

Behavioral Analysis of Individuals in Crises

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Abstract: *Political, social, economic, and civilization changes trigger a number of issues that require the development of personal characteristics sufficient for survival and adaptation to life in a society stricken by a crisis. In general, we can talk about a neurotic personality, the signs of which manifest themselves in anxiety, the actualization of specific negative defenses, suspicion, feelings of resentment and guilt, loss of sense in life. To prevent or counteract these disrupting behaviors, one needs to seek meanings and ideas of self-actualization, to grow spiritually, acquire "psychological culture" while learning to build their life experience in the form of the worldview of reality, so-called semantic picture of the world. The development and reinforcement of this worldview are made possible due to spiritual values, reflective thinking, conscience, intuition, achieving integrity and the highest cognitive and aesthetic human needs, which are respect and self-actualization. Such type of individual is open-minded and inquisitive, ready to push the boundaries, which is also a sign of the capability for transcendence.*

Keywords: *psychological culture, crisis society, neurotic personality, self-actualization, spiritual values, reflective thinking, conflict behavior.*

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Introduction

Scientists typically describe critical life situations through such terms as stress, conflict, crisis, and frustration. As of today, the relationship between these concepts remains unresolved by science. Stress is viewed as a mini-crisis. The Chinese interpret crisis as a tragedy but, at the same time, as an opportunity for growth, while seeing conflict as a path to neurosis and deem it an opportunity for development. Frustration is scientifically interpreted as an aggressive reaction to the obstacles on the way to the desired goal. All these situations are united by the concept of "stress resistance". If a person is trained to find a way out of crisis and use it as a resource for development, they automatically change their adaptive capabilities and learn to be in a state of balance and harmony (Gerasymova et al., 2019; Nerubasska et al., 2020; Nerubasska & Maksymchuk, 2020; Palamarchuk et al., 2020; Sheremet et al., 2019).

Political, social, economic, and civilization changes bring about a number of issues that require the development of personal characteristics necessary for survival and adaptation to life in a society stricken by a crisis. This volatility causes ambiguity in personal ways of development (Horney, 1997). The inability to develop a specific set of values and views of the events happening in the world contributes to the crisis and suffering in various domains of human personality and existence.

The chaotic nature of social phenomena is often subjectively perceived as a crisis of normative ideas about the relationship between the individual and society. The economic crisis, meanwhile, is seen as a conflict between the poor and the rich. Today, researchers view the globalization trend as the main culprit of the civilization crisis (Kovaliov, 2016). The technological revolution poses a threat to human civilization, especially after having effectively introduced such phenomena in the media as Internet wars or the 25th frame effect. Whereas the ethnic crisis is a misunderstanding of communities that have different mentalities often expressed in political views, personal crisis manifests itself as an internal conflict, neurosis and can be both the cause and result of the crises mentioned above.

Speaking of our adaptation in the contemporary social and cultural environment, scientists have come up with a notion of the "psychological culture of a personality" (Kuzikova, 2008). The analysis of the relevant scientific literature allows suggesting that, in the psychological dimension, the inability to adapt to modern society can manifest itself in varied forms of neurosis. We consider the personal level of crisis in terms of changes that occur in the individual under the influence of social instability. In general

terms, we are talking about a neurotic personality, recognized by increased anxiety, the actualization of specific negative defenses, and suspicion. Neuroticism makes it difficult for an individual to tell sincerity from insincerity. They tend to be rigid and stubbornly refuse to accept other people's views; they are constantly suffering, struggling to develop a relationship with others, which is manifested in internal conflict, imbalance and distortion of character structure, inconsistency in actions and behavior, painful addiction and obsessions. The neurotic internal conflicts deprive an individual of the possibility of choice, which is impeded by their conflicted nature and the internal prohibitions that severely limit such people in relationships and self-actualization. Their "ego-concept" is dominated by an unconscious tendency to evaluate themselves based on what others think of them, resulting in low self-esteem.

Internal conflict is part of both a healthy and a neurotic personality

While neurosis can be caused by a crisis, it can also form before a crisis breaks out. According to Horney (1997), interpersonal trends that people use to maintain social security are defined as moving toward people, moving against people and moving away from people depending on the motivation. Moving towards people is of a gradual nature because here an individual is seeking love and acceptance. Moving against everybody is inherent to aggressive, dominant personalities who are driven by the desire to survive; they tend to be competitive and seek to be superior to others, often displaying the necessity to manipulate people ("how can I benefit from this person?") and even sadistic behaviors. They always aspire to win where their job is the means of accomplishing their goals. They seldom feel happy with their job, and the feelings are consistently suppressed because they would distract from the goal and stand in the way to success.

The internal conflict forms the structural basis of neurosis. However, it should be noted that internal conflict is peculiar to mentally stable people as well. What is different is that a mentally healthy individual perceives constructive conflict and contributes to personal development, while neurotic conflict is often unconscious and aggravates the neurotic situation. We can describe the internal conflict in many ways. For example, it can be the controversy between the structures that express the instinctive nature of identity and the cultural nature of a "superego" (according to Freud, 1993). It can be a clash of the internal needs of internally contradictory states of personality, such as the state of the child whose actions are governed by emotional desires, and opportunities to satisfy them,

expressed by the state of the father, guided by the principle of necessity (according to Berne, 1992). The internal conflict can also arise between the individual's ego and the rest of the world, which calls for sharp rigid self-control, cynicism, casting away doubts, loss of moral values (according to Horney, 1997). It can also manifest itself in a disturbance of the balance between conscious and unconscious (according to Jung, 1997).

Stressful situations reveal inadequate reactions in people with impaired psychological protection. In childhood, the psyche protects us from psychological trauma, but when we grow up such protection is inadequately expressed and forms an aggressive personality. According to the doctrine of Freud (1993), frustration together with conflicts motivate a person to master new ways of stress reduction, which is possible through such methods as identification and substitution.

Here are some statistics from the study of various forms of aggression among 77 students of technical universities in 2014 and 2015. The research based on the aggression test developed by Bass et al. (2008) produced the following results: 24.67% of the surveyed reported *physical aggression* above the norm; 28,57% of surveyed students reported *verbal aggression*; 15.58% reported *indirect aggression* (evil jokes, ridicule, slander, and gossip) and aggression not directed at anyone (disordered anger, observed in screaming, banging fists on the table, stomping feet); *negative thinking* (oppositional manner in behavior from passive resistance to active struggle against established customs and laws, typically directed against the authorities or management) was indicated in 25.97% of respondents; *annoyance* (even at slightest irritation a person would be ready to express rudeness, irritability, resentment, sharpness) was found in 11,68 %; 44,7% of the surveyed reported *suspicion* that ranges between distrust and caution towards people and confidence that others plot something villainous; 49,35 % were indicated as prone to *resentment or bearing a grudge* (envy and hatred towards others for actual and imaginary actions); finally, 40,25% were found tending to *auto aggression* or a *feeling of guilt*, which means subjects think they are bad people, therefore, they experience pangs of conscience. As can be inferred, the respondents received the highest scores on the scales "Suspicion", "Feelings of resentment" and "Guilt" (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Statistical data of research in various forms of aggression among students of technical university*

| Types of aggression | Exceeding the norm in % of respondents |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| physical aggression | 24,67 |
| verbal aggression | 28,57 |
| indirect aggression | 15,58 |
| negative thinking | 25,97 |
| annoyance | 11,68 |
| suspiciousness | 44,77 |
| resentment | 49,35 |
| auto aggression | 40,25 |

Perceived at the level of public consciousness, social stratification is subjectively experienced as a crisis of social values and ideals, in particular, the high examples of social justice. Values underlie our understanding of the meaning of life. They navigate us in search for answers to the eternal questions such as *what is the sense of life?* or *what for do I wake up every day?* The sense of own worth and purpose are powerful driving forces for personal motivation. Unfortunately, nowadays, an increasing number of people struggle to find a clear purpose for their existence. Dr Viktor Frankl (1990) pointed out that an individual without a sense of life is a creature with no ideas, completely devoid of interest in self-actualization. As a rule, such people tend to avoid or escape from reality, growing addicted to environments where they can be someone else and easily reach their goals, which is already a trend as we witness the rapid growth in popularity of video games. Such people are often oriented by false values and, thus, set false goals, for instance, placing priority on material wealth. These people are believed to abandon the spiritual values: humanity, integrity, sincerity, harmonious development. The risk to lose the sense of life is the highest for such people because they often lack interest in life, which is bound to result in existential frustration or existential vacuum. According to Viktor Frankl (1990), it contributes to *noogenic neurosis*. On the bright side, however, if seeking professional help, they can be analyzed and understood, thus an individual would be able to divert the energy into a constructive direction.

The subject of the chosen discussion at the socio-psychological level

is social situations in which a particular social group is guided by a normative model of behavior regarding the purpose and outcome of their activities. The multiple crises of contemporary society complicate the situation with a social choice, adoption of social norms, and the process on the whole. The situation with choice is connected with the selectivity of the information necessary for the personal growth of an individual, freedom in control over their life and responsibility before themselves and other people. Freedom of choice is based on the developed reflexivity of the individual because the choice means conscious decision-making, which is possible as long as a person understands the nature of the situation. Responsibility is an ethical prerogative of a person that indicates their developed spirituality.

Each time in history is characterized by a certain specificity of neuroses, according to which different psychotherapeutic directions were formed. "A Constructive theory of neuroses" by Horney (1997) is aimed at the real integration of personality. According to the researcher, the change in the conditions in which the neuroses were formed, contributes to the solution of neurotic problems. Carl Gustav Jung (1997) considered neurosis as a sign of some superpower that is pointing at the necessity of intrapersonal growth.

This assumption resonates with the views of other renowned scientists such as Freud (1993) and James (2000). They believed "personal growth" to be the most important concept on which a person's ability to exist under given conditions depends. However, as a clinician, Freud (1993) was more curious about individual aspects of ego, emphasizing the idea of self. In the light of this position, a person who would show interest in others could understand their own problems, desires, and worries more effectively, thus, also, achieving their goals. James (2000) and his followers, on the other hand, were concerned with interpersonal relationships.

Words can kill, they can also heal, which was proved by Viktor Frankl (1990). Dr Frankl's logotherapy (1990) is a philosophy rather than a mechanism. Contemporary philosophers point to the need to develop worldview sciences. In modern psychological science, the term "psychological culture of the individual" is used to define the behavior model in society. Psychologist Kuzikova (2008) singles out the philosophical meaning of this concept and connects it with the processes of self-actualization, personal growth and ways of organizing psychological experience in the form of worldview understanding of reality, semantic picture or a model of the world.

Motkov (1999) dedicated his work to the research of the instrumental, technological constituent of the human psychological culture.

The scientist argues that psychological culture is, first of all, high quality of self-organization and self-regulation of all activities, expressed in patterns of behavior. He believes people with a higher level of psychological culture can manage their functional states, maintain positivity, well-being and vitality. They can be generally characterized as content with life because they have worked on and mastered the system of such tools as self-awareness, healthy communication, control of their emotions and actions, creative search, self-development, and their aspirations while taking into account the internal needs, possibilities and features of the social environment.

Psychological culture of personality

Along with an efficient lifestyle and developed spiritual values, psychological culture provides for harmonious and resilient psychological health. But the harmonious holistic development of the individual must occur simultaneously with the formation of other aspects of culture. When someone builds some specific plan of action, all levels of personality cooperate, namely, the initial psychobiological level, level of operative "self" and the "highest" level of spiritual orientations and values.

When speaking of the psychological culture development of young men, contemporary psychologists place an emphasis on the formation of reflective thinking. In his methodology "Psychological culture of personality", Motkov (1999) outlines a set of skills necessary for successful personal self-organization in the modern social and cultural environment. The skills that young men should learn include the ability to clearly understand themselves and their desires, their character; to listen carefully to the other, without losing the logic of the interlocutor's thoughts; to flexibly manage their mood, desires and actions; to boldly challenge themselves in new situations and new businesses; wisely plan time, to choose a job based on personal capabilities; to develop themselves incessantly; to understand psychological causes to why their mood changes; understand their own mistakes; to keep a clear head and composure in conflict situations; to express negative desires and emotions carefully and with consideration towards other people; to create original ideas and unusual images; to keep promises and fulfill business agreements; maintain the mental and physical strength; realize their purpose, and actualize their potential in life; express their thoughts clearly and confidently; respond quickly to unsatisfactory condition and find ways to improve it; to practically implement their new ideas, create new methods of work; to follow things through, to prioritize important goals; to independently overcome bad habits and develop positive

ones.

The irrational structures of the psychological culture require, however, further research. According to Frankl (1990), these structures are non-reflexive methods of self-development. Thus, the irrational structures of the individual psyche become the cultural determinants of the development of meaning. Frankl (1990, p. 97) sees conscience as one of them. Conscience is immersed in the depths of the unconscious and is the structure of the "spiritual unconscious." It helps a person to make existential decisions of non-reflective origin building upon the unconscious, so it has signs of irrationality. Whereas our consciousness is directed to what already exists, the conscience is directed to something that has not happened yet, something about to be realized, and what will be carried out in the act of contemplation by intuition. Conscience as an intuitive function can be meaningful and rational only after some time. Frankl (1990) believed that through suffering, a person can change and become complete. This integrity can be found in the higher manifestations of personality, which, according to Maslow (1997), occupy the highest levels of our needs, which are cognitive, aesthetic needs, the need for respect and self-actualization. Such a personality is open-minded and ready to push their boundaries, which speaks for their capacity for self-transcendence. A person focused entirely on physical needs is not inclined to make extra effort for the sake of creativity. They seek excitement and pleasure. Focus on meaning and values are the elements inherent to a healthy personality. Basically, to be a person means to be present in the world, to have relationships with others. Self-actualization and happiness are possible through the cognition of the senses (Bühler, 1968).

Modern psychologists did a series of experimental studies to find that a high level of psychological culture relies on the presence of positive psychological defense mechanisms, harmony, the general level of culture, psychological well-being, flexibility, self-discipline, and spontaneity, which correlates with their "spiritual satisfaction". People with a developed psychological culture rate their functional mental states (well-being, mood, general activity, sustainable happiness) higher than people with a low level of psychological culture.

According to Tchaprak (2009), the term "psychological culture" helps to describe and understand the psychological conditions for overcoming the disintegration of personality value systems during a crisis of a certain type of culture. Individual psychological culture cannot be considered outside the context of the culture in which a person grew up and lives. In the epistemological framework, these are the components of culture

singled out in philosophy and culturology, namely the normativity of social behavior, its role functions, social expectations, psychological knowledge, meanings expressed in images, symbols, gestures and words, the way we dress, values as an image of the ideal, desirable and normative. The procedure-and-activity aspect of the psychological culture analysis is determined by the scope and content of tasks that an individual needs to learn to solve. In the subjective-personal aspect of the analysis, those components arise that are objectively represented in the culture, and they become the personality's acquisition, and are assigned to the subject in relationships. Culture is seen as the indicator of a person who has achieved a certain harmony that allows stable social and productive inclusion in public life and work, as well as emotional comfort.

Howard Gardner (2007), a developmental psychologist who was studying the multiple intellects of an individual, concluded that it is symbols and symbolic systems that express sounds, moods, feelings, connect the intellectual capacity and the formed culture of the individual. Based on the manifestation of symbolic abilities in the ontogenesis of personality, Gardner (2007, p. 355) identifies four stages of adaptation in society. It all starts in infancy, which is the time for the acquisition of rudimentary skills, as the basis for further development of symbols and the detection of symbolic actions. Then, we proceed with early childhood (from two to five years) where the acquisition of skills to work with a number of symbolic systems occurs. We move into the school age where we improve skills in some areas of symbolism, which are valued in a particular culture. Finally, in adolescence and adulthood, we become accomplished in the use of symbols, transferring symbolic knowledge, and generating original symbolic products.

The social and psychological crisis is brought about by differences in the mentality of people, which complicates the ability to understand each other. As is said, a lumberjack, a botanist and an artist will see three different ecosystems in one forest.

The term "neurotic" cannot be understood without considering the cultural conditions of neurosis. What we perceive as the norm varies in different cultures. If we are aware of the cultural conditions we live in we have a better chance to study and understand the neuroses. The cultural factors impact our psychological conditions. The cultural context in the treatment of neuroses was acknowledged by the great minds of Sullivan (1999), Horney (1997), and Frankl (1990). Neurosis is a deviation from the norm, but people can deviate from conventional patterns without negative consequences. A person with neurosis stands in their own way, because of anxiety and negative forms of social protection, caused by the personality

poorly adapted to the conditions of society.

Culture and history interpret different patterns of behavior differently. Cultural conditions determine certain forms of neurosis. Such neuroses stem from various forms of prohibition, in particular, the prohibition of pleasure in culture (from work, from relationships with people). Every culture has its peculiar neurosis type. Freeman (1983) has proved that some cultures do not feature neuroses at all, for instance, a cyclical culture. In modern culture, time is discrete (present, past and future), thus, people are neurotic. Fromm (2018) developed a method of applying cultural factors in the treatment of neuroses, the formation of guidelines for productive activities. In contrast to the symbiotic relationship, the mature person retains their integrity. Fromm (2018) is convinced that the more a person knows and understands, the bigger their capacity for love is, and the bigger their accomplishment in the process of creating a unity with the world. This unity is achieved through a state of focused meditation, the movement of the soul. The activity of internal forces is independent of changes in the external world. A personality that is motivated by passion is not focused on love. To love means to give, not to receive. Love is a dynamic concern and consideration. Responsibility is a voluntary act in response to the needs of others; to be responsible means to worry about others, about their spiritual needs. Respect is a fundamental feature in a developed society as it navigates people to be considerate to others, observe and be aware of the individuality of others while also showing interest in the individual's self-development but following own path and not serving somebody else's interests. A mature person should have a developed set of guidelines that help in day-to-day life. A mature person is free from the image of mother and father, instead, forming the inner self-consciousness of their parents.

Conclusions

Summarizing the presented theoretic research, we now have a possibility to identify the factors of personality stress resilience, according to the criteria of cognitive and volitional structural components: "field-dependence -independence" and "adaptation-maladaptation". The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Stress resilience indicators*

| | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adaptation (self-organization, self-regulation) | Adaptation to the existing living conditions without the ability to change | Self-actualization (presence of meaning of life; orientation on conscience, sense of |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | them or influence them | ethics; an individual is self-organized and has a purpose of life; integral; when in conflict, moves towards people; possesses developed psychological culture |
| Maladaptation | Interdependent neurotic (anxious, aggressive, with sadistic tendencies, has no freedom of choice) | Neurotic with the illusion of freedom of choice (unrealized; irresponsible; with no determined life path of development; when in conflict, tends to move away from people) |
| | Field dependence | Field independence (freedom of choice) |

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