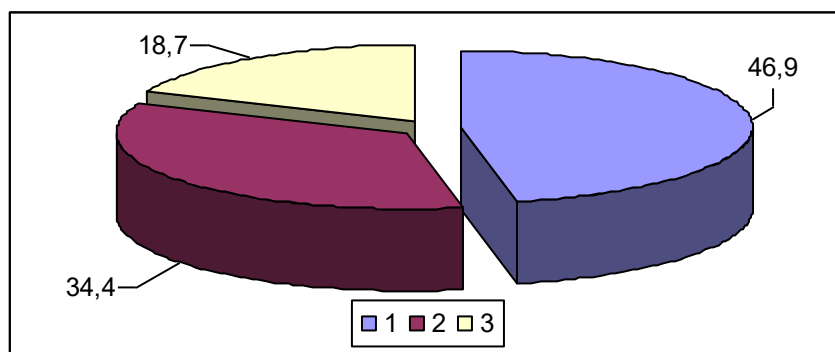


Figure 2: Correlation of the stages of the intermediate level of professional deformation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments (n = 136; 1 - formation, 2 - development, 3 - consolidation), %

As we can see, the stages of “formation” and “development” have quite significant quantitative indicators among respondents who are characterized by an intermediate level of professional deformation (46.9 % and 34.4 % respectively), and they prevail compared to the stage of “consolidation” (18.7 %).

At the “formation” stage, instructor-officers prefer to rely on their experience in their activities and refuse to seek help or advice from colleagues or authorities. In addition, professional deformation in this category of people can be manifested in the formal and passive performance of their service duties and the desire to shift their tasks to less experienced colleagues without showing initiative.

At the stage of “development”, instructor-officers are oriented toward further career growth; they strive for a managerial position or authority, etc. These individuals consider it unacceptable to receive critical remarks in their address and immediately show intolerance to opponents and interlocutors. They can manipulate colleagues and cadets (as subjects of the educational process) under their status and authority in the unit, as well as the indicators of the success of their pedagogical activities.

The stage of “consolidation” is the final one for an intermediate level of professional deformation (inherent in 18.7 % of respondents of this level). This stage of deformation is characterized by a possibility of increasing

egoism and self-centeredness in instructor-officers. Accordingly, the style of behavior and communication may be accompanied by manifestations of disregard for the corporate values of the service and the rules of interaction in the workforce. We should also talk about already progressive changes in the self-image (overestimation or underestimation of self-esteem, errors in the perception of opinions and positions of one's own professional and social environment, etc.)

An advanced level of professional deformation is inherent in 57.2 % of respondents with more than 15 years of experience in pedagogical activities. At this level, professionally unfavorable personality traits of instructor-officers are rooted, namely: uncooperativeness, proneness to conflict, frivolity, desire to shift work, and responsibility to others, etc. There is a struggle for behavioral motives, as well as a confrontation between individual qualities in the psychological structure of the personality. As we can see, the stage of "formation" (81.3 %) dominates among the stages of the advanced level of deformation formedness in instructor-officers (Figure 3).

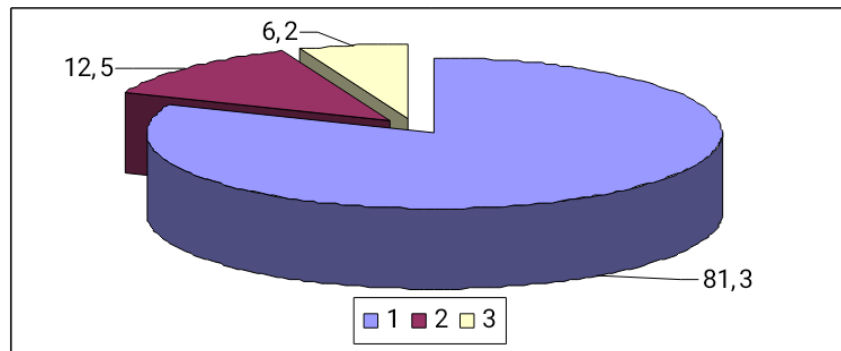


Figure 3: Correlation of the stages of the advanced level of professional deformation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments (n = 136; 1 - formation, 2 - development, 3 - consolidation), %

The stage of "formation" radically changes, first of all, the perceptions of instructor-officers about the prospects for further professional activities (career development) in this area. Such instructor-officers want to change their occupation before it is too late (in terms of age). There are manifestations of certain psycho-physiological changes in the personality (rapid fatigue, low resources to cope with stressful and extreme situations, rejection of significant physical and mental stress, etc.).

At the same time, at the stage of "development" (12.5 % of respondents with an advanced level), deformation can take the form of fanatical devotion to work to the detriment of family, relatives, friends, etc. Behavior increasingly acquires signs of justifying oneself and one's ambitions. Behavioral patterns may progress, primarily related to the poor quality of educational services, limiting additional communication with cadets and other subjects of educational activities.

As for the stage of "consolidation", it is not numerous among representatives of the advanced level of professional deformation (6.2 % of respondents with 15 years of experience and over). Its most classic manifestation is cases of instructor-officers being alienated from everyone – first of all, from their immediate professional and social environments (colleagues, friends, cadets, etc.). At the same time, manifestations of substance abuse, in particular, alcohol, are becoming more and more relevant. The importance of alcohol intervention can be explained primarily by the need to facilitate recovery from stressful events and tense situations of service activities. Accordingly, timely personality correction during corrective psychological measures can prevent the development of serious negative consequences.

In general, it can be stated that the professional deformation of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments can be reflected at the initial, intermediate, and advanced levels. The initial level of professional deformation determines the exacerbation of the manifestation of personal and business qualities of instructor-officers necessary for further pedagogical activities. These deformational changes only intensify, moving to the intermediate and even advanced level, with increasing experience in pedagogical activities. The perceptions of the prospects for further activities (service, pedagogical, etc.) in higher educational institutions with specific training environments are radically changing. Negative attitudes toward the immediate professional or social environment are growing, and the dominance of an individual model of behavior and communication style ("it is better to act on your own") is observed.

The next methodology we used in the study of the professional deformation syndrome in instructor-officers was the methodology of measuring anxiety. Thanks to this methodology, we were able to identify the appropriate levels of anxiety of the respondents (Table 3) and the possible reactions of the respondents in different work situations.

Table 3: Indicators of the level of anxiety in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments (n = 136), %

Instructor-officers with different experience in pedagogical activities	Level of anxiety			
	low	average	above average	high
up to 5 years (n = 21)	14.3	19.0	23.8	42.9
5-10 years (n = 45)	17.8	22.2	37.8	22.2
10-15 years (n = 42)	26.2	21.4	33.3	19.1
more than 15 years (n = 28)	14.3	21.4	39.3	25.0

In the course of the research, we found that a high level of anxiety is inherent mainly in less experienced instructor-officers (with up to 5 years of experience) (42.9 %). This level of anxiety may be caused by the processes of adaptation to the conditions of the profession. Most people with this level of anxiety prefer not to express their opinions and not to take initiative; they are susceptible to criticism from more authoritative and experienced colleagues hiding their true feelings and emotions. However, during a long professional career (more than 15 years), there may be periods that provoke the development of such anxiety even in more experienced instructor-officers (25.0 %), because a person can constantly expect threats and anxiety from situations that should not cause it (situational phenomena). At the same time, certain age-related changes may also be at work here, causing anxiety about the prospects for further service activities, uncertainty about the future, etc.

Above average anxiety levels dominate mainly among respondents with 5-10 years of experience and more than 15 years (37.8 % and 33.9 %, respectively). In particular, the first category of respondents has to some extent already developed their model of behavior in stressful professional activities but is still somewhat prone to anxiety. The period of recovery from this state can take up to several days. The tendency to be nervous is one of the negative features of their behavior. Stressful situations affect their working capacity. Criticism from outsiders can be perceived quite negatively and even aggressively. As for the more experienced instructor-officers (with 15 years of experience and over), as we have already noted, a high level of anxiety can be age-related or caused by objective factors, which certainly contribute to the development of certain deformational changes in them.

An average level of anxiety is inherent in all categories of respondents to varying degrees. In terms of quantitative indicators, it is most evident in instructor-officers with 5-10 years of pedagogical experience (22.2 %), 10-15 years (21.4 %), and more than 15 years (21.4 %). This demonstrates the tendency that instructor-officers adapt to tense and stressful situations with experience, and therefore they do not experience strong emotional disturbance and anxiety. However, there are cases when instructor-officers face excessive physical and mental stress caused by complex and atypical tasks assigned by their superiors. Such situations are characterized by personal anxiety, a sense of uncertainty, and some fear. These respondents have adequate self-esteem, calm emotionality, and a moderate state of mind. However, from time to time they still feel some anxiety, which becomes more obvious and demonstrative with more experience (more than 15 years).

A low level of anxiety among all categories of respondents is more evident in instructor-officers with 10-15 years of pedagogical experience (26.2 %). Such results can be explained by the fact that after successful adaptation to the conditions of the profession and with relevant experience, instructor-officers direct their efforts to acquire those business qualities that will help overcome their anxieties and fears of pedagogical activities. The majority of these respondents are well-established professionals and perform their professional duties at a sufficiently high level. Therefore, they are not concerned about the problems they experienced during their growth and professionalization. In addition, instructor-officers are sufficiently adapted to the stressful conditions of service, as the specifics of their work involve such peculiarities. As a result, these instructor-officers develop a stable tolerance to all conditions of the profession.

In general, it can be stated that with the acquisition of experience, instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments become more adapted to stressful phenomena and tense situations of professional activities, and therefore the level of anxiety gradually moves from high to low. However, another tendency can be observed (according to the results of our research), that over the years and with considerable experience (more than 15 years of pedagogical activities), the degree of anxiety can increase, caused by changes in the perception of the prospects of their activities in a particular higher educational institution with specific training environments. In combination with the previous indicators, this demonstrates deformational (psycho-physiological) changes in the personality of instructor-officers.

The author's questionnaire to determine the professional and psychological indicators of deformation in instructor-officers was the next questionnaire we used to establish the conditions for the emergence and development of instructor-officers' deformational changes. The key positions to be studied included the definition of professional and psychological indicators of deformation manifested during the pedagogical activities of instructor-officers, namely: excessive tension; states of nervousness; the presence of stressful

phenomena; manifestations of proactive attitude during the performance of professional tasks; emotionality and empathy; cooperativeness; exhaustion; job satisfaction; the desire to change the type of activities desire to leave the higher educational institution with specific training environments. The obtained results and their correlation are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation of professional and psychological indicators of deformation manifested during the pedagogical activities of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments (n = 136), %

Professional and psychological indicators of deformation	Frequency of manifestation	Instructor-officers with different experience in pedagogical activities			
		up to 5 years (n = 21)	5-10 years (n = 45)	10-15 years (n = 42)	more than 15 years (n = 28)
excessive tension	a	9.5	11.1	23.8	32.1
	b	33.3	40.0	33.3	35.7
	c	42.9	35.6	31.0	25.0
	d	14.3	13.3	11.9	7.2
state of nervousness	a	9.5	15.6	21.4	28.5
	b	28.6	33.3	31.0	42.9
	c	47.6	37.8	33.3	21.4
	d	14.3	13.3	14.3	7.2
presence of stressful phenomena	a	14.3	20.0	28.6	46.5
	b	42.9	42.2	38.1	28.5
	c	33.3	28.9	21.4	14.3
	d	9.5	8.9	11.9	10.7
emotionality and empathy	a	4.8	6.7	16.7	17.9
	b	23.8	44.4	47.6	42.8
	c	47.6	31.1	23.8	21.4
	d	23.8	17.8	11.9	17.9
cooperativeness	a	9.5	4.4	7.1	10.7
	b	52.4	33.3	47.6	53.6
	c	23.8	46.7	31.0	21.4
	d	14.3	15.6	14.3	14.3
proactive attitude during the performance of professional tasks	a	4.8	8.9	9.5	14.3
	b	28.6	37.7	52.3	53.6
	c	47.6	35.6	23.8	21.4
	d	19.0	17.8	14.3	10.7
exhaustion	a	14.4	13.3	7.1	7.2
	b	47.6	44.4	40.5	35.7
	c	19.0	26.7	33.3	32.1
	d	19.0	15.6	19.1	25.0
job satisfaction	a	4.8	6.7	16.7	17.9
	b	19.0	31.1	45.2	46.4
	c	52.4	44.4	28.6	25.0
	d	23.8	17.8	9.5	10.7
desire to change the type of activities	a	62.0	35.6	21.4	17.9
	b	19.0	37.7	40.5	28.5
	c	9.5	15.6	23.8	35.7
	d	9.5	11.1	14.3	17.9
desire to leave the higher educational institution with specific training environments	a	80.9	66.7	19.1	10.7
	b	9.5	13.3	35.7	25.0
	c	4.8	11.1	33.3	42.9
	d	4.8	8.9	11.9	21.4

Symbols: a – never; b – sometimes; c – often; d – always

As can be seen from the above results, each indicator shows certain dynamics, taking into account the experience of pedagogical activities of instructor-officers, which may indicate certain deformational changes in

the personality. Let us comment on the data presented.

In particular, we found that excessive tension and nervousness are evident in instructor-officers with up to 5 years of pedagogical experience (often 42.9 % and 47.6 %, respectively). This situation is caused by the adaptation period which this particular category of respondents is experiencing. Less experienced instructor-officers are just getting acquainted with the conditions and requirements of the instructional profession, they are characterized by a certain romanticism, and have not yet perfected the usual model of behavior in atypical situations, which makes them tense and nervous (for a certain number of respondents, these states are always inherent – 14.3 % and 14.3, respectively). Over time, and therefore with the experience of pedagogical activities, excessive tension, and nervousness become less pronounced, as can be seen from the results of our research. These indicators are less typical in the “often” position for instructor-officers with more extensive pedagogical experience: 5-10 years – 35.6 % and 37.8 %; 10-15 years – 31.0 % and 33.3 %; more than 15 years – 25.0 % and 21.4 %. Quantitative data indicate that respondents are already adapted to the conditions of the profession and have a thirst for professional success and career growth. This suggests a tendency for instructor-officers’ tension to decrease as they master the profession and gain experience.

To some extent, a similar trend can be seen in the indicator of emotionality and empathy. Whereas for less experienced instructor-officers (with up to 5 years of experience), this indicator is quite stable (in the “often” position 47.6 % and “always” 23.8 %). This suggests that younger instructor-officers are more emotional and open in their relationships with colleagues and cadets. At the same time, more experienced instructor-officers are quite reserved and more cautious in expressing their emotions. This tendency is supported by the quantitative results of our research, according to which the manifestation of emotionality and empathy is primarily situational. In particular, a significant number of respondents preferred the option “sometimes” (instructor-officers with 5-10 years of experience – 44.4 %; 10-15 years – 47.6 %; more than 15 years – 42.8 %). This is seen as both a positive aspect – the presence of tolerant communicative competence of the respondents, and a negative one – the likelihood of accumulating their own negative emotions, which will be carefully hidden, but eventually can provoke an “explosion” of the personality and strong internal excitement.

As for such a professional and psychological indicator as cooperativeness, it was distributed among the respondents rather disproportionately. Quantitatively, it dominates among instructor-officers with 5-10 years of pedagogical experience (46.7 % in the “often” position), which is quite natural, because such respondents have gone through all stages of adaptation and can position themselves more qualitatively in relationships. They believe that working with people (colleagues, cadets, etc.) recharges them. Instead, less experienced instructor-officers (up to 5 years of experience) are just going through the stages of their formation and entry into the profession, so the level of their cooperativeness (compared to the previous category of respondents) is insignificant (the same indicator is only 23.8 %). As for the other categories of respondents, we see that with time and significant work experience (10-15 and more than 15 years), they gradually move away from excessive and constant professional contacts (31.0 % and 21.4 % in the “often” position). They indicate that they spend too much energy in this model of behavior because you can expect a lot of negative things from people, which is why such contacts are mostly targeted or situational (the “sometimes” position dominates – 47.6 % and 53.6 %, respectively). Analogous and similar situations require qualitative psychological correction because all signs indicate that these categories of respondents have already existing deformational changes, primarily in their communicative sphere of personality.

In the future, such indicators as the presence of stressful phenomena, proactive attitude in the performance of professional tasks, and exhaustion of the personality of instructor-officers are subject to argumentation. Psychologically, these indicators are in a cause-and-effect relationship with each other, because stressful phenomena and situations can provoke excessive proactive attitudes and additional efforts in the performance of professional tasks, which generally leads to rapid exhaustion of the individual.

According to the above data, every instructor-officer of higher educational institutions with specific training environments often or sometimes experiences stress at work (quantitative results confirm this). However, the respondents with 5 years of pedagogical experience and over have already learned to cope with their stress, compared to less experienced instructor-officers (the latter have the highest rate in the “often” and “always” categories – 33.3 % and 9.5 % respectively). A similar situation is observed in the indicator referred to as “proactive attitude in performing professional tasks”. This means that more experienced instructor-officers have already managed to develop their model of behavior during the provision of educational services, and therefore do not show excessive proactive attitudes, as evidenced by the results of their survey (in the “often” section, the respondents with 10-15 years and more than 15 years of experience show approximately the same indicators – 23.8 % and 21.4 %). Their increased proactive attitude is of a targeted or situational nature (for example, fulfillment of urgent and pressing tasks) i. e. rather high quantitative indicators are displayed (52.3 % and 53.6 %) in the “sometimes” section. At the same time, these data can quite convincingly indicate that it is the respondents with experience of 10-15 and more than 15 years that show signs of exhaustion. Our assumption is confirmed by the quantitative display of the survey results, which demonstrates that more experienced respondents reveal more expressed psychological exhaustion (often with 10-15 years of experience – 33.3 %;

more than 15 years – 32.1 %). For comparison, instructor-officers with less experience (up to 5 years and 5-10 years) have a lower rate of exhaustion (19.0 % and 26.7 %).

Thus, the quantitative results of the three professional and psychological indicators (presence of stressful phenomena, proactive attitude in performing professional tasks, and exhaustion) show a progressive tendency to the development of deformational changes in instructor-officers. This requires appropriate corrective psychological measures, without which cases of deviant behavior (e. g., substance abuse as a way to overcome stress or compensate for professional exhaustion) may become widespread, which is certainly harmful to health and will become an obstacle to further work in higher educational institutions with specific training environments.

And finally, let's compare the respondents' job satisfaction with their desire to change their type of activities or even leave the higher educational institution with specific training environments. Analyzing the results of the research, we found that people with less than 5 years of pedagogical activities often feel satisfied with their work (52.4 %), and therefore they do not have a conscious desire to change their type of activities (62.0 %), let alone leave the higher educational institution (80.9 %). As we have already mentioned above, this situation is caused by the period of adaptation which this category of respondents is experiencing. Instructor-officers are just getting acquainted with the conditions of the profession and they have a certain romanticism toward the profession.

At the same time, the situation may change in some way with the experience of pedagogical activities and working in the higher educational institution with specific training environments. In particular, over time, the obstacles encountered on their professional path, as well as significant physical and mental stress, can provoke a certain degree of disbelief in a specialist, which in turn reduces the degree of satisfaction with the profession and causes a desire to change the type of activities. This is confirmed by the results of our survey. In particular, 45.2 % of respondents with 10-15 years of pedagogical experience and 46.4 % with more than 15 years of experience only sometimes feel satisfied with their work. Instead, only 28.6 % and 25.0 % of these categories of respondents often feel satisfied, which, in our opinion, is an insignificant indicator. This situation once again convinces us that instructor-officers with more years of service are increasingly thinking about changing their jobs (33.3 % of respondents with 10-15 years of experience, 42.9 % with more than 15 years of experience). Monotony, the constant repetition of actions, teaching the same academic disciplines for a considerable period, frequent lack of opportunities for personal development, and periodic conflicts at work also contribute to the desire to leave the higher educational institution with specific training environments.

In general, these results raise some concerns, as frequent thoughts of changing the type of activities indicate an average level of deformation and become an obstacle to further professionalization. It would be logical to assume that such instructor-officers do not see any prospects for their pedagogical activities and remain at the same level of professional development, working with little enthusiasm or even in a reluctant manner. At the same time, similar deformational changes in personality can, on the contrary, contribute to the instructor-officer's constant tension and anxiety, as we have already mentioned, because his or her views and positions are formed on the basis of a progressive desire to change the type of activities as soon as possible, to achieve success in another field (implementation of own business projects, consulting practice, etc.). The vector of deformational changes in the personality of an instructor-officer depends primarily on his or her individual and psychological as well as socio-psychological peculiarities, methods and means of psychological support of pedagogical activities, and the use of the latest correctional programs when working with this category of specialists.

4. DISCUSSION

The works of a number of scientists who have dealt with the issues of professional deformation of workers in the socio-economic sphere (Basinska, & Dåderman, 2019; Civilotti, Acquadro Maran, Garbarino, & Magnavita, 2022; Kyrian, Nikolaesku, Stepanova, & Nenko, 2020) state that professional deformation syndrome is a natural phenomenon for those categories of professionals who work with people and whose activities are impossible without business communication. At the same time, it is determined that the presence of unfavorable factors in professional activities can cause a progressive feeling of dissatisfaction with the profession, internal tension, a sense of psychological discomfort, and self-doubt. With the repetition of unfavorable work or pedagogical situations, such mental states can be consolidated and turn into persistent personality traits (e. g., proneness to conflict, irritability, suspicion, indifference to others and to work in general). These mental formations of the personality begin to manifest themselves in professional activities and communication, thereby causing the emergence of unusual ways (models) of behavior.

A general understanding of the essence of professional deformation involves cognitive distortions, and disorientation of the individual in the prospects of his or her life-sustaining activities, which arises as a result of the influence of internal and external factors of professional activities, and leads to the development of specific personality changes (Bondarenko, et al., 2021; Galbraith, Boyda, McFeeters, & Galbraith, 2021; Lockie, Orr, & Dawes, 2022). The vector of deformational changes can extend to mental processes, states, personality traits,

and socio-psychological traits. At the same time, according to some researchers (Dir, Saldana, Chapman, & Aalsma, 2019; Volianiuk, Lozhkin, & Simkova, 2022), professional deformation is manifested in a change of the parameters of individual and psychological as well as socio-psychological characteristics of a specialist, which ultimately distorts the manifestations of his or her life.

The results of the research on the peculiarities of professional deformation manifestation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions confirmed the tendency that professional deformation develops as a result of the mutual influence of the peculiarities of service activities and personal characteristics of employees. Over time, instructor-officers become more adapted to stressful phenomena and tense situations of professional activities. However, with significant experience (more than 15 years of pedagogical activities), the degree of their anxiety increases. Difficulties in work and significant physical, as well as mental stress can provoke feelings of discouragement, which generally reduces the degree of satisfaction with the profession and causes a desire to change the type of activities. Under such conditions, deformation takes on a general form (distrust and stereotypical thinking); a directive form (authoritarianism, pickiness, corporate norms leveling); and an adaptive form (lack of motivation, avoidance of high-quality performance of professional tasks, etc.) This confirms the conclusions of many scientists (Barko, Okhrimenko, I., Medvediev, Vagina, & Okhrimenko, S., 2020a; Griban, et al., 2020; MacDonald, Camire, Erickson, & Santos, 2020; Mojallal, Simons, Quevillon, & Hatwan, 2022; Prontenko, et al., 2020a), whose works note that professional deformation causes an exacerbation of personality manifestations that arises as a result of a number of conditions related to service or social (including pedagogical and instructional) activities.

In general, based on the analysis of the approaches of scientists and the results of our research, we have determined that professional deformation does not develop so rapidly in the pedagogical activities of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions, but its manifestations can be quite pronounced with the experience gained. Early diagnostics of negative changes in instructor-officers allows them to improve the psychological support of their professional activities, optimize the processes of professional and psychological training of specialists, and develop a program of measures for psycho-prophylaxis and psycho-correction. The results of our research confirmed and expanded the findings of many scientists (Bondarenko, et al., 2022; García-Rivera, et al., 2020; Nosko, et al., 2020; Ponomarenko, et al., 2022; Prontenko, et al., 2020b; Schilling, Colledge, Brand, Ludyga, & Gerber, 2019; Zahorodna, et al., 2022; Zhamardiy, et al., 2019).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The profession of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions with specific training environments is a complex system of different types of activities (service, pedagogical, methodological, organizational, educational, etc.) that are interrelated and interdependent. It is a vivid manifestation of intellectual applied work, which involves increased proactive attitudes, tension and intense nature of interaction as well as communication, as it takes place in the system of human-to-human relations.

Professional deformation implies cognitive distortions and disorientation of the individual in the prospects of his or her life-sustaining activities; it occurs as a result of the influence of internal and external factors of professional activities leading to the development of specific changes in instructor-officers. It can be reflected at the initial, intermediate, and advanced levels. The experience of pedagogical activities makes adjustments to the formation of an appropriate level of professional deformation of instructor-officers because deformational changes in the personality occur under the constant influence of the conditions of the profession and penetrate various areas of his or her service and off-duty realization. The initial level of professional deformation determines the exacerbation of the manifestation of moral and psychological as well as business qualities of instructor-officers. With the experience of pedagogical activities, these deformational changes only intensify, moving to the intermediate and even advanced levels. Perceptions of the prospects for further professional activities in this field are radically changing. Negative attitudes towards the immediate professional or social environments are growing, and the dominance of an individual model of behavior and communication style is observed.

With increasing experience, instructor-officers of higher educational institutions become more adapted to stressful phenomena and tense situations of professional activities, but the degree of anxiety increases due to the constant feeling of “will I have time to achieve everything?”. They become less emotional, more stable relationships with colleagues and cadets are purposeful (selective) or even situational. Decreased proactive attitude during the performance of professional tasks in stressful conditions is often accompanied by exhaustion (cognitive, emotional, intellectual, etc.), which indicates a progressive tendency to the development of deformational changes in instructor-officers. Frequent thoughts about changing the type of activities or even leaving the higher educational institution indicate the intermediate level of personality deformation, which distorts the perception of the prospects for their own professional and personal development in the pedagogical sphere forming additional compensatory mechanisms. All of this significantly affects the quality of educational services and the behavior of instructor-officers (working with little enthusiasm or even in a reluctant manner, a desire to shift work to less experienced colleagues, proneness to conflict, isolation, possible substance abuse,

etc.). The vector of possible deformational changes in the personality of instructor-officers depends primarily on their individual psychological and socio-psychological characteristics. That is why qualitative diagnostics of deformational changes in the personality at the early stages of their manifestation, as well as well-chosen methods and means of psycho-correction will contribute to the formation of the mental stability of instructor-officers of higher educational institutions and prolong their professional longevity.

Prospects for further research. It is planned to develop a program of measures for the prevention of professional deformation in instructor-officers of higher educational institutions as a separate area of psychological support for their pedagogical activities.

Authors' contributions

Ivan Okhrimenko, Kostiantyn Prontenko and Olga Marchenko were involved in study concept and experimental design. Ivan Okhrimenko, Svitlana Okhrimenko and Vladyslav Yemanov were involved in data collection, analysis and article writing. Volodymyr Trobiuk, Olena Sashurina and Kostiantyn Prontenko were involved in data interpretation. All authors were involved in critical review and final approval of the article.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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