

Peculiarities of Decision Making by Police Officers with Different Levels of Professional Self-Fulfilment

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Abstract: *The research found that decision making within the professional activities of the police is the key to their success, an indicator of the effectiveness of their duties performance. It is appealed that decision making in critical situations requires a high level of individual's self-fulfilment, which reduces stress and encourages police officers to solve the problem. The aim of the article is to identify and substantiate the relationship of personal characteristics with decision making factors in police officers with different levels of professional self-fulfilment. The sample of the empirical research consisted of 84 employees of special purpose police units. The groups of police officers with different levels of professional self-fulfilment were formed using the questionnaire of "Type and Level of Professional Self-Fulfilment". The research involved the usage of psychodiagnostic techniques, including: the Melbourne Decision Making Questionnaire, the Personal Decision Making Factors Questionnaire and the Big Five Personality Questionnaire. The results of the research showed that the behaviour of police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment is characterized by prosociality and responsibility due to the peculiarities of decisions they do not postpone them and do not lose valuable time, considering all possible alternatives. This characterizes them as capable to take risk if the situation requires it. On the other hand, police officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment tend to shift the problem to other people, they often demonstrate independent behaviour and take responsibility for decision making, but this is accompanied by doubts and fears about their rationality.*

Keywords: *Decision making; police officer; professional self-fulfilment; responsibility.*

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1. Introduction

The professional activities of police officers manifest a specific type of human activities, which is based on the continuous selection of the best option in making professional decisions. The problem of decision making by police officers in the field of legal psychology is often identified with assignments to translate the choices into action faced by police officers in the line of their duties. Making decisions is not an easy task, and even more so for representatives of socionomic professions. Not only the outcome of the case but also the life of the person as a whole can depend on the correct and timely decision, especially when it refers to police activities. The ability to make decisions is reduced and it requires the police officer to use his personal resources under conditions of excessive physical, emotional and psychological stress. Police officers from special purpose police units quite often face extreme situations, such as armed attacks, apprehension of criminals and prevention of terrorist acts, etc., which require a prompt decision and adherence to tactical special procedures (Bondarenko et al., 2020a; Bondarenko et al., 2020b; Okhrimenko et al., 2020). These problem situations are characterized by high complexity, tension, urgency and negative consequences, as every action and decision of a police officer can affect people's lives. Complexity management and making decisions in stressful situations is often associated with a high level of responsibility and vital activities.

2. Literature Review

Awareness of one's professional identity is the key to successful police activities. To ensure the harmonious development of the police officer's personality, it is necessary to have confidence in one's place in the profession and the ability to influence the course of events by making appropriate decisions. Identifying oneself with the profession will allow the police officer to quickly adapt to the requirements of the profession and build strategies to overcome stress. Professional affiliation with a professional group involves a number of difficulties that must be mastered by the police officer and the ability to make decisions in uncertain and stressful conditions is one of the most important factors. The loss of viability, which is necessary in the police profession will be the counter reaction (Aleksandrov et al., 2017; Shvets et al., 2020).

The quality of work performed by police officers becomes crucial in the conditions of active implementation of new reforms and dynamic legal

development of the state. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive study of the personality of police officers as prominent representatives of risky professions (Kubaenko et al., 2021).

Foreign project groups pay a lot of attention to the issues of decision making by police officers. Thus, in particular, Bakotic (2016) agrees that the police profession places high demands on its candidates for service. Those employees who are able to overcome difficulties in the profession and take responsibility for decision making are satisfied with their work.

At the same time, Arble and Arnetz (2016) emphasize that policing is impossible without the ability to respond quickly to operational tasks, readiness to act and the potential to make decisions in stressful situations. After all, the course of the event and the safety of citizens will depend on the outlined features. The need for a highly qualified specialist who is able to withstand threats in the profession and save not only his own life, but also that of other people is completely understandable. It is clear that police officers often have to interact with criminals and victims of crime, which undoubtedly requires skill, physical endurance and psychological tranquillity, as such contacts are traumatic in nature (Ryu et al., 2020).

Crisis decision making is a natural phenomenon in police practice. Police officers are more likely to face difficult choices in terms of coordinated decision than other professional groups, which is well-argued and results in excessive stress, overload and tension. Only a sufficient level of professionalism and competence can protect police officers from making the wrong decision (Šalkauskaitė et al., 2015).

According to the study by Fridman et al. (2019), police mistakes in making decisions under situations of excessive stress and tension are due to the specifics of the situation and its complexity. The researchers suggest that police officers may make erroneous decisions in a difficult situation because they have limited time to resolve it, have accompanying aggravating circumstances due to the threatening event, their own personal experience in such situation and the peculiarities of responding to it.

Andersen and colleagues (2018) emphasize the importance of developing effective preventive measures technologies against mistakes in decision making under critical situations. The scientists propose to introduce innovative experiments in police practice, which in real time will capture the physiological, psychological and behavioural manifestations of decision making by police officers under stress.

Research on the peculiarities of decision making under stress is a promising area of scientific inquiry, because the data obtained will predict future scenarios and will affect professional efficiency. Jackson (2015) believes

that understanding the specifics of decision making by police officers is an important resource that can not only increase the effectiveness of police activities, but also raise public confidence in law enforcement agencies.

At the same time, the successful overcoming of difficult professional situations is conditioned by the specifics of entering the profession. The police officer must have a certain list of qualities in his arsenal that will help maintain his / her psychological state and well-being. It is especially important to pay sufficient attention to the competencies of police officers during their professional development (Bondarenko et al., 2020).

With reference to the research, the key competencies of police officers, according to Ostapovich and co-authors (2020), are law- and order-abidingness, prompt decision making in difficult situations, responsibility, emotional stability, viability, conscientious performance of duties, tolerance for uncertainty and teamwork for a common socially important goal.

Thus, given the above viewpoints, it can be ascertained that the study of organizational and psychological peculiarities of making decisions by police officers in the process of their official activities is a relevant theoretical and applied problem. Hence, *the aim* of the work is to identify and substantiate the relationship of personal characteristics with decision making factors in police officers with different levels of professional self-fulfilment. The following *tasks* were performed to achieve this aim: 1) to conduct a theoretical review of the problem of making decisions by police officers in the works of national and foreign scientists; 2) to diagnose the level of professional self-fulfilment of police officers so as to divide them into groups; 3) to determine the relationship between personal characteristics and the specifics of decision making in this category of police officers.

3. Methodology

The empirical basis of the research consisted of 84 employees of special purpose police units. The groups of police officers with different levels of professional self-fulfilment were formed using the questionnaire of "Type and Level of Professional Self-Fulfilment" (Gavrilova, 2015) and by means of cluster analysis (using the method of k - means and the principle of "close neighbours"). The high-level group consisted of 28 respondents, the second group (low-level) included 24 respondents. The medium level of professional self-fulfilment was diagnosed in 32 people who were excluded from further research.

The choice of psychodiagnostic techniques is due to the need for comprehensive diagnosis of decision making factors by police officers. With

this in mind, the Melbourne Decision Making Questionnaire, the Personal Decision Making Factors Questionnaire (T. Kornilova) and the Big Five Personality Questionnaire were used.

The Melbourne Decision Making Questionnaire (MDMQ) is a beta-testing result of the more general Flinders' Decision Making Questionnaire (DMQ) (Halyan, 2011). This psychodiagnostic tool reveals three factors of possible human resistance to stressful situations and decision making in them: 1) awareness of possible risks and possible alternative decisions; 2) the desire to find the best decision; 3) confidence that there is enough time to solve the problem and make decisions. The questionnaire consists of 22 statements, which form four copings: one productive (scale of "Vigilance") and three unproductive (scales of "Avoidance", "Procrastination", "Hypervigilance"). Let's describe them in more detail.

The "Vigilance" scale is a key characteristic of a person when making important decisions, as it includes the person's ability to engage cognitive abilities in situations of uncertainty and complexity. It reveals the ability of the individual to clarify and analyse possible resolutions of the problem and take the most successful option.

The "Avoidance" scale indicates a person's intention and desire to shift responsibility for decision making to other people.

The "Procrastination" scale characterizes a person as being able to postpone a decision for as long as possible, especially if the situation is stressful and tense.

The "Hypervigilance" scale describes a person's excessive effort to make a decision, looking for all possible alternatives, which provokes panic, when the situation requires a quick solution and is extreme.

The Personal Decision Making Factors Questionnaire (PDF-25) (T. Kornilova). This diagnostic tool contains 25 statements that reveal the peculiarities of human decision making through the interpretation and description of two scales. Thus, in particular, the scale of "Rationality" diagnoses the ability and skills of an individual to take a rational approach to solving complex situations that require immediate decision making and require awareness of their consequences. At the same time, the scale of "Risk readiness" demonstrates a person's propensity for risky behaviour, which is expressed through the person's ability to take risks when making decisions and the ability to take responsibility (Kornilova, 2013).

The "Big Five Personality Questionnaire" (R. McCrae, & P. Costa) allows the analysis of five independent variables (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, cooperation, conscientiousness), on the basis of which you can adequately build a psychological portrait of a personality and

determine his/her main characteristics. The test contains 75 statements that describe the behavioural manifestations of a personality (Hromov, 2000).

The psychodiagnostic techniques used in our research are not original. They are adapted versions in Russian and Ukrainian, the use of which is authorized by Ukrainian scientists on the basis of a cooperation agreement between G. S. Kostyuk Institute of Psychology of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine and international public professional organization European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA) (No. 27/134 dated 12.05.1997).

Cluster analysis (using the method of k - means and the principle of “close neighbours”), as well as the rank correlation coefficient of Spearman were used for mathematical and statistical processing.

The research was performed in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Code of Ethics of the Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs (Protocol No. 13 of December 24, 2019). Informed consent was obtained from all participants who during the scientific process were guided by the principles of academic integrity, responsibility, observance of ethical norms and rules established by the law to claim confidence in the results of creative achievements. They could refuse to participate in the research at any time.

4. Results

The results of studies of the relationship between structural components of personality and decision making factors in police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Relationships between structural personality factors and decision making factors in police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment (r)

Scales	Vigilance	Avoidance	Procrasti- nation	Hypervigi- lance
Neuroticism	- 0.157	0.016	0.359*	- 0.349*
Extraversion	- 0.080	- 0.038	- 0.279	0.360*
Openness to experience	- 0.075	- 0.093	- 0.319*	0.375*
Cooperation	0.232	- 0.135	0.129	0.190
Conscien- tiousness	- 0.073	- 0.033	- 0.323*	- 0.366*

Note: * - level of significance is $p \leq 0.05$.

Police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment have significant relationships between the scales of the Big Five Personal

Questionnaire and the Melbourne Decision Making Questionnaire, as evidenced by the results (Table 1).

According to the personal component of “Neuroticism”, a positive relationship was established according to the decision making factors of “Procrastination” ($r = 0.359$, $p \leq 0.05$) and a negative relationship according to the scale of “Hypervigilance” ($r = -0.349$, $p \leq 0.05$). This indicates that police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment more tend to postpone the decision and are more torn between the choice of alternative solutions with the increase of anxiety, irritation and tension. It is natural that during negative emotions about a difficult situation that requires an immediate solution, police officers of this group tend to postpone the decision or to calm down and make the right choice, which in itself is a positive phenomenon. We believe that in times of stress, the best decision for police officers is to calm down, normalize their emotional state and then act immediately, rather than commit impulsive acts that can only harm police operations. It should be noted that in the case of reducing hypervigilance in problematic situations, there is a reduction in negative emotions, which in turn is the prevention of burnout in police officers. Low levels of neuroticism in police officers indicate that they are more resilient to enduring difficulties because they are more emotionally balanced and stable. This ability is not an innate trait and can be acquired by mastering new professional experience in solving problem situations and making appropriate decisions.

According to the personal component of “Extraversion”, a positive relationship was established on the decision making factors of “Hypervigilance” ($r = 0.360$, $p \leq 0.05$). We can say that police officers of the first group with an increase in extraversion, which is expressed through the communicative abilities of the individual, his / her ambitions, enthusiasm and optimism more tend to find the right solution as soon as possible, while trying all possible alternatives, analysing them for expediency and relevance to the situation which is already quite a positive phenomenon. However, this type of decision making behaviour is not common to all police officers, but only to those who have a high level of self-fulfilment and resistance to stress. The extroversion of police officers portrays police officers as active, sociable and willing to take risks in situations that require it, which allows us to portray them as brave and courageous people. Positive police officers are better able to cope with difficulties in the profession, able to enjoy work and show zest for life.

The personal component of “Openness to experience” has a negative relationship on the factors of decision making of “Procrastination”

($r = -0.319$, $p \leq 0.05$) and a positive relationship on the scale of “Hypervigilance” ($r = 0.375$, $p \leq 0.05$). The results suggest that the increase in the tendency of police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment to show imagination and creativity in decision making reduces the desire to postpone decision making and increases the search for possible alternatives. That is, the perception of a difficult situation in terms of aesthetic component and creativity shows a developed outlook in police officers, the ability to generate effective ideas and make the right decisions, which is very important in their service activities. Openness to experience portrays police officers as more sensitive and flexible in stressful situations that require quick resolution and intervention.

According to the personal component of “Conscientiousness”, negative relationships were established on the decision making factors of “Procrastination” ($r = -0.323$, $p \leq 0.05$) and “Hypervigilance” ($r = -0.366$, $p \leq 0.05$). Thus, the increase of social responsibility and emergency control in police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment reduces their desire to postpone the solution of the problem for a more favourable time and the intention to waste time in finding the best solution. That is, police officers of the first group are purposeful, organized and methodical in making decisions, do not show signs of procrastination. The behaviour of police officers of the first group is purposeful; they focus on solving the problem, not on their emotions, which they feel in such situations. The results obtained confirm that the most effective police officer is one who is responsible for the tasks assigned to him / her and is able to show all his / her professionalism in difficult situations. The reliability of a police officer is a guarantee of not only successful professional activities, but also people’s faith in the competence of law enforcement agencies in general.

The results of studies of the relationships between structural factors of personality and decision making factors in police officers with low levels of professional self-fulfilment are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Relationships between structural personality factors and decision making factors in police officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment (r)

Scales	Vigilance	Avoidance	Procrasti- nation	Hyper- vigi- lance
Neuroticism	- 0.074	0.291	0.289	0.135
Extraversion	- 0.022	- 0.172	- 0.085	0.083

Openness to experience	- 0.353*	- 0.143	0.158	0.130
Cooperation	- 0.165	- 0.337*	0.025	0.274
Conscientiousness	- 0.064	- 0.181	0.083	- 0.080

Note: * - level of significance is $p \leq 0.05$.

According to the factor of personality structure such as “Openness to experience” police officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment showed a significantly negative correlation relationship with the decision making factor of “Vigilance” ($r = -0.353$, $p \leq 0.05$). This shows that as the readiness of police officers to use creativity and imagination in the performance of their official duties increases, the ability to rationally consider the possible consequences and prospects of solving a problem situation decreases. That is, it is quite risky to improvise for the second group of police officers during policing, as they may lose the opportunity to qualitatively analyse the situation and draw appropriate conclusions regarding its solution. We believe that the willingness to accept new experiences is a useful quality of the police officer’s personality, but the decisions made on the basis of it should not contradict employment position instructions when responding to offenses, etc.

The personal component of “Cooperation” has a negative relationship with the decision making factor of “Avoidance” ($r = -0.337$, $p \leq 0.05$). Based on the data obtained, we can conclude that in case of growth of prosocial behaviour signs and willingness to cooperate in police officers with low levels of professional self-fulfilment there is a decrease in the desire to avoid the problem and postpone its solution, or even transfer it to another person. There is no doubt that the ability of police officers to make a good impression on other people, a tolerant attitude towards them is able to establish relationships with people who can help in policing, which for good reason, is a high indicator of law enforcement professionalism. We believe that this quality should be further developed and applied in practice, as the partnership between the police and citizens is able to ensure a timely response to offenses and a conduct of appropriate police actions. We are convinced that the development of communication skills, social and emotional intelligence in police officers at the stage of their professional training can develop the personality of a modern police officer who will demonstrate a high level of professionalism, competence and willingness to communicate with citizens, regardless of the status they rank in police operations, whether they are witnesses to the events, or victims or offenders, suspects, etc.

The correlation relationships established in the group of police officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment confirmed our theoretical assumptions that the higher the level of resistance of police officers to stress, adverse events and difficulties, the more they tend to constructively perceive the situation and a decision on its resolution as soon as possible. However, many issues remain that need to be analysed and clarified in more detail. Hence, we conducted correlation analysis between the key factors proposed in the Big Five Questionnaire and the elements of the Personal Decision Making Factors Questionnaire, which particularly describes the features of decision making in problem situations.

The results of studies of the relationships between structural factors of personality and personal decision making factors in police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Relationships between structural personality factors and personal decision making factors in police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment (r)

Scales	Risk readiness	Rationality
Neuroticism	0.418*	0.287
Extraversion	0.299	0.353*
Openness to experience	0.158	- 0.053
Cooperation	0.145	0.053
Conscientiousness	0.374*	0.223

Note: * - level of significance is $p \leq 0.05$.

According to the psychological variable, which describes personal characteristics in decision making of “Risk readiness”, significant positive correlations were established with the following personality characteristics of the “Big Five” as “Neuroticism” ($r = 0.418$, $p \leq 0.05$) and “Conscientiousness” ($r = 0.374$, $p \leq 0.05$). It follows that the growth of personal readiness to take risks in police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment simultaneously occurs with an increase in stress and anxiety, as well as an increase in responsibility for decisions. That is, the police officers of the first group have a natural desire to act, regardless of whether they know all the circumstances of the case or not. These empirical facts are predictable, because the specifics of the activities of special purpose police units are often uncertain and obscure, so they are accustomed to act and make decisions at the place. According to the Big Five model, a person’s neurotic state is perceived as showing signs of aggression and irritability. It can be assumed that police officers tend to consciously set themselves up aggressively before a special operation, thus setting themselves up for work and coping with stress and anxiety. It is well known that police officers of

special purpose units are often forced to use weapons and risk their lives, which leaves an imprint on their identity. Hence, they are characterised by the increased level of neuroticism, negative feelings and aggressive behaviour enhancing in situations of increased risk and responsibility, when police officers are forced to show courage and bravery.

Another psychological variable, which indicates the readiness of the individual to consider and analyse the situation before making a final decision is “rationality” establishing positive significant relationship with the personality trait of “Extraversion” ($r = 0.353, p \leq 0.05$). We can assume that growth of the readiness to rationally consider the situation, anticipate all the negative consequences and make a probable scenario of events is accompanied by increased optimism about the positive outcome of the special operation. We assume that police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment have high cognitive and intellectual abilities to qualitatively analyse a problem situation, which is confirmed by such a personality trait as extroversion. Thus, the ability to quickly analyse a problem situation and make the most effective decision is very important for special purpose police officers.

It is interesting that the representatives of the high level of professional self-fulfilment have a desire to attract their own resources in the fight against stress and solving complex problems, which in itself is a pretty good indicator of the success of this group of police officers. Based on this, it was important to find out exactly how police officers who have a low level of professional self-fulfilment are willing to take risks and rationalize. The results of studies of the relationships between structural factors of personality and personal decision making factors in police officers with low levels of professional self-fulfilment are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Relationships between structural personality factors and personal decision making factors in police officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment (r)

Scales	Risk readiness	Rationality
Neuroticism	- 0.191	0.154
Extraversion	- 0.254	- 0.162
Openness to experience	- 0.378*	- 0.045
Cooperation	- 0.284	- 0.388*
Conscientiousness	- 0.148	0.041

Note: * - level of significance is $p \leq 0.05$.

“Risk readiness” decision making factor that indicates a person’s readiness to take risks is negatively correlated with the characteristics of a personality such as “Openness to experience” ($r = -0.378, p \leq 0.05$). Police

officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment who show growth of personal readiness for self-regulation, which is most evident in situations that require risk, are simultaneously characterised by a decrease in the desire to use creativity and untested behaviours. That is, in situations of risk and danger police officers of the second group prefer more well-known and most effective ways to respond to crime. This circumstance is quite natural, because people who have a low level of resistance to difficulties feel better when they solve problems the way they are used to, insofar as innovation is an additional stress for them, which reduces their effectiveness. As a rule, police officers have no right to make a mistake. Their actions had to be coordinated, lightning fast and effective, because the results of special operations depend on their efficiency, professionalism and experience.

“Rationality” decision making factor that reflects the individual’s ability to consider the situation before taking action is negatively correlated with the personality characteristic of “Cooperation” ($r = -0.388$, $p \leq 0.05$). This shows that as a tendency to rationalize before making a decision in a group of police officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment grows, the readiness to communicate and cooperate with other peoples decreases. We understand that police officers who are accustomed to using the most proven methods during special operations tend to rely on their knowledge, experience and intuition, which reduces their ability to communicate effectively with other participants in police operations. We believe that this result can be seen as a positive circumstance, because the police officer copes with a heavy workload and agitation anxiety at work in this way. Involving other people in their activities can cause them to fear and doubt the success of the operation and its positive solution. They are not inclined to spend their own resources on making a positive impression on others, as their priority is the quality of professional tasks. Hence, we assume that they reserve the right to make the final decision in a problem situation and rely solely on their own experience.

5. Limits and Discussion

Meyer (2018) agrees that a police officer feels a heavy burden of responsibility for making a decision that can negatively affect his/her life. Hence, the task of developing appropriate training programs or career enhancement courses for police officers, which will be aimed at developing the necessary competencies that have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the decision (including critical skills, openness to new experiences, ability to self-analysis and reflection, etc.). Quite often, the

success of the decisions made in the professional activities of special purpose police units requires them to be able to go beyond the rules of law and regulations. Such a model of behaviour requires the police officer to show courage, because he/she will have to defend and stand his/her ground. The police officer must also take responsibility for his/her decisions. After all, it is useful to realize that the level of knowledge and information at the time of the decision does not provide any other alternatives, even if later the decision may be wrong.

Wigsten (2020) also sought to deepen the understanding of how police officers make decisions in crisis situations. Having considered the examples of real cases of decision making by police officers in the line of their duties, the scientist concludes that the same stressful situations are perceived differently by police officers, in one case easily and quickly, and in another – difficult and slowly. It should be emphasized that stress is a common element in the police profession and negatively affects their ability to act in connection with the performance of their official duties. The most stressful factors that increase tension in decision making can be pressure, unclear circumstances, many tasks that need to be performed simultaneously, and secondary distractions. In addition, the outcome of the problem situation depends on the resources of the police officer, his/her viability and the level of self-confidence, which help him/her choose decisions from all possible options and reduce stress from the decision, which may not always be right.

According to the researchers (Fedorenko, Dotsenko, Okhrimenko, Radchenko, & Gorbenko, 2020; Larsson, Nilsson, & Waaler, 2018), the specifics of police activities involve constant stress related to decision making situations in their practice. Making quick and correct decisions in these circumstances places high demands on the ability to make decisions, and this ability takes time to gradually develop through learning and experience. At the same time, Pavlov (2017) noted that police decision making upon arrival at the scene has its own time interval, which begins from the moment of arrival on call and up to the intervention in the situation itself. Along with that, Myloslavs'ka (2021) expands the existing ideas about the psychological directions of the research on the specifics of decision making. The data obtained by the researcher represent that more pronounced tendencies to maximization and satisfaction are observed in respondents with a high level of proactivity, and a low level of proactivity is reflected in a more significant tendency to minimization.

Boiko and Filonenko (2021) in the theoretical study of scientific papers concluded that the types of orientations in difficult situations and

inclinations in decision making are psychological prerequisites for coping behaviour, the organization of which determines professional productivity and personal fulfilment of police officers. Yevdokimova and Ponomarenko (2018) emphasize that the developed social intelligence of police officers is a kind of personal resource in successful professional activities, as it allows police officers to correctly read and interpret verbal signals and reactions of their interlocutor, which significantly improves policing and facilitates decision making. The obtained data show that the high level of communicative tolerance in police officers contributes to the effective analysis of the conversation with the interlocutor, adaptation in uncertain situations and the tendency to make quick decisions based on the information received.

6. Conclusions

Our research of the specifics of decision making by police officers in the context of their personal characteristics is not final, but the data obtained allowed us to draw a number of significant conclusions. Theoretical investigations demonstrated the availability of numerous literature sources on the outlined issue. At that time, quite a few studies were devoted to the research of the peculiarities of decision making, especially in people with different levels of self-fulfilment.

It was found that police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment tend to mobilize their own resources in problem situations, but sometimes because of this, they may lose the ability to make timely decisions and often doubt the correctness of the choice. Their focus on contacts is accompanied by an excessive search for possible solutions to the problem, through a detailed understanding and analysis of the situation. At the same time, they are characterised by their readiness to make decisions, using creativity and personal touch, which leads to a thorough consideration of the problem, rather than postponing it. This group of police officers prefers independent decision making in critical situations, as the principle of partnership between the police and the community in the case of special police operations does not play a significant role, insofar as actions must be based on appropriate instructions and personal experience of police officers. In addition, the behaviour of police officers with a high level of professional self-fulfilment is characterized by prosociality and responsibility, due to the peculiarities of decisions, because they do not postpone them and do not lose valuable time, considering all possible alternatives that describe them to be able to take risk judging from the specific situation.

It is determined that the use of innovations in activities of police officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment leads to a decrease in their meticulous attention to the problem and readiness for unpredictable actions. It is clear that uncertainty evokes frustrated feelings, which to some extent deter police officers from making hasty decisions. They tend to communicate with other participants in police operations, but this phenomenon occurs when they tend to shift responsibility to other people, appealing that they are better competent and experienced in these matters. We assume that this phenomenon occurs when police officers with a low level of self-fulfilment have to demonstrate independent behaviour and take responsibility for making non-standard decisions. Accordingly, this is accompanied by doubts and concerns about their correctness.

Our results also allow us to summarize that police officers with a low level of professional self-fulfilment have different results from police officers with a high-level, which confirms our assumption about the ability of professionals to use individual psychological resources to deal with stress and difficult life as well as work situations. Hence, it is especially important to further study this issue and develop appropriate practical recommendations that can be implemented in the process of professional training or retraining of special purpose police units.

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The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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