

## **Personality Destructions in the Professional Sphere: Subjective Control as a Factor of Their Overcoming**

**Tatiana N. Scherbakova<sup>1\*</sup>, Tatiana V. Stashkova<sup>1</sup>, Sergey N. Ryagin<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Don State Technical University, Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation

<sup>2</sup> Moscow Financial and Industrial University "Synergy", Moscow, Russian Federation

\*Corresponding author: [tatiananik@list.ru](mailto:tatiananik@list.ru)

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### **Abstract**

The introduction presents the substantiation of the relevance of the study of subjective factors of personality destructiveness and emotional exhaustion in the professional space in the conditions of uncertainty. The results of analyzing the research of internal predictors that cause the emergence of destructive transformations and emotional exhaustion of personality in the situation of modern risks are presented. The aspects of negative influence of complex and entropic professional environment on personality adaptation and psychological well-being are described. The barriers of successful adaptation of personality to new requirements with different level of subjective control are shown. The substantive characteristic of psychological effects of the influence of professional socialization on the psychological well-being of the personality or the formation of destructions is given. The novelty of the study lies in the identification and description of subjective control as a factor of effective overcoming of personality destructions in the professional sphere of different orientation. The Results section shows the specificity of the pattern of manifestation of indicators of the formation of components of subjective control of personality in representatives of technical and pedagogical professions. The analysis of the results of the empirical study of the components of the subjective control system as a factor in the prevention of personality destructions in the process of immersion in the profession is described. The Discussion presents a description and interpretation of the results of the empirical study of manifestation of subjective control components and their relationship with the probability of destructive transformations

and emotional exhaustion in persons with different professional orientation. The data of the empirical study show the presence of risks of emotional exhaustion and destructive transformations of personality in the situation of deficits and risks of subjective control. The resource possibilities of subjective control in the prevention of destructive personal transformations under the influence of immersion in the profession are shown for the first time. The Conclusion shows the clustering of psychological factors related to the peculiarities of the system of subjective control, influencing the emergence of emotional exhaustion of personality in the conditions of modern risks of uncertainty. The idea that the effectiveness of psychological assistance programs in overcoming the state of emotional exhaustion and destruction in the professional sphere is determined by the level of mobilization of subjective control resources to achieve success and psychological well-being is emphasized.

### **Keywords**

subjective control, personality, professional deformation, destructions, responsibility, controllability of life, transformations

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### **Introduction**

Today, a person who is developing, self-efficient, promising, and capable of pre-adaptation is in demand. In this regard, it is interesting to study possible predictors of regression and stagnation of personality development, mechanisms of their action and ways to overcome them. Professional activity occupies a significant place in the life of a modern person and represents the leading form of the subject's activity, so the formation of personality here is the most intensive. Professional formation, being built into the system of life priorities, goals and values, influences all spheres of the subject's life activity, setting new "tasks for meaning", endowing activity with a special prognostic meaning, setting the meaning matrix of building productive motivational intents of the personality (Abakumova, 2019; Maunz, Glaser, 2024). In modern conditions of increased mobility and global challenges (e.g., special working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic) (Toscano, Bigliardi, Plevaya, Kamneva, Zappalà, 2022) the success and psychological preservation of the subject of professional activity is associated with the ability to maximize the use of their potential, initiating developmental formats and stimulating the formation of the ability

## GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY, PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

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to pre-adaptation (Asmolov, Shekhter, Chernorizov, 2017). Especially the success of personality socialization in the professional sphere is associated with the improvement of the system of subjective control that contributes to the implementation of life plans. As a result of immersion in the space of professional life, over time there are transformations of personal life attitudes, attitudes to oneself, others and the world. At the same time, these transformations can be both constructive and destructive, which is determined by a complex of individual-psychological predictors.

Productivity of adaptation is determined, according to our hypothesis, by the level of development and integration of the system of subjective control of personality. Subjective control of personality consists of 3 blocks (Shcherbakova, 2020):

1. The strategic block is formed by values, meanings, meaning-life orientations of the individual, which become the subjective basis of transformations and set the strategy of movement. The role of this block of activity control increases in the situation of modern risks and the need to build sustainable economic and social systems.
2. The tactical block is based on the professional and social competence of the individual and promotes effective coping in complex and problematic situations.
3. The operational block is based on the subject's autopsychological competence and allows to manage psychological and emotional states.

Deficits of development of subjective control system can contribute to destructive character of personality changes in the context of profession. At the same time, as emotional exhaustion is formed, strategic, tactical and operational control mismatch occurs. This leads to the fact that declarations of personality cannot be realized in practice and its self-efficacy decreases, pre-adaptation becomes more difficult. From the point of view of modern psychology, personality development acts as a unified system of progressive and regressive transformations, but their ratio in the process of life and professional path is constantly changing.

Personality destructions in the professional sphere provoke rapid fatigue and depletion of personal resource (Hu, Zhang, Zhai, Wang, Gan, Wang, Wang, Wang, Yi, 2024), change of the established structure of activity and communication, which negatively affects not only productivity and interaction with colleagues (Slowiak, Jay, 2023), but also has a wider range of influence on different spheres of human activity and psychological well-being (Povarenkov, 2021; Rodina, 2019).

Destructions that arise in the process of long-term performance of the same professional activity are a consequence of insufficiently formed ability to personal growth, reflect deficits of creativity, autopsychological competence and transformative activity, insufficient understanding of motivational intention. In the conditions of modern risks, a personality oriented to personal growth, possessing skills of self-transformative activity and self-control, having a clear idea of the meaningful purpose of the undertaken efforts for the future, has more chances to preserve his psychological well-being and

performance. Personal values, clear goals, expressed subjective position, personal resistance to entropy and multifactor stress as attributes of modern life become a kind of psychological buffer, mitigating destructive influences in a situation of uncertainty (Salikhova, 2020, Soloviev, 2019) .

Professional being is an integral part of beingness of a modern person and, accordingly, success, demand and preservation of personality as a professional are significant factors in maintaining high self-esteem and psychological well-being. Professional activity, in general, has a positive impact on the subject, facilitating development and providing a platform for the realization of their potential. At the same time, in conditions of uncertainty, multifactor stress, a person faces unfavorable conditions of activity realization, high tension, abrupt changes in requirements, overloads, which makes special demands on personality stability, ability to choose constructive coping strategies. Otherwise, deformations, psychosomatic disorders, various developmental disorders, intrapersonal crises, self-esteem and self-relationship problems may occur. The problem of constructiveness or destructiveness of personal transformations in professional life is directly related to the psychological safety of personality and the ability to survive in a situation of uncertainty and multitasking (Karpova, Drynkina, 2022; Solovyova, 2020). In this regard, researchers now pay special attention to the factors of psychological self-regulation in the workplace (Barabamshchikova, Kuznetsova, 2022).

Destructive disorders in emotional exhaustion in professional activity are manifested in the fact that some links in the structure of individual activity fall out of the field of subjective control of a person, due to the rapid onset of fatigue and overstrain of the subject, he misses the opportunity to maximally realize the acquired skills and abilities. In the situation of emotional exhaustion the personality has a decrease in the function of self-control, forecasting and goal-setting, which prevents the build-up of self-actualization in the time perspective. The study of destructive deformations expressed in the syndrome of emotional exhaustion in the context of the modern situation of the subject's professional activity realization is important (Shekhovtsova, 2020). Destructive transformations of personality trigger psychological defenses, minimize subjective involvement in activity, which in certain circumstances leads to a decrease in performance, professional mistakes and extreme situations. Non-constructive transformations of personality in the process of realization of professional activity lead to the fact that it ceases to meet the modern standard of a specialist and turns out to be unclaimed. In empirical studies of modern psychologists it is shown that the predictors of professional deformation can be associated with the contradiction between objective and subjective goals of activity, personal meaning and significance of what is happening (Alessandri, Perinelli, 2018). Here, the developed strategic control allows harmonizing the situation at the semantic level, setting new vectors of development, progressive transformation, and the operational one makes it possible to preserve emotional stability and emotional self-efficacy, allowing to resist emotional exhaustion

Psychologists classify professional deformations, distinguishing their different types: semantic, motivational, cognitive, personal and conative. Today, emotional exhaustion in psychology is considered as an independent phenomenon, the result of the negative impact of the profession on the personality. Emotional exhaustion can cause regression of self-realization in the professional space, significantly reduce the status of psychological well-being of the individual, negatively affect its effectiveness. The phenomenon of exhaustion can transform professional self-concept and the image of the subject's future, provoking personality destructions and becoming a significant obstacle on the way to success. Therefore, it is of great importance to develop autopsychological competence, the ability to take care of one's psychological well-being, to support the development of personal characteristics that reduce the likelihood of emotional exhaustion (Pacheco, 2020).

Personality destructions in professional activity are expressed in the violation of goal-setting, problems with reflection of the situation, deficits of planning and forecasting, lack of control and regulation, moreover, professionally significant qualities can be significantly distorted. The expressed system of subjective control of the personality is associated with the predisposition of the subject to attribute responsibility for the results of activity to himself, to consider himself the master of his life, imagining that life can be manageable if one shows adequate self-control (Shcherbakova, 2019). The resource of the system of subjective control as a factor of effective overcoming personality destructions in the professional sphere is associated, first of all, with the fact that internality correlates with the ability to make decisions independently, purposefulness, ability to help and support oneself.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the expression of components of the subjective control system in persons with different professional orientation and differences in the expression of emotional exhaustion indicators.

## Methods

The study involved teachers and representatives of technical specialties, total sample size 354 people. The sample included respondents with emotional exhaustion indicators higher than average values. The idea of the sample formation was to be able to compare the studied variables in representatives of professional orientations that are far enough from each other (Shinkarenko, 2012).

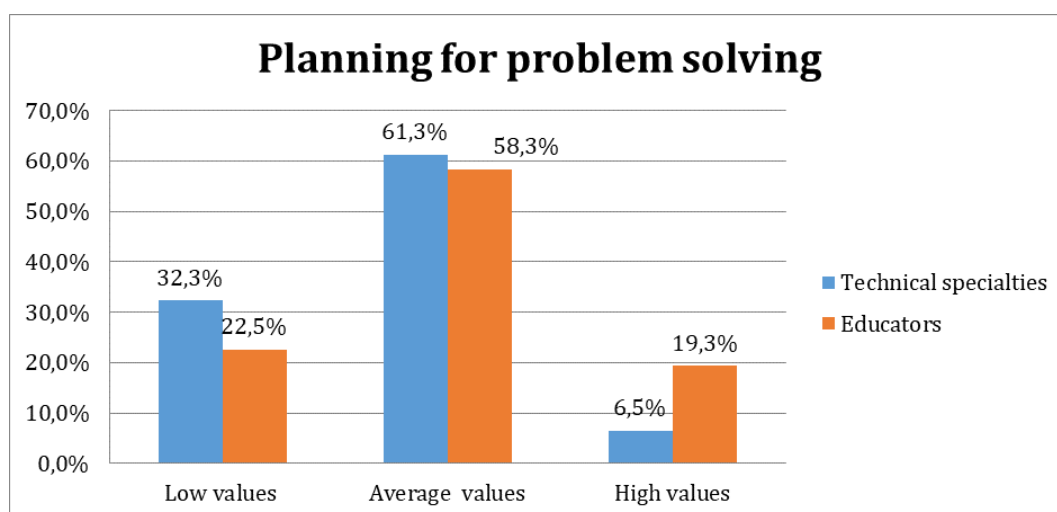
The following methods were used in the research: Diagnostics of professional exhaustion by K. Maslach, S. Jackson (adaptation of I. E. Vorobyanova (2008)); Coping Strategies questionnaire by R. Lazarus (adaptation of WCQ methodology) (Kryukova, Kuftyak, 2007); Meaning-Life Orientations test by D. A. Leontiev. This toolkit allows us to get an idea of the expression of certain components of the system of subjective control of personality. The indicators of certain scales were chosen as indicators: "problem-solving planning", "self-control", "acceptance of responsibility" from questionnaire "Coping

Strategies" by R. Lazarus (adaptation of WCQ methodology); "locus of control I-I (I am the master of life)", "locus of control I-life (controllability of life)" from the methodology "Meaning-Life Orientations" by D. A. Leontiev. These scales provide necessary information about the expression of components of the system of subjective control of personality.

## Results

As a result of the conducted empirical study, interesting data were obtained. In the process of diagnostics using the questionnaire "Coping Strategies" by R. Lazarus (adaptation of WCQ methodology), the levels of expression of the indicator "problem-solving planning" were revealed (Fig. 1).

**Figure 1**  
*Expression of problem-solving planning skills among educators and technicians*

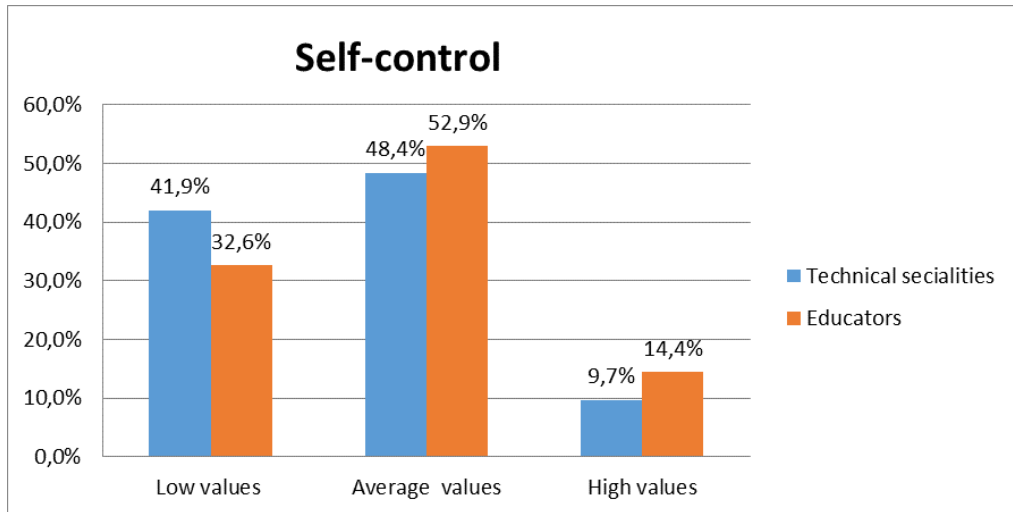


From the obtained data we can conclude that the majority of respondents of both groups (61% and 58%) have average values of expressiveness of the ability to plan problem solving. The majority of teachers and technical specialists, in general, know how to solve tasks in crisis situations and plan the process of finding a way out. At the same time, the respondents of the "Teachers" group have fewer low values (22%), while the technical specialists have 32%, and a higher percentage of high values 19% vs. 6%. The analysis of diagnostic data allows us to see the risks associated with the greater expression of low values of skills to plan problem solving in situations of difficulty.

The data on the scale "Self-control" show that half of respondents of both groups have moderately expressed self-control and this is a resource position. At the same time, the representatives of technical specialties (41,9 %) have low values and only 9%

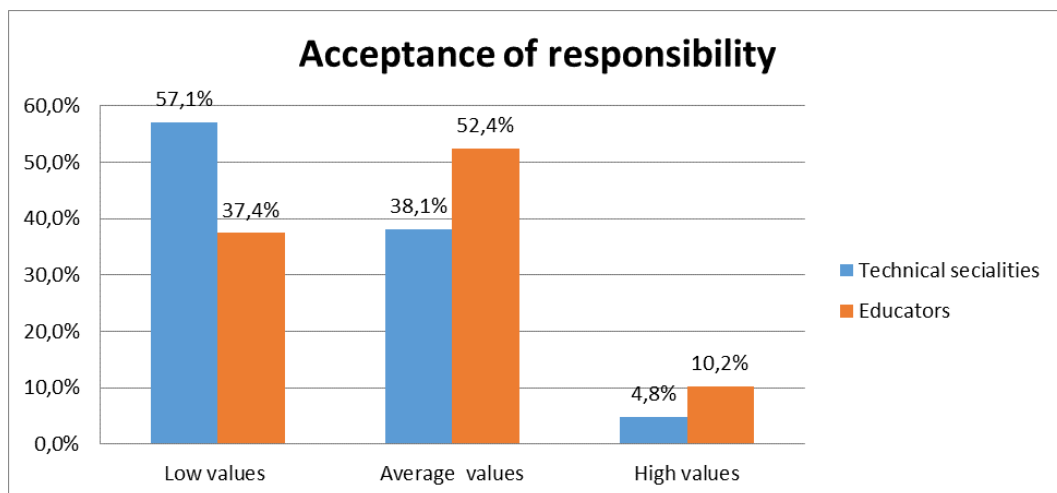
demonstrated high self-control, here there is a risk of emotional exhaustion associated with the deficit of self-control (Fig. 2).

**Figure 2**  
*Expression of self-control indicators in teachers and technicians*



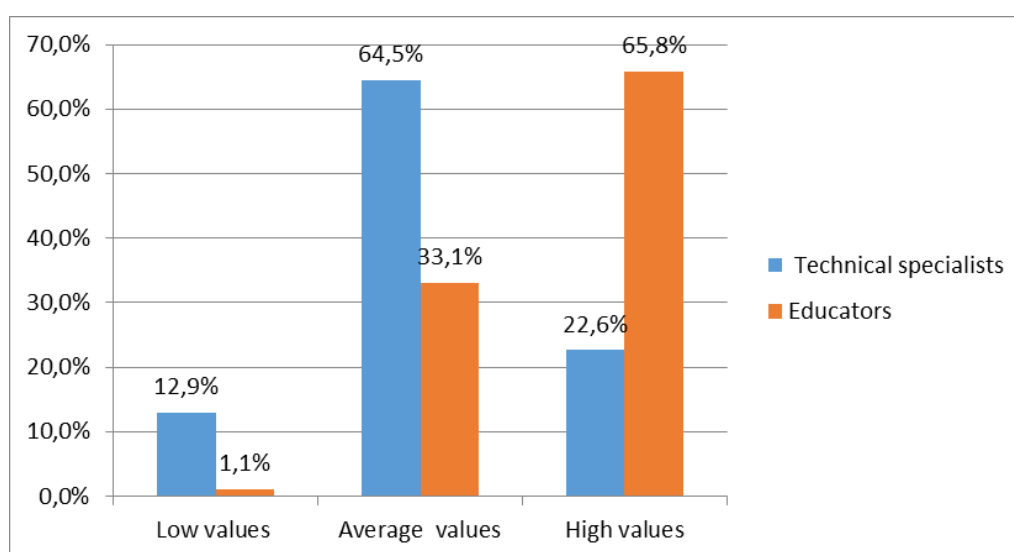
The data on the scale "Acceptance of responsibility" (Fig. 3) show that teachers have a higher degree of readiness to accept responsibility compared to technical professionals. Obviously, this is due to the peculiarities of the professional profile: teachers are more often faced with the professional situation of the need to make decisions, while technical professionals are forced to follow the technology and act according to the algorithm.

**Figure 3**  
*Indicators of readiness to accept responsibility in educators and technicians*



As a result of the study using the test of meaning-life orientations (MLO) by D. A. Leontiev, diagnostic data were obtained regarding locus of control I - I and locus of control I - life, reflecting the subject's ideas about the possibility of being the master of his life and managing it in the conditions of modern risks. Comparative data on the indicated indicators are reflected graphically in Figures 4 and 5.

**Figure 4**  
*Indicators of locus of control I - I (I am the master of life) in teachers and technical specialists*

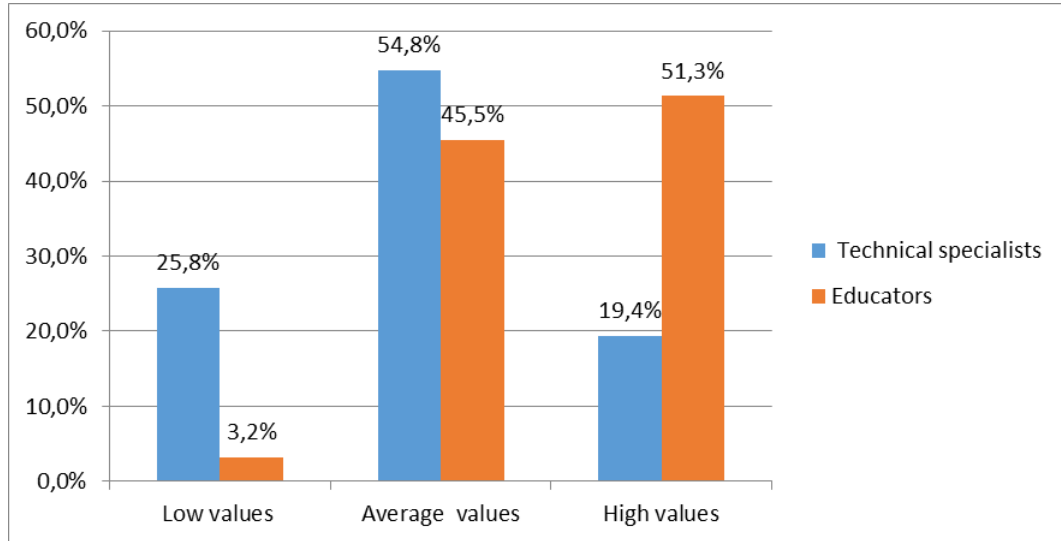


The data indicate that more than half of the respondents of both groups believe that they can realize all their plans, as it depends on their own efforts, an insignificant part of 12% and 1% – prefer to rely on fate and specific circumstances. At the same time, the position of teachers is somewhat biased and reflects rather a declaration and desire to be the master of life than the real state of affairs. This is obviously due to the peculiarity of the pedagogical profession, where the professional, realizing the educational function, asserts the idea of the need to be an independent subject and master of life. Mythologized idea of the ability to hypercontrol can be a risk in terms of the development of professional destruction of the teacher's personality.

The picture of life manageability indicators (Fig. 5) looks more realistic in the group of specialists of technical profile: 25% – low level, 54.8% – medium and high in 19.4% of respondents. The group of "Educators" showed higher results: 51.3% - high level and 45.5% – medium level. Thus, they believe that everything that happens to them depends on their competence, abilities, purposefulness, is determined by their desire and activity. In a situation when overestimated expectations regarding the manageability of life are not justified, intra-personal conflict and destructive transformations of personality can develop.

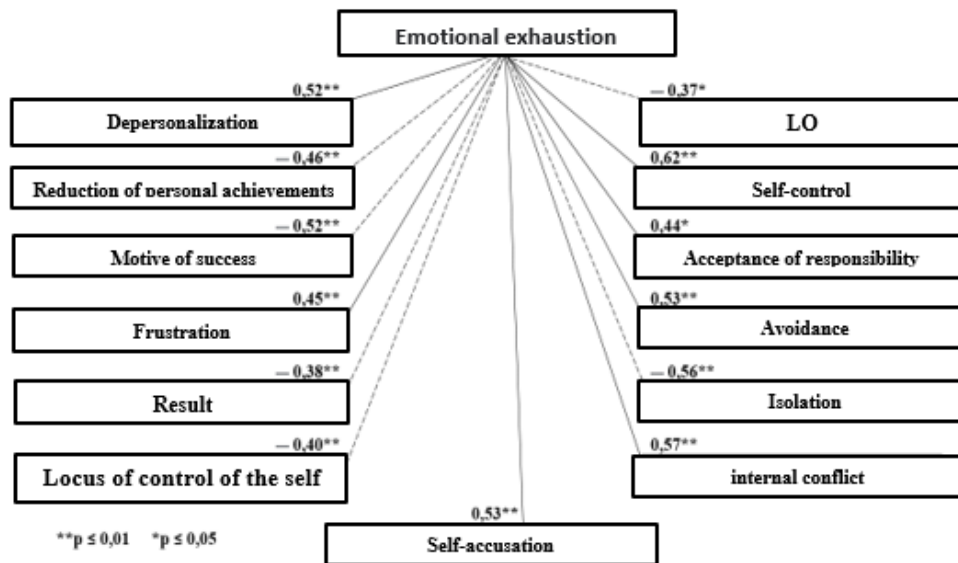


**Figure 5**  
*Indicators of locus of control self - life (controllability of life) in teachers and technical specialists*



Correlations between the scale "Emotional exhaustion" and scales of emotional exhaustion, LOT, coping strategies and motivation to achieve success/failure, frustration in professional's technical profile (Fig. 6).

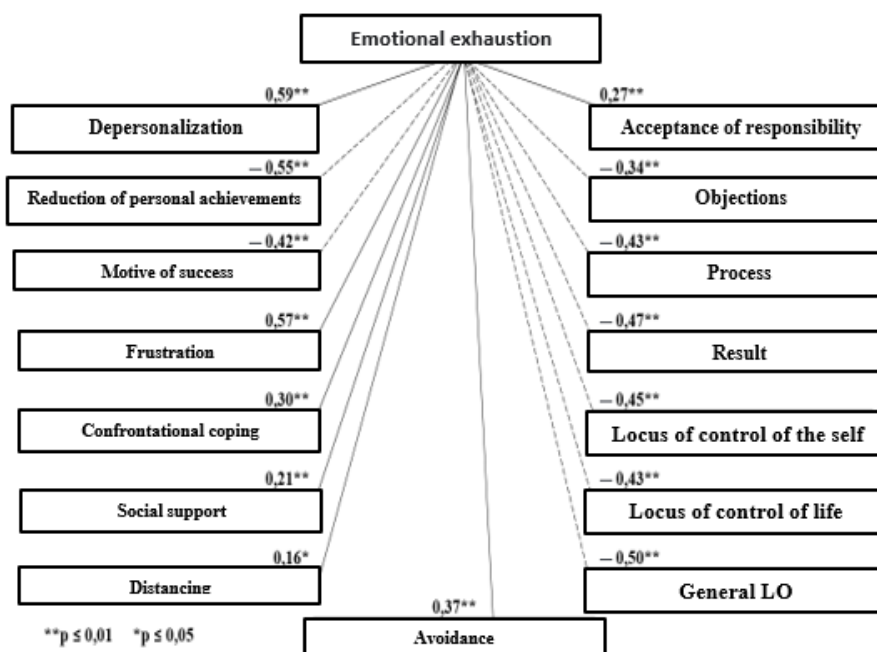
**Figure 6**  
*Correlations between indicators of emotional exhaustion and control in technical specialists*



As the analysis of correlations has shown, emotional exhaustion has significant direct correlations with self-accusation, internal conflict, avoidance and depersonalization; at the same time, there is a significant direct correlation with self-control (0.62) and a moderate direct correlation with acceptance of responsibility. This picture reflects the peculiarities of the state of personality in the situation of exhaustion: at the value of preserving one's status there is a mythologization of the ability of self-control and a desire to rigidly control or mask one's emotional experiences. Against the background of avoidance and frustration respondents showing the presence of emotional exhaustion demonstrate an inverse correlation between emotional exhaustion and achievement motive, as well as locus of control of the self, which reflects the projections of exhaustion state in technical specialists.

Correlations between the scale "Emotional exhaustion" and scales of emotional exhaustion, LOT, coping strategies and motivation to achieve success/failure, frustration in the group of teachers are presented in Fig. 7.

**Figure 7**  
 Correlations between indicators of emotional exhaustion and control in educators.



The analysis of correlations of emotional exhaustion in the group of teachers shows that this indicator has significant direct correlations with depersonalization, frustration, insignificant – with avoidance, confrontation and acceptance of responsibility. At the same time, there is an inverse correlation at the significance level between the reduction of personal achievements and the meaningfulness of life and a less significant inverse

correlation emotional exhaustion – locus of control of the self; locus of control of life. Thus, against the background of frustration and depersonalization, a teacher in the state of emotional exhaustion loses to a certain extent a sense of control over his internal and external manifestations and life in general.

## Discussion

The analysis of the obtained empirical data allows us to see the differences in the development of components of subjective control in persons of different professional orientation. It is interesting that the highest indicators of expression of components of the subjective control system are found in representatives of the pedagogical profession, in which a specialist can make decisions independently and performs work that requires endurance and patience, the ability to control oneself (Holmström, Tuominen, Laasanen, Veermans, 2023). Lower indicators are found in representatives of technical professions that require high qualification, the need to act within the framework of certain professional regulations and technical assignments, which provides insufficient opportunities to demonstrate independence in the management of the production process.

Understanding and systematization of resources and risks associated with the peculiarities of the development of the system of subjective control as a factor of effective overcoming personality destructions in the professional sphere allows us to identify the focuses of psychological support of the subject of activity aimed at the formation of his psychological safety in conditions of increased stressogenicity of the environment (Trofimova, Kuzmina, 2022).

Resources of subjective control in the prevention of emotional exhaustion and other personality destructions are acceptance of responsibility and the ability to control one's activity in difficult situations, optimizing efforts to achieve the result, which allows to be more successful and psychologically well.

Risks associated with the peculiarities of the individual system of subjective control include the following items:

- deficits in self-control;
- doubts about the self-efficacy of the self as a subject of responsibility and regulation of activity;
- The mythologizing of one's own ability to control life.

A subject with insufficiently high subjective control cannot directly relate his/her behavior to life events and feels that he/she is not in control of his/her life. At the same time, the relationship between locus of control and goal setting in professional activity can be quite ambiguous. In their study E. A. Pronenko, D. V. Vashumirskaya found that no significant correlations were found between locus of control and the characteristics of achieving professional goals. However, among those who set themselves goals for the workday shift the level of internality turned out to be higher, which may indicate some

tendency: people with internal locus of control are more inclined to set goals for the workday (Pronenko, Vashumirskaya, 2023).

The success of professional socialization of subjects with different orientation in the situation of modern risks can be significantly influenced by the level of productive activity and unfavorable emotional background of activity. Therefore, it is important to model the implementation of complex psychological assistance focused on stimulating the development of self-control and self-regulation, the formation of motivational intension of successful pre-adaptation, the formation of attitudes of success, the development of skills of self-initiation of positive emotions (Bogdan, Masilova, 2022).

Expansion of the resource of subjective control and integration of its strategic, tactical and operational levels is essential for increasing the effectiveness of prevention of destructive transformations of personality. In modern conditions the role of appropriate programs of psychological support of constructive socialization of personality in the space of professional life of the subject increases. This is associated, first of all, with the need to develop personal stability, antifragility and stable subjective picture of the world as opposed to external uncertainty (Ukrainitseva, 2021). The content of such programs involves working with the subject's personal meaning and motivational intents as components of strategic subjective control. development of professional skills of self-control and skills to optimize the course of functional and psychoemotional states. Individual and group work in this direction allows to increase personal resistance to destruction and allows to reduce the influence of stress factors in the situation of modern risks. The resource of subjective control in relation to the prevention and correction of personality destructions is associated with the fact that this psychological new formation allows to feel oneself the master of the situation, capable of managing the situation, thereby reducing the stress associated with the increasing demands of multitasking activity.

## ***Conclusion***

Thus, the results of the study allow us to conclude about the significance of the relationship "quality of subjective control - severity of personality destructiveness". This relationship is two-sided: on the one hand, at the stage of personality destructions in professional activity the ability to adequately use the possibilities of subjective control in a situation decreases; on the other hand, the deficits of subjective control make the personality more vulnerable to destructive external influences and stress.

There are differences in the expression of components of the subjective control system in specialists of different professional orientation, demonstrating the presence of emotional exhaustion: teachers and workers of the technical sphere. Obviously, it is connected with the peculiarities of the professional activity model and requirements to the format of its subject's activity.

Optimization of autopsychological activity of the subject, formation of supersituational forms of control and regulation, development of the system of subjective control,

integration and harmonization of its components can be singled out as productive directions of overcoming professional destructions of personality.

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## Author Contribution

**Tatiana Nikolaevna Scherbakova** – conceptualization, methodology, project administration, final approval of the article version for publication.

**Tatiana Vladimirovna Stashkova** – conducting the research, data analysis, description of the results obtained and statistical processing of data.

**Sergey Nikolayevich Ryagin** – interpretation of results, statistical processing of results, formulation of conclusions of the study.

## Author Details

**Tatiana Nikolaevna Shcherbakova** – Dr. Sci. (Psychology), Professor, Professor of the Department of "General and Consultative Psychology", "Don State Technical University"; SPIN-code: 7801-5645; AuthorID: 630739; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4114-185X>; e-mail: [tatiananik@list.ru](mailto:tatiananik@list.ru)

**Tatiana Vladimirovna Stashkova** – Postgraduate student of the Department of "General and Consultative Psychology", "Don State Technical University", Rostov-on-Don; WOS ResearcherID: ABG-5445-2021; SPIN-code: 2958-4835; AuthorID: 1205218; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1966-4195>; e-mail: [t.v.stashkova@mail.ru](mailto:t.v.stashkova@mail.ru)

**Sergey Nikolaevich Ryagin** – Dr. Sci. (Pedagogy), Non-State Educational Private Institution of Higher Education "Moscow Financial-Industrial University "Synergy", Moscow, Russian Federation; SPIN-code: 4921-3613; AuthorID: 684471; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0426-1825>; e-mail: [Ryagin\\_sn@mail.ru](mailto:Ryagin_sn@mail.ru)

## **Conflict of Interest Information**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.