



Features of Hardiness and Life-Purpose Orientations of Cadets of Departmental Educational Organizations

TAT'YANA V. KORNILOVA

Vologda Institute of Law and Economics of the Federal Penitentiary Service, tatyana_vladi21@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1978-9294>

DMITRII O. KULESHOV

Saint-Petersburg Military Order of Zhukov Institute of the National Guard Troops, kuleshov0901@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3249-9649>

Abstract

Introduction: the article presents results of the interdepartmental study covering cadets of educational institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service and the National Guard Troop. Development levels of two professionally important qualities, such as hardiness and life-purpose orientations, are determined. The study assesses graduate cadets' readiness for professional activity, as well as the impact of the educational environment of departmental educational organizations on the formation of professionally important qualities. **Purpose:** to identify the level of hardiness and life-purpose orientations of cadets of departmental organizations (case study of the Vologda Institute of Law and Economics of the Federal Penitentiary Service and the Saint-Petersburg Military Order of Zhukov Institute of the National Guard Troops). **Methods:** to study the stated characteristics of cadets of departmental organizations on a sample of 125 male and female persons (aged 21 to 25 years), the "Hardiness Survey" by S. Maddi and the "Purpose-in-Life Test" by J. Crumbaugh and L. Maholic, adapted by D.A. Leont'ev, are used. **Results:** differences in the parameters of hardiness, challenge, commitment to educational activities and in some positions of life-purpose orientations are identified and reasoned. A pattern is substantiated: the more active and productive a cadet is, the higher his/her vitality and sense of purpose, and vice versa. **Conclusion:** the educational environment of departmental educational institutions has a positive effect on the development of professionally important qualities of graduate cadets. The data obtained have made it possible to develop proposals to raise hardiness and form life-purpose orientations.

Keywords: cadets; hardiness; life-purpose orientations; personal characteristics; professional activity; departmental educational organizations; employees of the Federal Penitentiary Service; employees of the National Guard Troops.

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Introduction

Law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation perform an important function to ensure the country's security, law and order, and, if necessary, protect its interests, including by force. The current geopolitical situation, as well as a high level of negative information impact, exerted on both citizens and personnel of law enforcement agencies require new inter-departmental studies, including those aimed at studying hardiness and life-purpose orientations of people who will ensure the security of the Russian Federation.

Data from the research portal "Superjob" show that the military profession in the Russian Federation is now considered the most dangerous (43% of the respondents). Citizens worry about the fate of "people in uniform" three times more often than in previous years. One of the reasons for dramatic changes in public opinion is the conflict at the borders of Russia. In this regard, citizens associate official activity with an obvious threat to life [1]. At the same time, the survey conducted by the Russia Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) reveals that citizens aged 18 to 24 years (79%) find it difficult to deal with stresses provoked by the special military operation [2].

Emotional experience of extreme life events affects people's health and also changes the perception of the surrounding world and their place in it. Official environment can be a source of many professional stressors for individuals, contribute to a high level of stress and, as a result, negatively affect the physical and psychological health of employees. Critical situations trigger the use of person's internal resources and test his/her hardiness. A person's ability to cope with difficult life situations and minimize the negative impact of stress is an important indicator of the level of personal development, which, in turn, actualizes the study of the relationship between a sense of purpose and a level of hardiness.

Hardiness is an important advantage in difficult situations and stressful conditions. Having a high level of hardiness, a person can cope with almost any difficult circumstances and problems.

The Californian psychologist S. Maddy, one of the founders of the hardiness theory, developed the problem of the phenomenon

with regard not only to the idea of a holistic approach to personality, but also to principles of positive psychology. This concept was developed during the study of psychological factors contributing to successful overcoming of stress and reducing (or even preventing) negative reactions to stressful situations. According to it, stressful circumstances are an integral part of life, and, therefore, courage is necessary if a person wants to develop and not to deny problems and avoid stressful events [3].

In S. Maddy's research, the phenomenon of hardiness is understood as a set of attitudes and personal skills that provide motivation and courage, contributing to the transformation of stressful events from potential problems into opportunities for personal growth [4, p. 23]. In particular, three hardiness components were identified, namely commitment (the belief that involvement in what is happening gives the maximum chance to find something worthwhile and interesting for the individual), control (the belief that the struggle helps influence the outcome of what is happening, even if this influence is not absolute and success is not guaranteed) and challenge (the person's conviction that everything that happens to him/her contributes to his/her development due to knowledge extracted from experience, no matter whether positive or negative) [5, p. 5].

Thus, hardiness is especially important in conditions that initially cause stress, for example, such as service. Since 1979, extensive research has shown that hardiness mitigates adverse effects of work/service-related stress on people's health in a wide variety of occupations.

S. Maddy developed a hardiness model showing that when stress effects increase, a person may have a stress reaction. If this reaction continues to rise, a decrease in productivity is expected (for example, a physical illness or a mental breakdown). However, if hardiness components are high, critical situations are constructively overcome.

A number of studies have noted that hardiness is formed in childhood and adolescence, although its development is possible at a later age [6].

A large block of foreign studies is devoted directly to the study of the problems of har-

diness of cadets, military personnel, as well as employees of various law enforcement agencies (A.G. Thomassen, S.W. Hystad, B.H. Johnsen, G.E. Johnsen, J.C. Laberg, J.Eid [7]; S.R. Maddi, M.D. Matthews, D.R. Kelly, B. Villarreal, K.K. Gundersen, S.C.M. Savino [8]; S. Lo Bue, S. Kintaert, J. Taverniers, J. Mylle, R. Delahaij, M. Euwema [9]; M. Nordmo, O. K. Olsen, J. Hetland, R. Espevik, A.B. Bakker, and S. Pallesen [10]). It should be noted that the analysis of foreign publications indicates that a high level of hardiness among cadets is associated with a higher level of academic performance, perseverance, efficiency, confidence in the ability to complete the entire training path, satisfaction with their own lives, etc. [11].

It should be noted that in Russia there is also a growing number of publications on the study of hardiness of military personnel, employees of the Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters, internal affairs and justice bodies, including cadets (E.R. Kua-sheva, 2011 [12]; E.A. Gorskaya, I.V. Chernova, 2013 [13]; L.N. Molchanova, A.I. Red'kin, 2014 [14]; S.S. Franchuk, S.N. Gavryuchenko, 2015 [15]; A.S. Otradnova, 2018 [16]; A.A. Zemskova, N.A. Kravtsova, 2019 [17]; G.M. Muratshina, 2021 [18]; A.R. Dashevskii, E.A. Shmeleva, P.A. Kislyakov, 2022 [19]; A.V. Speranskaya, 2023 [20], etc.).

Research

To survey cadets of departmental educational organizations, the authors of the publication used valid and reliable methods: the “Hardiness Survey” [5], which is a version of the questionnaire developed by the American psychologist S. Maddy and adapted by the scientific group of Professor D. A. Leont’ev, as well as the “Purpose-in-Life Test” (PIL) [21], a version of the questionnaire worked out by D. Crumbaugh and L. Maholic and adapted by D.A. Leont’ev.

The research covered 63 graduate cadets (22 boys and 41 girls) of the Vologda Institute of Law and Economics of the Federal Penitentiary Service (VILE of the FPS of Russia) and 62 students (62 boys) of the Saint-Petersburg Military Order of Zhukov Institute of the National Guard Troops (SPVI). The age of the surveyed ranged from 20 to 25 years (average age – 22).

The data obtained were processed using the multifunctional computer diagnostic system “Psychometric Expert’ and the statistical data analysis system “SPSS Statistics 24”.

The results were interpreted by groups of cadets differentiated by the criterion of gender with the help of the nonparametric statistical Mann-Whitney U test to assess the differences.

Let us take a closer look at the results of the “Hardiness Survey” (Table 1).

Table 1

Average values on the scales of the method “Hardiness Survey”

Scales	Women, VILE of the FPS of Russia	Men, VILE of the FPS of Russia	Men, SPVI
Commitment	33.8	33.4	33.2
Control	31.9	32.5	32.4
Challenge	17.5	18.4	19.5*
Hardiness	83.2	84.3	85.1

Note: * indicates differences at the level of $p \leq 0.05$.

Significant differences were revealed between women of the VILE of the FPS of Russia and men of the SPVI by “challenge” component, therefore, it can be stated that cadets of the SPVI are more prone to risky actions, which, in turn, may be due to the specifics of educational activities of the military university (a large

number of shooting drills, exercises, tactical training, etc.). Other scales of the test show no significant differences between cadets of educational organizations.

However, it is worth noting that women of the VILE of the FPS of Russia are more involved in educational activities than men of both educational or-

ganizations, which may be due to more developed perseverance, punctuality and attentiveness. The overall index of hardiness is slightly higher in the group of young men of the SPVI, which suggests that they tend to use active rather than passive

strategies to overcome stressful events, are more motivated to social support, to provide and receive it, as well as to active physical training.

Figure 1 shows the percentage distribution of cadets with different hardiness levels.

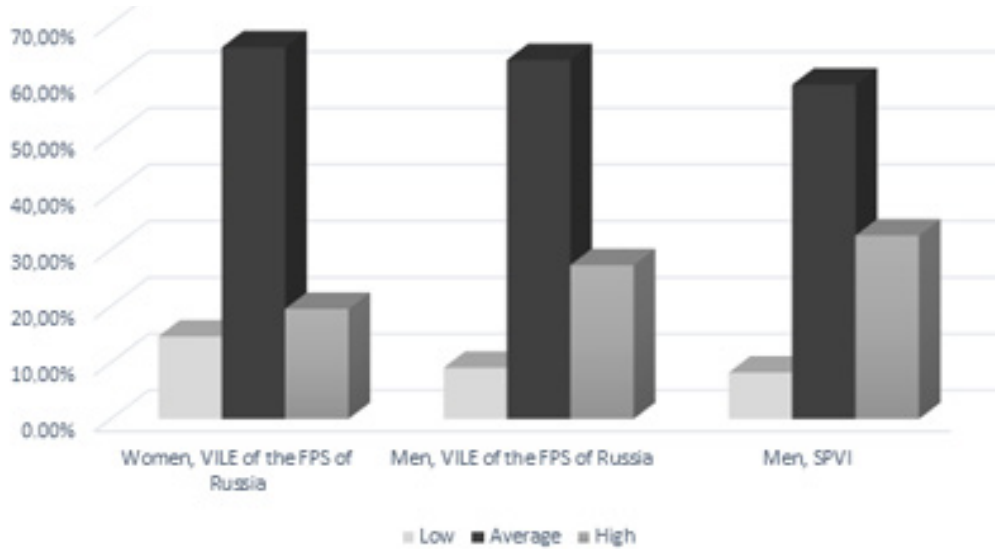


Figure 1. Percentage distribution of cadets with different hardiness levels (%)

The absolute majority of the men and women surveyed (89.35%) are characterized by medium and high hardiness. The number of

respondents with a low indicator is minimal (10.65%).

Let us consider results of the “Purpose-in-Life Test” in more detail (Table 2).

Table 2

Average values on the scales of the method “Purpose-in-Life Test”

Scales	Women, VILE of the FPS of Russia	Men, VILE of the FPS of Russia	Men, SPVI
Goals in life	30.6	31.3	32.2
Life process, interest and emotional intensity	28.7	26.9	30.7*
Life effectiveness, satisfaction with self-realization	25.3	24.1	26.4
Locus of control – I (I am the master of life)	17.6	19.8	19.2
Locus of control – life, controllability of life	28.7	30.4	30.1
General indicator of the sense of purpose	104.8	105.4	106.2

Note: * indicates differences at the level of $p \leq 0.05$.

Significant differences were revealed on the scale of “Life process, interest and emotional intensity” between young men of the VILE of the FPS of Russia and the SPVI, which suggests that cadets of the SPVI perceive the process of their life to a greater extent as interesting, emotionally intense and filled with purpose, which may be due to their

involvement in future professional activities (carrying services for the protection of public order and ensuring public safety in Saint Petersburg).

Comparative analysis of other scales of the “Purpose-in-Life Test” shows the absence of significant differences. As for the “locus of control – I” scale, a significant number of respon-

dents of all groups have low indicators. It can be assumed that cadets find freedom of choice insufficient and do not control events of their own lives, possibly due to strict subordination in educational institutions, the need to obey orders of commanders and chiefs in accordance with requirements of general military regulations.

The highest indicators are observed on the scale of “goals in life”. The largest number of respondents are focused on determination of their future and making plans, and beginning of professional formation.

In general, average results of the “Purpose-in-Life Test” fall within the limits of the norm, which indicates that the cadets are satisfied with life at the present time, their life is productive and full, they have clearly defined life goals, interests and intentions. It is worth noting that the sense of purpose is a necessary condition for person’s development of personality.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the formed life-purpose orientations of cadets.

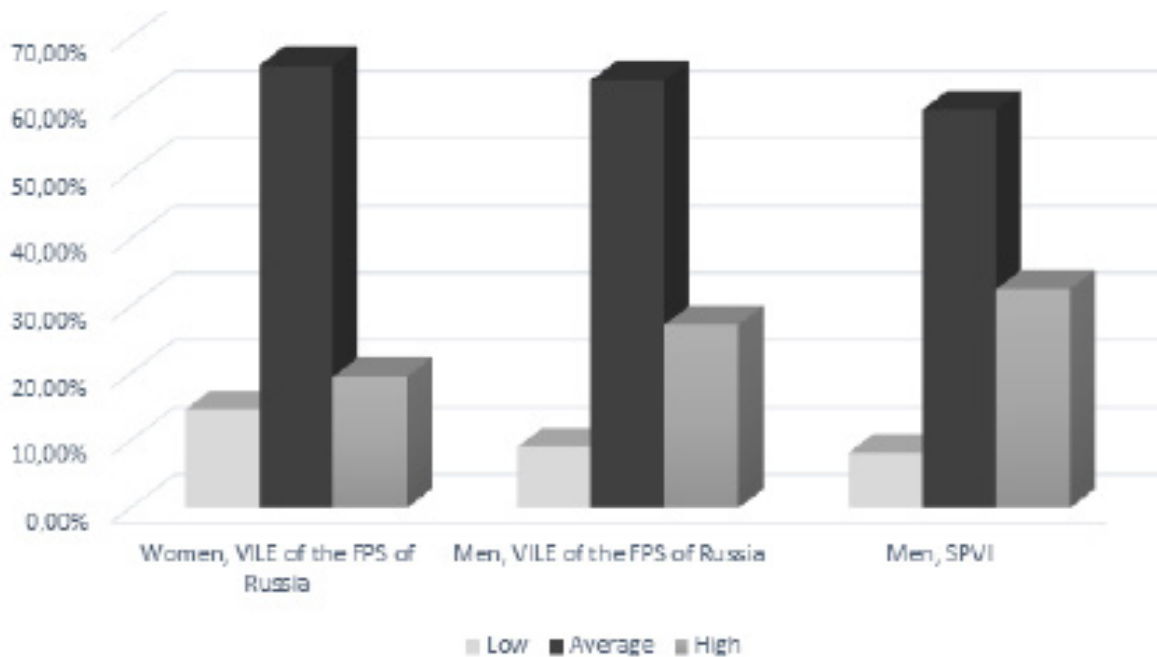


Figure 2. Distribution of the formed life-purpose orientations of cadets (%)

Most surveyed men and women (83.15%) have average and high values on the “general indicator of the sense of purpose” scale. The number of respondents with a low indicator is 16.85%.

Conclusion

Thus, the problem of hardiness as a factor that helps employees of extreme professions to be mentally stable, turning potential difficulties into opportunities for personal growth and self-realization, deserves special research and practical attention of scientists. After all, it is known that extreme professions are characterized by increased responsibility for the lives of other people and the need for quick decision-making in traumatic situations.

Based on the study, we can highlight a certain degree of interrelation of hardiness and purpose of life among cadets of departmental organizations of the Federal Penitentiary Service and the National Guard Troops.

It is established that cadets’ hardiness is an exceptional personal quality that leads to adaptability and high efficiency in difficult conditions of training in departmental educational organizations and in further service. In addition to the fact that it is difficult for cadets to balance their service and life, they try to overcome the conflict between service, personal life and responsibilities, where each area takes a lot of time and is difficult in terms of their tasks and activities. In service, stressors can manifest

themselves in various forms, including physical (for example, lack of sleep, physical exhaustion, etc.) and psychological (for example, lack of time, heavy workload, information overload, etc.).

The practical significance of the study is that the data obtained can be used to develop comprehensive programs for psychological work with representatives of extreme professions. For example, hardiness development training

will be useful for cadets of departmental educational organizations, since a high level of human hardiness increases their performance, leadership, allows them to maintain health in stressful circumstances, forms motivation to work hard in order to overcome transformations, interact with social support and effectively take care of themselves in order to turn stressful circumstances from potential problems in the possibility of constructive development.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

TAT'YANA V. KORNILOVA – Candidate of Sciences (Psychology), Head of the Division of Organization and Coordination of Research Activities and International Cooperation of the Organizational and Research Department of the Vologda Institute of Law and Economics of the Federal Penitentiary Service, Vologda, Russia, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1978-9294>, tatyana_vladi21@mail.ru

DMITRII O. KULESHOV – Candidate of Sciences (Psychology), Lecturer at the Saint-Petersburg Military Order of Zhukov Institute of the National Guard Troops, Saint Petersburg, Russia, good42rus@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3249-9649>

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