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## STRUCTURE OF EMOTIONAL AND DEFENSIVE PATTERNS AMONG PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EMOTIONAL MATURITY

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The article investigates features and manifestation of psychological defense mechanisms and stable emotional characteristics among test persons with different levels of emotional maturity. The dominant psychological defense mechanisms in both groups are considered. The differences in terms of psychological defense mechanisms in groups of people with high and low emotional maturity of personality are shown. Four-factor structure of emotionally protective patterns in emotional maturity of personality is presented. The specific manifestation of the emotionally protective structure depending on the severity of the studied phenomenon is found.

Key words: emotional maturity, personality, stress factors, psychological defense mechanisms.

Стаття присвячена дослідженню особливостей прояву механізмів психологічного захисту та стійких емоційних рис у випробовуваних з різним рівнем емоційної зрілості. Розглянуті домінуючі механізми психологічного захисту в обох групах. Показані розбіжності в показниках механізмів психологічного захисту в групах осіб з високим та низьким рівнем емоційної зрілості особистості. Представлена чотирьохфакторна структура емоційно-захисних патернів емоційної зрілості особистості. Виявлена специфіка прояву виділеної емоційно-захисної структури залежно від рівня вираженості досліджуваного феномену.

Ключові слова: емоційна зрілість, особистість, стресові фактори, механізми психологічного захисту.

Статья посвящена исследованию особенностей проявления механизмов психологической защиты и стойких эмоциональных черт у испытуемых с разным уровнем эмоциональной зрелости. Рассмотрены доминирующие механизмы психологической защиты в обеих группах. Показаны различия в показателях механизмов психологической защиты в группах людей с высоким и низким уровнем эмоциональной зрелости личности. Представлена четырехфакторная структура эмоционально-защитных паттернов эмоциональной зрелости личности. Выявлена специфика проявления выделенной эмоционально-защитной структуры в зависимости от уровня выраженности исследуемого феномена.

Ключевые слова: эмоциональная зрелость, личность, личностные особенности, социально-психологическая адаптация.

Significance. Investigation of the emotional maturity and its components is driven by purely theoretical and practical aspects of modern psychological science. Obviously, the high level of emotional maturity contributes to effective social functioning of people. Their adaptation in society affects the establishment of constructive, mutually productive, open interpersonal relations that are implemented in a mature form of friendship, love and the ability to create emotionally close harmonious family relationships. At the same time immaturity contributes to the creation of infantile phenomena of communication, such as interpersonal dependence/counter dependence [6], the devaluation of maturity and inflation of courage [4], the fear of psychological intimacy [2], the syndrome of «emotional cold» among girls [1], loneliness and other. Therefore the concept of emotional maturity can be a key to create the best quality of life.

Problem analysis.

Based on our theoretical analysis of the most popular psychological concepts the following basic models of individual emotional maturity were allocated: a) partial models (identification of emotional maturity and emotional competence; emotional maturity versus emotional intelligence; emotional maturity as a feature of a certain age, emotional maturity as a social norm); b) generative models (emotionally mature identity as a «fully functioning person», as a man who goes to self-actualization, as a genuine person, a child, as an adult, as a person, which is included in the transpersonal structures).

The most thoroughly and comprehensively the problem of emotional maturity is presented in the works among representatives of humanist paradigm, namely – client-centered approach [10]. Emotionally mature person, according to Rogers is a man who is open for understanding of his own feelings and reasons that caused them, and their contents; who trusts his feelings, accepts them; who is able to experience emotions of different range, depth and intensity; who can express in words his own emotional experiences; who is capable of empathy.

In our opinion (O.S.Kocharyan [5]) emotionally mature person is sensitive to his emotions and understands them. The emotionally mature person is able to see the depth of his experience, he has the courage to come into contact with his own emotions and keep those emotions and experiences that are authentic. Also, emotionally mature person is able to move away from the usual strategies for infantile emotional response that is a response to a traumatic situation, herewith the response becomes habitual and spontaneous and determined situation. Emotionally mature human has «fluid» and not static emotions which are dynamic in nature. If the fixation of emotions in one form or another happens it shows their absence in the expanded sense. It is the evidence that the man faced a traumatic experience since childhood.

Such characteristic of emotionally mature person was the theoretical model to introduce the concept of «emotional maturity», which we define as a certain level of adult personality, characterized by openness of emotional experience, awareness of his own feelings and accepting them, developed emotional sphere and emotional self-control, the ability to show and express emotions and feelings adequately and according to situation and experiences.

Based on model of emotionally mature person as a «fully functioning person» one stands five main structural components of emotional maturity in personality: reflection of emotions, emotional self-regulation, empathy, emotional expressiveness and accepting your own emotions.

According to this concept, it is considered necessary to study features and manifestation of psychological defense mechanisms and stable emotional characteristics among test persons with different levels of emotional maturity.

The aim was to analyze the patterns of emotional protection among persons with different levels of emotional maturity.

For empirical study we used the following methods and techniques:

1. Testing method of individual emotional maturity TMIEM (O.S.Kocharyan, M.A.Piven);
2. Testing method of typologies in psychological defense, R. Plutchik (adaptation of L.I.Vasserman, O.F.Yerysheva, E.B.Klubova, and others).
3. Scale of differential emotions by K. Izard.

We used procedure of dimension reduction for mathematical and statistical data –factor analysis (method of principal components, rotation of Varimax raw) and reliability evaluation of differences (t-Student criterion and U-criterion of Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney for large samples).

The research sample was 197 people (114 women, 83 men) – students of humanitarian and technical specialties in National Aerospace University named by N.E. Zhukovsky «HAI», who have 4 and 5 year of study and aged 20 to 23 years. To achieve this goal there were created two research sections by extreme groups, using techniques TMIEM of this sample. So the first group consisted of 65 people with high emotional maturity (33 men, 32 women), the second group consisted of 65 men with low emotional maturity (24 men, 41 women).

Research results.

We know that the idea of psychological defense is one of the fundamental concepts when describing individual adaptation to difficult situations. It has great explanatory power tools in the study of coping and adaptive personal reserves which allow optimal social and personal adaptation.

For clarity, the severity of psychological defense mechanisms in groups of test persons with high and low levels of emotional maturity is presented as a graphic image (Fig. 1).

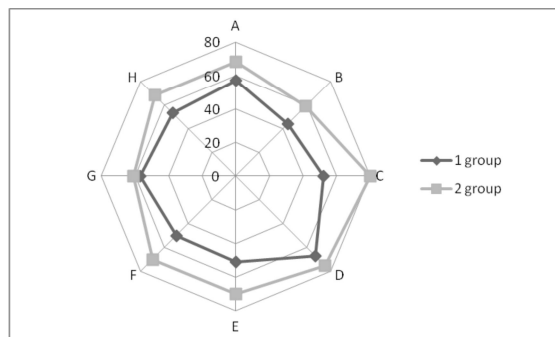


Fig.1. The intensity of the main psychological defense mechanisms among groups of people with high (group 1) and low (group 2) severity level of emotional maturity.

Note: A – denial, B – displacement, C – regression, D – compensation, E – projection, F – substitution, G – intellectualization, H – jet formation.

The figure shows that PDM indices dominate in a group of people with a low level of emotional maturity, so they are characterized by a high degree of general Ego-intensity defense, which may indicate a significant state of psycho-emotional stress and anxiety.

The most evident protective mechanism in the first group is compensation, defined as the person's ability to get rid of feelings about their own shortcomings by developing their strengths. This protective mechanism is a conscious action in support of self-importance and self-worth. In psychoanalytic literature [7] people who use mostly mature PDM and means of the emotion processing, defined as more emotionally and personally mature.

The main psychological defense mechanism among the test persons of the second group is a regression that is the protection of manipulative type. Regression is a return to the earliest infantile behavior strategies that appear to demonstrate vulnerability and dependence to reduce anxiety [9]. Perhaps the expressive regression only enhances emotional immaturity, as a small child is unable to control his emotional background, to recognize and analyze his feelings, to enter the emotional world of another person; he just spontaneously reacts to what happens.

U-criterion of Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney helped to set significant difference between the groups in

terms of severity among defense mechanisms. Test persons with low emotional maturity in contrast to the first group people have the highest level of severity indicators such as psychological defense mechanisms: denial ( $U=952,5$ ,  $p \leq 0,0001$ ), displacement ( $U=1490$ ,  $p \leq 0,003$ ), regression ( $U=801$ ,  $p \leq 0,0001$ ), compensation ( $U=1619,5$ ,  $p \leq 0,02$ ), projection ( $U = 1333,5$ ,  $p \leq 0,0001$ ), replacement ( $U=1138,5$ ,  $p \leq 0,0001$ ) and jet formation ( $U=1440,5$ ,  $p \leq 0,002$ ).

According to the psychoevolutionary theory of personality by R. Plutchik and structural theory of personality by H.Kellerman, there is a specific network of relationships between emotions, defense mechanisms and personality dispositions (hereditary predisposition to mental illness) [1]. In order to understand the interaction between structural features and mechanisms of psychological defense and persistent emotional traits we have done factorization feature of space data in lifestyle techniques [8] and the data in scale of differential emotions by K. Izard [3]. The resulting four-factor matrix explains 69,6% variance (Table 1).

Table 1

Factor structure of the emotional and defensive patterns among people with different levels of emotional maturity

Indexes	Factor 1 «Immaturity PDM»	Factor 2 «The release of protection»	Factor 3 «Projection»	Factor 4 «Interaction of protection»
Interest			0,50	
Joy		0,65	0,43	
Surprise		0,64		
Grief	0,69		-0,39	
Anger	0,66			
Disgust	0,63			
Contempt	0,41		0,47	
Fear	0,64			
Shame	0,48		-0,50	
Guilt	0,58			
Denial				0,51
Extrusion	0,68	-0,40		0,64
Regression	0,68			
Compensation				
Projection	0,57		0,33	
Substitution				
Intellectualization		-0,53		
Jet formation				-0,42
Factor value	29,60%	18,19%	13,58%	8,23%

Note: Table includes only meaningful load factor (from 0,40)

The first monopolar factor that explains 29,6% of variance is designated as «Immaturity PDM» and includes the following indicators: grief (0,69), anger (0,66), disgust (0,63), contempt (0,41), fear (0,64), shame (0,48), guilt (0,58), extrusion (0,68), regression (0,68) and projection (0,57). In this factor, combined are immature psychological defense mechanisms, sthenia and asthenia negative emotions, and emotions aimed at criticism of one's own ego. In our view, it is evident that increasing negative emotional experiences activate protective defense mechanisms (which do not allow the flow of conflict and traumatic information to the consciousness of the individual). It means that such test persons inherent complexity to be faced with negative emotions and to experience their depth, so they may unknowingly suppress them, demonstrate helplessness, dependency, child behavior and replace their unacceptable internal desire for other people to reduce anxiety. At the same time, we can assume that the activation of these protections does not fully ensure the avoidance of negative emotions.

The second factor with 18,19% value is bipolar and called «The release of protection». It combines the following components as joy (0,65), surprise (0,64), extrusion (-0,40), intellectualization (-0,53). Combining these components into a single factor indicates that control over impulses and emotions, which happens when thinking about them instead of direct experience and suppressing of unacceptable for individual signals block the experiences of positive emotions, which are activated spontaneously. The decrease in intensity of psychological defense mechanisms involves the emergence of joy and wonder, and conversely the presence of these experiences eliminates the effect of defense mechanisms.

Third bipolar factor that explains 13,58% variance is called «Projection». In this factor, we have the following indicators: interest (0,50), joy (0,43), grief (-0,39), contempt (0,47), shame (-0,50) and projection (0,33). This factor shows the interaction of positive and negative emotions and contains a projection. We can assume that positive emotions constitute appropriate self-image for individual. Contempt, painted as a negative emotion, arises among test persons with respect to a man who demonstrates in their opinion bad characters or behavior. Projection is a protection from contempt when the individual has difficulty to admit his own feelings as for significant advantage over others.

The fourth bipolar factor with the value of 8,23% is called «Interaction of protection» includes the following indicators: denial (0,51), extrusion (0,64) and jet formation (-0,42). When denial there appears disregard of painful reality for human, the information that is countered to the individual is not accepted at all. Extrusion is aimed at leveling the negative experiences by removing them from consciousness. Jet formation involves the transformation of

unacceptable impulses in consciously acceptable appearance. We can assume that this factor grouped psychological defense mechanisms by setting their polarity and complexity. Thus, denial and repression are polar mechanisms of protection against the jet formation; it is noted in the opposite signs of factors. Thus, the person cannot use both protective and defensive protection mechanisms.

Table 2  
The difference in severity of selected factors among representatives in groups with high and low emotional maturity

Factors	Average value (Group 1)	Average value (Group 2)	t-criterion	Level of significance, p (df=128)
Factor «Immaturity PDM»	-0,41	0,41	<b>5,62</b>	<b>0,001</b>
Factor «The release of protection»	0,37	-0,37	<b>-4,54</b>	<b>0,001</b>
Factor «Projection»	-0,13	0,13	1,42	0,183
Factor «Interaction of protection»	-0,38	0,38	<b>-4,79</b>	<b>0,001</b>

Checking the authenticity of the differences in highlighted factors between research groups using Student t-criterion showed that specific for test persons with high levels of emotional maturity is «Release from protection» factor and for subjects with low levels of emotional maturity specific are factors of «Immaturity PDM» and «Interaction of protection». Factor «projection» does not reach the significant level in differences and can be considered as part of the emotional sphere, equally expressed in the structure of the emotional sphere among emotionally mature and emotionally immature individuals.

#### Conclusion

1. The most significant protective mechanism among the representatives with the high level of emotional maturity is compensation, defined as the person's ability to get rid of feelings about his own shortcomings by developing strengths. The main psychological defense mechanism among people from the second group is a regression that is the protection of manipulative type.

2. People with low emotional maturity have advantage of such psychological defense mechanisms as denial, repression, regression, compensation, projection, replacement and jet formation.

3. Emotionally protective space of personal maturity is represented by four factors: «Immaturity PDM», «Release of protection», «Projection», «Interaction of protection». These components reflect the peculiarities of the emotional sphere among both emotionally mature and emotionally immature personality.

4. The specific component of emotional maturity phenomenon for people with high level of emotional maturity is the «Release of protection», i.e. low intensity of psychological defense mechanisms involves the emergence of positive emotions.

5. The specific component of emotional maturity phenomenon for subjects with low level of emotional maturity is «Immaturity PDM» and «Interaction of protection». Factor «Immaturity PDM» highlights that the increase in negative emotional experiences activates primitive defense mechanisms that cannot fully balance primitive negative emotions. The factor «Interaction of protection» reflects the tensions in sphere of protection and shows the impossibility of simultaneous use of protective and defensive mechanisms of maintenance.

The prospect of further studies may be connected to the expansion of ideas about factors that crystallize and support the functioning of individual emotional maturity for further creation of a system including psycho measures to eliminate already existing violations of the studied phenomenon.

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