

Four, as a kind of double division (two and two), means conditional solitude (like the number two), but also the correct ordering of what is divided. Therefore, is an order symbol in space and, by analogy, of every other well-ordered structure.

References:

1. JUNG, C.G. The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*. Volume 9. 1981. 485 p.
2. JUNG, C.G. (2012). Structure & Dynamics of the Psyche. *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. Volume 8. 998 p.
3. JUNG, C.G. (2017). The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings. *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*. Volume 18. 1132 p.

CZU: 159.923:371

DOI: 10.46727/c.v2.1-2-10-2022.p259-265

PECULIARITIES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENSE MECHANISMS' MANIFESTATIONS AMONG EDUCATORS

YERMAKOVA Nataliia,

Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor,

Assistant Professor of the Department of Psychology, Sumy State Pedagogical

University named after A. S. Makarenko, Sumy, Ukraine,

ORCID: 0000-0001-6163-8313, e-mail: ergna@ukr.net

Abstract. *The purpose of the article is to present a psychological analysis of the features of the mechanisms of psychological protection manifested by educators. The study analyzes theoretical approaches to studying the functioning of psychological defense mechanisms, including the approach of classical psychoanalysis, Neo-Freudianism, Transactional analysis, Gestalt therapy, Phenomenological approach to humanistic psychology, Interactionist approach, Psychoevolutionary theory of emotions, and approaches of domestic scientists. Empirical research has shown that teachers with different work experiences have the same protections. This indicates the invariability of their use of specific mechanisms in professional activities for a long time. But this gives reason to believe that the manifestation of certain psychological protections is inherent among educators. The links between the protective mechanisms used by educators and other psychological characteristics have been established. Relationships have been established between manifestations of projection mechanisms, denial of rationalization, avoidance strategy, and character accentuations such as exaltation, hyperthymicity, emotionality, and cyclothymicity.*

Keywords: *psychological protection, defense mechanisms' manifestations, internal conflict, adaptation, anxiety, frustration, stereotypes, educators.*

Introduction

The rapid pace and dynamics of the modern information space's development, the urbanization of the population, and the need for rapid changes in behavioral stereotypes predict a constant impact on the psyche, which leads to an increase in “pressure” on it. The specified social factors require the intensive formation of structures inside the individual that would protect it from overload and help in effective adaptation to difficult psychological conditions, as well as solve problems in professional and household activities. Such structures formed and integrated into the psyche can be mechanisms of psychological protection.

The protective mechanisms of the psyche are intrapsychic, mostly unconscious structures that ensure the processes of reducing tension arising from unacceptable or potentially dangerous stimuli.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of classical psychoanalysis, coined the term “psychological defense”. He used this concept to “generally denote the tactics that the ‘Ego’ uses in resolving internal conflicts that can lead to neuroses” (Freud S., 1936, 2013). Freud's daughter, Anna, the author of the classic work “Psychology of the Ego and Defense Mechanisms”, which developed her father’s theory, emphasized that “Ego-defense mechanisms are unconscious and reject the demands of instinct” (Freud A., 1937, 1966). Later, the concept of defense mechanisms was interpreted, transformed, and modernized by representatives of different generations of researchers and psychotherapists. Thus, according to A. Adler, psychological protection consists in compensation for inferiority. K. Horney considered the manifestation of neurotic needs that are formed to protect against “basal anxiety” as protective strategies. E. Fromm described defense mechanisms as ways to escape from freedom. In his writings, E. Berne noted methods of structuring time as an analog of protection, in particular, psychological games. In the direction of Gestalt psychology, F. Perls (Perls F., 2015) described psychological protection by contact interruption mechanisms, and a representative of the humanistic direction, K. Rogers, considered it as a way to preserve the integrity of the “I-concept”.

In modern Ukrainian psychology, the concept of psychological protection began to be considered only recently, such psychologists as M.Y. Varii, O.V. Vynoslavskaya, V. L. Zlyvko, T.S. Yatsenko, and others worked on studying this phenomenon.

Nowadays, the most complete and systematized psychological defense is presented in the works of the American psychologist Robert Plutchik (Plutchik R., 1996). In co-authorship with H. Kellerman and H. Conte (Plutchik R., Kellerman H., Conte H.R., 1979), he presented a model of the functioning and genesis of psychological defense. The researcher identified eight main defense mechanisms with the corresponding basic emotions (fear, anger, joy, sadness, acceptance, disgust, expectation, and surprise). R. Plutchik drew attention to the fact that protective mechanisms, like basic emotions, are characterized by bipolarity, that is, they can be combined in opposite pairs. And

if emotions can be combined in this way: joy - sadness, fear – anger, acceptance – disgust, expectation – surprise, then the basic defenses by analogy are combined into four pairs: reactive formation – compensation, suppression – substitution, denial – projection, intellectualization – regression.

The scientist proposed five postulates of models of psychological protection: 1) the formation of specific protection is determined by the need to cope with the corresponding emotions; 2) there are eight types of protection that arise to overcome the eight corresponding basic emotions; 3) the eight primary defenses are characterized by both similarity and oppositeness; 4) different types of personal diagnoses are essentially characterized by certain protective styles; 5) an individual can use any combination of psychological defenses.

The theory of R. Plutchik, H. Kellerman, and H. Kont is one of the successful attempts to systematize knowledge about psychological protection, on the basis of which the scientists created the "Lifestyle Index" questionnaire, which determines the level of expression of protective mechanisms (Plutchik R., Kellerman H., Conte H.R., 1979).

Thus, according to scientists, the emergence of protective mechanisms in ontogenesis is conditioned by the suppression of emotions that arise as a result of the failure to satisfy basic needs at the corresponding stages of mental development. The action of protective strategies is quite different: some mechanisms are characterized by a complex structure, for their formation, it was necessary to have definite, already formed mental structures. For example, to use the mechanisms of intellectualization and rationalization, it is necessary to have logical thinking. Other defense mechanisms, such as regression, projection, and denial, operate only with instinctive-affective components and can be formed already at the beginning of life.

The norm and pathology of an individual's protective functioning depend on whether he managed to realize his basic psychological needs (for safety, freedom and autonomy, success and efficiency, recognition, and self-determination) at certain stages of ontogenesis or, due to the heteronomous influence of the environment, they were frustrated. The formation of protective mechanisms at the initial stages of life is caused by the failure of the child's basic needs.

The issue of studying protective mechanisms is especially important for the field of education. After all, the professional effectiveness of teachers depends both on their adequate perception of each other and on how they behave with students. In the process of professional activity of an individual, conditions are created for the formation of negative neoplasms in it, which are called “professional deformations”. Such changes can be both personal (accentuations of character, persistent negative traits, stereotypes of behavior and thinking) and professional (incompetence, formalism, didacticism, etc.). Teachers are among the most vulnerable to professional destruction.

Among the reasons for the formation of deformations in teachers, we can name: strong emotional tension, working with objects that have a high degree of their own activity, professional fatigue, burnout, a high level of identification with the professional role, etc., as a result of which the teacher begins to excessively use the mechanisms of psychological protection. The consequence of their excessive use and the lack of reduction in the high intensity of their manifestation (on average after 10-15 years) can be psychological changes that are negative in nature: aggressiveness, authoritarianism, inadequate self-esteem, dominance, conservatism, etc. as manifestations of the development of professional deformations. The formation of such personal changes inevitably leads the teacher to mental illness, which affects relationships with others and the productivity of professional activity. The consequence of this can be a gradual professional degradation, which will lead the teacher to absolute incompetence in his activities.

Therefore, it is essential for teachers to follow specific preventive measures, such as self-diagnosis, reflection, and self-regulation, to avoid professional deformations or reduce their impact. Targeted work on reducing the intensity of the psychological protection mechanisms of the individual is also a crucial method of optimizing pedagogical communication, a means of self-development.

Methodology and methods

An experimental study of the manifestation of psychological protection mechanisms' peculiarities among educators was conducted on the basis of general secondary education institutions in the Sumy district. 57 respondents participated in the study. Of them, 18 teachers in the first research group with work experience up to 15 years, and 16 teachers in the second group with work experience of 15 years or more. It should be noted that 23 respondents on the scale of motivation for approval of the questionnaire "Evaluation of professional orientation of the teacher's personality" scored more than 7 points, so their results were not taken into account.

The main research methods were: analysis of scientific sources, their systematization, and generalization of theoretical and experimental data. Standardized methods were used to diagnose the researched psychological phenomenon and its related components: "Lifestyle Index Questionnaire" (Plutchik R., Kellerman H., Conte H.R., 1979) and "Methodology for assessing the professional orientation of the teacher's personality" (Rogov Y. I., 2019).

The results

When processing the results, the respondents were divided into two groups. The first group included educators with teaching experience of 15 years or more (16 people), and the second - with teaching experience of fewer than 15 years (18 people). It turned out that in the group of educators with 15 or more years of experience, the following 5 psychological defenses dominate: displacement (8%), denial (23%), projection (31%), hypercompensation (11%), and rationalization

(27%). In the group of educators with up to 15 years of work experience, there are 4 such overly pronounced defenses: displacement (6%), denial (33%), projection (39%), and rationalization (22%). Thus, we can observe that in both research groups, the mechanisms of projection, rationalization, and denial become the most common.

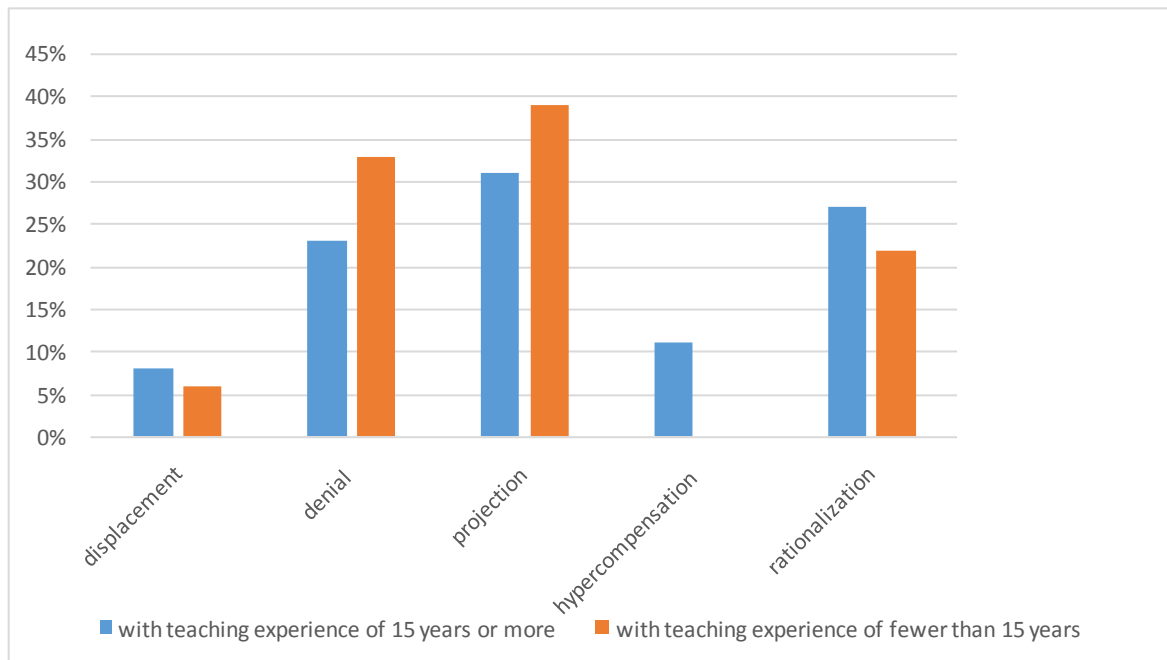


Fig. 1. Peculiarities of psychological protection mechanisms' manifestations that exceed the threshold for teachers of different groups

The mechanism of projection, according to the “Life Style Index” method of R. Plutchik - G. Kellerman - H. Conte, as the most common among educators, involves attributing one's own socially unacceptable feelings and thoughts to others for the purpose of self-justification. In our opinion, the popularity of this mechanism among teachers may be related to their inflated level of moral attitudes about themselves and, as a result, their perception of themselves as ideal, which does not allow them to realize their own flaws. It can also be connected with the teacher's attempt to remove suspicions of incompetence, the presence of certain shortcomings, negative qualities in order not to lose authority among students. Such behavior is wrong in the sense that it prevents you from seeing yourself in reality and can lead to a negative perception of others or specific aspects of reality. This is a sort of neurotic self-affirmation that blocks self-development.

The rationalization mechanism was found to be the second most common. It is an effort to distort reality thanks to logical (pseudo-rational) explanations of frustrating circumstances. Distortion stands for not accepting real motives, reasons for one's own behavior or that of others, devaluation of currently unavailable experience, or reasons for conflict due to the threat of loss of self-respect in such a case. Despite the fact that it is one of the constructive defenses, the negative consequence of its hypertrophy can be a decrease in motivation for success, a habit of self-

deception, and “conservation” of reality, which will not allow the personality to develop. This will have a negative impact on professional activity because an unmotivated and not aspiring teacher will not be able to be an example for young people and stir their interests.

In third place among the common mechanisms of psychological protection among teachers is denial. This way, a significant number of teachers deny certain circumstances and internal impulses associated with anxiety. For the most part, this mechanism is aimed at denying some aspects of reality that are obvious to others but, for various reasons, are denied by the individual himself. Such behavior is often aimed at avoiding conflict situations. In any case, an overly pronounced denial strategy leads to a significant distortion of the perception of reality, which negatively affects relationships with others and the productivity of professional activity.

Table 1. Interrelationship of psychological protection mechanisms with a high level of manifestation with typical pedagogical orientations

Name of PPM with a high level of manifestation	Name of the type of professional orientation							
	Communicator		Organizer		Subject-oriented		Intellectual	
	more than the norm Abs., %	Insufficient level Abs., %	more than norm Abs., %	Not sufficient level of Abs., %	more than norm Abs., %	Not sufficient level of Abs., %	more than norm Abs., %	Not sufficient level of Abs., %
Denial (12 people)	0	2 (16%)	0	2 (16%)	0	2 (16%)	0	0
Projection (15 people)	0	4 (26%)	0	1 (6,6%)	1 (6,6%)	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	0
Rationalization (11 people)	0	4 (36%)	0	1 (9%)	0	0	2 (18%)	0
Avoidance (21 people)					10 (66%)		11 (72,6%)	

We also made an attempt to establish the relationship between the mechanisms of psychological protection, with a high level of manifestation according to the "Life Style Index" method of R. Plutchik - G. Kellerman - H. Conte, and typical pedagogical orientations according to the method of assessing the professional orientation of the teacher's personality (table 1). As a result of the analysis, it was established that respondents with pronounced mechanisms of denial, projection, and rationalization had no or a slight tendency of overestimated indicators in all pedagogical directions. The maximum indicator, in this case, was 18% of the "intellectual" orientation among teachers with a rationalization mechanism. With indicators below the norm according to the assessment of pedagogical orientation, the mechanisms of psychological protection are more interconnected. Thus, there is a relationship between the professional orientation of the "subject" with the mechanism of psychological protection of "avoidance", the "communicator" with the mechanism of psychological protection of rationalization (36%), and the tendency to mutual

manifestation with the mechanism of projection (26%); negation shows a tendency to interrelation with "communicator", "organizer" and "subject" (16%).

Conclusions

In the course of the research, it was found that teachers, regardless of the length of service, mainly possess psychological protection mechanisms such as projection, substitution, and rationalization. This testifies to the constant use of certain types of defenses in their professional activities for a long time and gives reason to believe that the manifestation of certain psychological defenses is characteristic of teachers. During the study, we also established links between the manifestations of the rationalization mechanism and the professional orientation of the communicator (detected in 36% of respondents), between the use of the avoidance strategy and the professional orientation of the "subject" (in 66% of the respondents) and the "intellectual" (72,6 % of respondents).

References:

1. FREUD, S. (1936, 2013). *The Problem of Anxiety*. New York: Norton, 343.
2. FREUD, A. (1937, 1966). *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence*. London: Karnas books, 191. <https://psptraining.com/wp-content/uploads/Freud-A.-1936-1993.The-ego-and-the-mechanisms-of-defence.-London-Karnac-Books.pdf>
3. Osvitnij projekt «Na urok» (2019) Metodyka «Profesijna spryamovanist osobystosti vchytelya» (Rogov Y. I.) <http://boyarka-lider.kiev.sch.in.ua/Files/downloadcenter/Мотиваційні%20та%20інформаційні%20матеріали.pdf>
4. PERLS, F. (2015) *Geshtaltpodhod I svidetel terapii*. M.: *Akademicheskii project*, 320.
5. PLUTCHIK, R. (1996) *Test-oprosnik mehanizmov psihologicheskoi zashshity (Life Style Index)* / Adaptatsiya L.R. Grebennikova (rukovodstvo po ispolzovaniy) / Plutchik R., Kellerman H., Conte H.R. Mytishi: Talant, 144. <https://ik-ptz.ru/exam-tests---2014-for-physics/test-plutchika-mehanizm-psihologicheskoi-zashchity-test-oprosnik.html>
6. PLUTCHIK, R., KELLERMAN, H., CONTE, H.R. (1979) *A structural theory of ego defenses and emotions* // In C. E. Izard, *Emotions in personality and psychopathology*. – N.Y.: Plenum, 1979. p. 229–257.