

**Osipova A. A.****On the Issue of the Functional Analysis of a Psychological Barrier**

The article focuses on functions of a psychological barrier which are considered within the framework of various foreign psychological schools and psychological schools of our country. The author concludes that studying and analyzing functions of a psychological barrier enable the researcher to use the obtained data not only for developing a psychological theory but also for practical application.

Keywords: *psychological barrier, functional analysis, personality development.*

At the present time the “psychological barrier” concept is considered as a universal category in psychological science [12]. At the same time such questions as the origin of a psychological barrier, mechanisms of its formation and transformation, barrier functions are insufficiently known.

The majority of psychological researches consider the typology of psychological barriers in the context of the general psychological (B. G. Ananyev, S. L. Rubenstein), socio-psychological (B. D. Parygin, A. K. Markova, A. V. Morozov), activity (A. N. Leontyev, R. H. Shakurov, L. K. Povarnitsyna) and personal (D. M. Zavalishina, R. M. Granovskaya, A. Hall, P. Hill) approaches.

The “psychological barrier” phenomenon has various sense filling in native and foreign psychology. Thus, functions of a psychological barrier are ambiguously understood and treated in foreign psychological science and in the psychology of our country.

Foreign psychological science considers the psychological barrier category (and, respectively, its functions) within psychoanalytic, behavioral, cognitive and humanistic approaches.

Representatives of the psychoanalytic school consider that when a person faces a barrier this fact instinctively activates defense mechanisms which protect the inner self from an external or internal threat. According to S. Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality the person's behavior, all psychodynamic processes are developed in result of interaction of instinctual drives and barriers, external and internal. For the description of human behavior S. Freud uses such categories as “cathexis” (which is treated as the mental energy of the instinctive sphere which is directed on certain objects and demands a discharge) and “anticathexis” (which is treated as the barrier impeding the direct satisfaction of an instinct). According to S. Freud, the purpose of



any form of human behavior is reduction of tension caused by an unpleasant accumulation of energy, and he points to two main ways of reducing the tension: the first consists in interaction with the problem situation which has caused anxiety, and in overcoming difficulties which leads to reducing the possibility of a repeat of the situation. The second way consists in distortion or denial of the very problem situation and S. Freud treated such a behavior as a "psychological defense". Thus, from the psychoanalyst's point of view a psychological barrier is shown in the form of psychological defense against unpleasant experience. Psychological defense is the main function of a psychological barrier in this approach [10].

Within the framework of the behavioral school they consider that actions on overcoming the obstacles, which bring success, cause a feeling of satisfaction, positive emotions. Further such actions are imprinted, acquired and the individual easily reproduces in the future [11]. Therefore, forming adaptive behavior is main function of a psychological barrier in this approach.

Within cognitive psychology there is a representation that formation of a certain structure of knowledge presupposes a person's conflict with contradictory information, thus there is either exception of this contradiction of the forming system of knowledge, or revision of available knowledge (cognitions) [9]. Thus, internal psychological barriers influence formation of cognitive schemes of personality.

Within the framework of the humanistic school the developing function is the main function of a barrier. According to Curt Levin, overcoming of internal psychological obstacles raises the person's level of aspiration; thus there is a stimulation of activity and increase in the energy of the person. Overcoming of an internal barrier promotes improvement of the person's spiritual potential, his/her self-actualization and self-realization. According to C. Levin, if the barrier is insuperable, the subject reduces the level of aspiration, weakens or completely loses an initiative [13].

There is no unambiguous view of a psychological barrier functions in the psychology of our country.

N. A. Berstein, a known physiologist of our country who have had studied mechanisms of regulation and manifestation of different types of activity, have assumed that the life activity process is a continuous process of overcoming of environment, and obstacles on the way of movement are powerful sources of activity therefore one of the most important functions of a psychological barrier is a function of mobilization of internal resources of an organism, their realization, definition of a measure and direction of activity [3].

S. M. Nurtdinov specifies that there was a certain dichotomizing view of the psychological barrier function in science. A psychological barrier is considered now positively, now negatively. The positive function of a barrier consists in defense function of personality in a threat situation, and the negative function of a barrier is shown in activity inhibition when there is a barrier on a way of its implementation, "mentality



functions and develops as means of overcoming of barriers. Reflection is not an end in itself, but means" [8, p. 188].

The researcher focuses on the positive function of a barrier which provides personal tolerance, "... it is possible to assume that barriers create prerequisites for development which is carried out in the course of the "deficiency" elimination: in mentality there are such changes which make up for the deficiency of internal resources necessary for overcoming of hindrances. These changes are stimulated not only from the outside by a subject of need, but also from within. The subject experiences the mobilization of internal "forces" occurring under the influence of a barrier as a state of tension, stress, discomfort. This is a deviation from a normal mode of functioning. Development leads to restoration of the broken balance and stress coping or reduction. The aspiration to balance is one of general tendencies of an organism, a basis of stability of personality. Increase of internal resources, their restructuring makes it possible to overcome resistance of one or another obstacle that, in turn, leads to personality development" [8, p. 189].

Considering functions of barriers, A. K. Markova also distinguishes two functions as the main: a constructive (positive) and negative which include a number of auxiliary functions.

She attributes to the constructive function:

- 1) indicator (shows feedback of the quality of influence);
- 2) stimulating, mobilizing.

The negative function of a barrier includes:

- 1) restraining (complicates advancement, reduces self-efficiency);
- 2) destructive (destroying) which includes motives of avoiding, refusal [6].

According to O. V. Belokhvostova, psychological barriers carry out three functions: creative, inhibitive and suppressing.

The creative function consists in mobilization of resources for overcoming the resistance of the environment impeding satisfaction of the person's needs, and also in regulation of movements taking into account the character of overcoming barriers of development, i.e. change of internal conditions for increase in functionality.

The inhibitive function consists in a full stop or repression of the person's activity on satisfaction of his/her needs.

The suppressing function has a destructive character. When a person meets insuperable barriers there is a blockade of satisfaction of important needs [2].

In his fundamental article "A Barrier as a Category and Its Role in Activity" R. H. Shakurov offers the following treatment of a psychological barrier and its functions, "The barrier is always an element of any system, it interacts with other its elements. A barrier is not simply an object. Not only existence, but also absence of an element of a system, and also space and time are barriers. A barrier is a certain relation of elements influencing the system in whole or its parts. The specificity of this influence may be



described in such words, as: resistance, inhibition, repression, counteraction, blocking, deprivation, etc. All these effects have a limiting character. Besides the external, there are also the internal limiters in the system.

In the general form the “barrier” concept can be treated as such a relation between system elements which limits the freedom of one of them. Therefore, the essence of a barrier lies in the rendered influence. It possesses the energy potential which is showing in restriction of any movement.

The barrier carries out the following main functions in relation to other elements:

- stabilization – a barrier stops movement, gives statics to it;
- correction – having faced an obstacle, movement changes its direction;
- energetization – the energy of movement is accumulated under the influence of the barrier holding it;
- dosage – obstacles dose movement, define its measure;
- mobilization – live organisms, having faced an obstacle, mobilize the energy and other resources for overcoming obstacles;
- development – changes in organisms at repeated mobilizations are consolidated that increases the functionality of a live system, gives a new quality to it;
- inhibition – a barrier retards movement, constrains activity;
- suppression (deprivation) – constantly blocking the activity of an organism, it needs, a barrier weakens and undermines its functionality.

Correction and dosage we will designate as a regulating function of barriers” [12, p. 5–7].

R. Kh. Shakurov has offered to subdivide barriers into “... value (primary) and operational (secondary) ... The elementary primary barriers create prerequisites for development of values under the influence of secondary, operational barriers. The latters are obstacles preventing from getting desired values. In the majority of cases these are social barriers which are removed only when a person perform any public requirements, for example, labor functions. Value barriers are directly connected with needs, secondary barriers are connected with aspirations and actions of the subject” [12, p. 7].

Developing R. Kh. Shakurov’s ideas in the paradigm of barrier pedagogics, A. S. Gormin notes that “a barrier has an energy potential and carries out the following functions in relation to the system in whole and to its certain elements:

- 1) the function of stabilization consists in immobilization of the system, or its planned change;
- 2) the function of correction consists in change of moving direction of the system;
- 3) the function of energetization means that system accumulates the unspent energy under the influence of a barrier;
- 4) the function of a dosage consists in movement dosing by definition of its measure according to possibilities of power overcoming of a barrier;



- 5) the function of mobilization means that the system (alive more often) mobilizes power reserves and directs them on overcoming the arisen obstacle;
- 6) the function of development consists in “learning” of a living system and formation of its tolerance towards barrier interaction;
- 7) the function of suppression consists in undermining the functionality of an organism (frustration)” [5, p. 10].

Considering internal barriers of the adult in training, I. A. Kolesnikova distinguishes the following types of barriers:

- psychophysiological (barriers concerning learning ability);
- socio-psychological (fear to be a pupil, fear of failure);
- social (lack of society’s demand for education);
- psychological and pedagogical barriers (undeveloped attitudes, absence of self-knowledge, education forms etc.) [6].

In the modern typology of barriers as certain individual obstacles arising during the person’s interaction with the world around and self-knowledge, it is possible to distinguish sense-value barriers as a specific type of psychological-didactic difficulties connected with features of sense-value development of personality and the possibility of interacting with the world around and the inner world at a personal level.

“Sense-value barriers are personal obstacles of the cogitative action initiation, connected with alienation of sense-value centrations of the subject of cognitive activity from the comprehended content, with disturbance of the process of “decrystallization” of sense, impossibility to take the cognizable to the level of personal sense. When a sense-value barrier appears the personal experience of the subject of knowledge does not become isolated on objective values or the objectivated meanings; as a result, the process of sense increment is broken; there is a deformation and regression of sense-creation. Depending on the level of formation of the sense sphere of personality sense-value barriers will differ according to dynamic and substantial characteristics. The dynamic aspect of the sense sphere is that defines the intension of estimation of events and self, and the substantial one is that the persons directly reveals from the “sense for others” in “the sense for self” [1, p. 249].

A number of authors emphasize such a function of a barrier as “ensuring the stability of personality in a development situation”. This is especially actual in developing creative thinking which takes place in solving problems (obstacles) arising on a way to the goal (G. A. Ball, A. M. Matyushkin, Ya. A. Ponomarev, O. K. Tikhomirov, L. Friedman).

In result of the analysis of a large number of psychological-pedagogical literature T. I. Verbitskaya has distinguished 14 functions of a psychological barrier, namely:

- creative – directed on overcoming of barriers, promoting creative activity;
- developing – promoting development and formation of the person’s personality and identity;
- stimulating – activating activity;



- bringing up – forming the system of value orientations developing spiritual and moral, intellectual and physical qualities of personality, ability to self-organization;
- protective – directed on stabilization of personality, defense of consciousness against the unpleasant, traumatizing experiences interfaced to the internal and external conflicts, states of anxiety and discomfort;
- training – forming abilities to overcome obstacles;
- emotional – forming abilities to realize own mental states and their reasons;
- mobilizational – preparing internal resources of an organism for their actualization, estimation of a measure and direction of their activity;
- stabilizing – promoting stabilization of the person's emotional and physical states;
- inhibition function – retarding intellectual, volitional processes, restraining activity;
- regulatory – regulating the development of relations in various situations;
- adaptational – establishing correspondence between needs of the individual and his/her potential taking into account specific conditions;
- destructive – being shown in dissatisfaction with self, low self-appraisal;
- conservative – connected with the person's spiritual potential inhibition, leading to the isolation development, depriving the person of his/her energy and resoluteness [4].

Studying and analyzing functions of a psychological barrier enables the researcher to use the obtained results not only for development of the psychological theory, but also for practical application.

The realization of the developing functions of a psychological barrier is possible only through its overcoming. Revealing the person's abilities and potential arises with a vital need and suitable conditions. It takes place when the goal becomes personally significant that leads to mobilization of forces and resources of personality, actualization of hidden reserves, disclosure of the potential which is often hidden even from the person himself/herself. The necessity of overcoming a psychological barrier leads to activation of essential spheres of the person's mentality, and the use of a psychological barrier as means of mobilization of the hidden resources of personality is an important condition of development of the person's integral identity.

According to a number of researchers, overcoming a psychological barrier is an important condition of the person's development, it actualizes the hidden potential of the person, leads to mobilization of resources, revelation of the internal potential unknown to the person.

Overcoming psychological barriers leads not only to normal functioning of the person's mentality (to decrease in anxiety, normalization of mental processes), but also to manifestation of new formations (formation of self-acceptance, development of self-control, ability to make constructive decisions etc.).



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