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**COMPETENCE IN TIME AS A PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY  
EFFECTIVENESS FACTOR**

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***Abstract***

The article shows that time competence is an important component of professional competence. The main factor of psychological time is the personal organization of life time, and it manifests itself in reflecting the objective time and dynamic characteristics of the psyche, and in the ability of the psyche to regulate and to personalize time. The study of time in the professional activity context contributes to better understanding of some reasons for low productivity of specialists, and also it provides an information base for the development of measures to optimize working hours. The article shows that young specialists have insufficient level of time competence, but they have good potential for its further development. The main factors were identified on the base and they contribute to the irrational time distribution. Some factors such as personal organization of time and procrastination affect time competence in the short term, but life satisfaction and holistic perception of time affect in the long term. A correlation has been determined on its base between irrational time usage and procrastination level. Timely identified low level of time competence for students and young specialists allows timely conduct a behavior correction aimed at optimizing working and personal time. It contributes to less professional burnout, prevention of depression, support for a high level of professional activity for several decades.

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays time becomes one of the most valuable resources of a person in all spheres of his life in the information flow and constantly updated technical means. It plays an especially important role in professional activities. It is on working days that people are constantly confronted with a large amount of information and instructions that need to be filtered out in importance terms, with constantly changing working conditions (political and economic changes, replacement of obsolete equipment and software with new ones, staff turnover, job duties and so on). Such a dynamic working day mode leads to the fact that a specialist is to think carefully over each step, allocating time as efficiently as possible. Otherwise, it can lead to rapid professional burnout and reduced productivity.

The category of time as a psychological phenomenon was studied at the beginning of the XX century (Bolotova, 2000). These studies were made by S. Buller, P. Janet, P. Fress and other psychologists. Later on, the time problematic became more widespread and was actively studied by such psychologists as S.L. Rubinshtein, K.A. Abulkhanova, T.N. Berezina, A.K. Bolotova, L. Zaivert, E. Shostrom, A. Newgarten.

S.L. Rubinstein's works are a methodological basis in the study of subjective time experience. According to the author, the term "psychological time" can be defined as subjective time studied through the characteristics of personal experience, awareness and attitude to the time (Ray, 1984; Galtseva, 2017).

According to K.A. Abulkhanova and T.N. Berezina, the personal time organization is connected with time - the meaning relevance duration. Motivation is actualized with experience through meaning, and, as a result, behavior, actions, inclusion into activity is generated (Abulkhanova & Berezina, 2001; Korneva & Plotnikova, 2015).

Kovalev (1988) considers time from three different levels. The objective level consists of a complex psycho physiological organization of the person's chronotope and the person's public, national, role and professional organization. The subjective level is represented with the value-time organization of personal self-consciousness in the form of person's life sensually-mental surveys. The subjective level consists of the person's vital-volitional regulation of his life activity in time. Bolotova's work distinguishes seven types of personal time organization based on the analysis of the implementation timing of various professional activities types. The main criteria in this classification are the successful/unsuccessful foundation of any time modes, the peculiarities of the subjective time experience, the ability to cope with official duties in the time deficit conditions (Bolotova, 2006; Kuznetsova et al., 2017).

L. Zaivert considers time from the economy point as a valuable capital and a scarce resource and identifies some modern reasons for the irrational time usage that primarily affects professional activity (Seiwert, 1993).

So, time becomes an important factor in the activities development and, in particular, constitutes the very essence of the professionally important personal qualities development. Time largely determines effectiveness of any professional activity, the effectiveness that primarily depends on the timely and quality performance of actions in the time deficit mode.

### **1.1. Time impact on the professional activity effectiveness.**

Time determines the effectiveness of any professional activity, where the main criteria are speed and accuracy of many actions. One main components of psychological time is the personal life time organization. It manifests itself in the reflection of objective time, dynamic and procedural characteristics of the psyche, as well as in the ability of the psyche to regulate time and personal time organization, that is a kind of time-spatial continuum where the person's value relations with the surrounding world are developed (Abulkhanova & Berezina, 2001).

### **1.2. Personal time organization.**

A distinguishing feature of a capable person is the ability to set a certain pace of activity, and also to discover possibility to act at a higher speed on different time scales. Ability to manage his abilities, to master new tempos and time opportunities, and there is a specific ability of the person to organize the life time.

Based on the above said, time management is supposed to be a special competence of a person who plays one of the most important roles in organizing the person's life in all activity spheres.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The problem of studying person's time competence and time management characteristics is relevant because it is competence that is a set of the characteristics that determine the best specialists.

### **2.1. The essence of time as a personal characteristic.**

Competence is considered to be subjective rather than positional characteristic, and it is based on basic personal characteristics that have a significant influence on the formation of competencies, their components are knowledge and skills.

### **2.2. The problem of inefficient time usage by specialists.**

Due to the fact that time management is a special competence of a person, the main problem is that many specialists do not know how to allocate efficiently their time and it directly affects the effectiveness of not only their work, but also the organization in a whole.

Constantly changing conditions of professional activity, the person's inability to organize his time can lead to some serious consequences. In the short term, it can be expressed in impossibility of meeting the deadlines, making wrong decisions, additional hours of ineffective work, while in the long-term it can lead to professional burnout of the person and dismissal.

## **3. Research Questions**

The problem of psychological time phenomenon and time competence in particular, has not been sufficiently studied and requires additional data and research. One of the main time research questions in

psychology is the question of understanding the very nature of time. There is an opinion that the essence of time is in its variability, and the main property of time is irreversibility.

### **3.1. The study of time as a psychological phenomenon.**

The category of time as a psychological phenomenon was studied at the beginning of the XXth century. However, the psychological time study peak came much later. Special problem development of time in psychology was in the 80es of the XXth century and a special contribution to this scientific activity field was made by Russian scientists. The works of S.L. Rubinstein and his colleagues are the methodological basis for studying the subjective experience of time (Rubenstein, 2000).

### **3.2. The study of time as a professional personal competence.**

Time becomes a significant factor in the development of activities in the psychological structure of activity and it is the essence of professionally important personal qualities development. Time determines the effectiveness of any professional activity, where the main criteria are speed and accuracy of actions.

There are different types of competencies: social, professional, personal, etc. And time competence is their important component. All this indicates that time competence has such universals as "tolerability" and "transitivity". That is why it is an important component in the model of professional competence.

According to I.A. Zimnyaya, competence in time should be studied holistically considering motivational, cognitive, behavioral, perceptual and regulatory components (Bolotova, 2006).

Considering above said, time competence has a certain structure consisting of the following components:

- A value-semantic component (the person's relation to time, social importance awareness of effective time organization, personal responsibility for the realization of his time as a resource).
- A motivational component (revealed through the motivation power to organize time of life and activity, through the desire to realize one's potential in life).
- A cognitive component (knowledge of technology, techniques of organizing time).
- A reflexive component (the person's ability to anticipate the results of actions before they are actually produced and thereby to monitor time indicators in the process of their own vital activity).
- An operational and technological component (determines the technology of life time organization and provides the procedural side of the activities implementation).

Time competence is one type of general person's competence. Thus, T.P. Afanasyeva, N.V. Nemova in their model of general person's competence allocate cognitive, affective and volitional components (Kovalyov, 1988).

Thus, the research theoretical significance on this subject is to obtain new data on the features of time competence as a factor in the professional activity effectiveness. And practical importance makes possible to use the findings to develop new programs, methods or trainings to improve the organizing personal time effectiveness, that can lead to improving the performance of people and adapting to new working conditions (in particular, working conditions in limited time modes).

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to study the person's time competence, as one factor of the professional activity effectiveness. So, it is necessary

- to study features of life time personal organization;
- to determine the person's time competence influence on the effectiveness of his professional activity.

#### **5. Research Methods**

Various methods were used to study the questions posed.

##### **5.1. The following methods were used to study the theoretical material.**

There are analysis and synthesis, comparative-analytical methods.

##### **5.2. The following methods were used to collect primary data of the study.**

There is a questionnaire and test method. The basis of the questionnaire method was the main causes of the time loss identified by the German author L. Zaivert (Seiwert, 1993).

The following tests were used in the study:

- standardized methods for studying the personal time organization and factors that may have an impact on it, such as E.Shostrom's "Competence in Time" (SAT) scale (Bolotova, 2006);
- test "Index of life satisfaction" (A. Neugarten) (Neugarten, Havinghuret, & Tobin, 1961);
- test "Personal competence in time" N.Yu. Grigorovskaya (Bolotova, 2006);
- tests used in management for the selection of personnel and aimed at identifying the "sense of time" in the individual and the level of its value for him (Bolotova, 2006).

The above methods were used to identify the causes of ineffective time usage by young people and factors that affect it.

##### **5.3. Mathematical methods were used for processing primary data and their further interpretation.**

The basic mathematical methods used in this study include descriptive statistics (the calculation of the arithmetic mean and the standard deviation) and linear correlation.

#### **6. Findings**

To study the specifics of the person's time competence and its impact on professional activity, a study was conducted among young specialists aged 20 to 30 involved in various fields of activity (state and municipal administration, economy, customs, psychology, HR management, trade) in number of 181 people.

### 6.1. Findings obtained by the questionnaire method.

A sociological survey on the main reasons for the time loss and its ineffective usage (see Table 01) based on a list of the most common "Thieves of Time" compiled by L. Zaivert identified some main reasons for the time loss among young specialists (Seiwert, 1993).

As a result, the most common reasons for ineffective time usage were identified and they are multitasking, simultaneous execution of several actions, and incomplete understanding of current tasks and ways to solve them. These reasons are the main factors of person's inability to organize his time. Without specific presentation of tasks to be performed at a certain time, the ability to rank them in terms of importance and a clear idea of the required time spent on each operation, it is impossible to perform the work effectively, especially in the limited time mode.

Absence of motivation and, as a consequence, procrastination, lack of priorities and distraction for various irritants indicate the professional personal burnout, that ultimately entails a decrease in the working capacity of employees.

### 6.2. Findings obtained by testing.

The results obtained on E. Shostrom's "Competence in time" (SAT) scale, that is an integral part of the self-actualization test, can determine the existence of a relationship of orientation in time with the level of person's self-actualization. In other words, if respondents are able to experience the present moment of their life in its entirety, and not just as a fatal consequence of the past or preparing for a future "real" life, and also if they have ability to feel the inseparability of the past, present and future (Navarro, Roe, & Artiles, 2015; Bolotova, 2006).

Considering the fact that a part of technique was used in this study, namely "time competence" scale, then for a qualitative analysis of the data obtained it is rationally to calculate high, middle and low levels on this scale and a sample.

The study proved that most of the subjects had optimal (67%) level of competency in time. A high level of competence 20% of respondents was incompetent in time, whereas 13% of specialists have low level. These findings suggest that the majority of young specialists have prospects in the development of time management skills.

**Table 01.** The main causes of time loss and waste

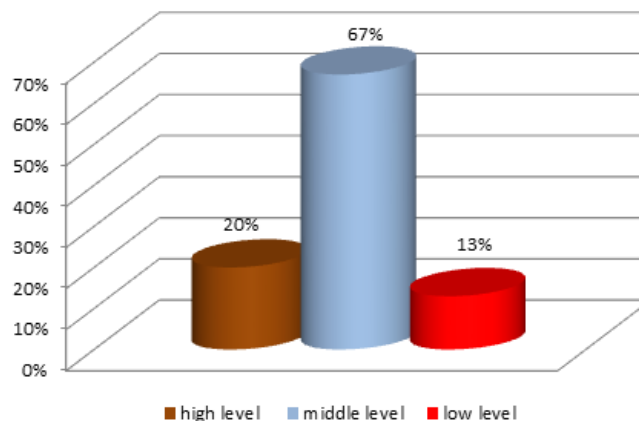
No	Causes of time loss	Number of replies, [%]
1	Performing a large amount of work in a short period of time	51.38%
2	Incomplete understanding of current tasks and ways to solve them	50.82%
3	Distraction (noise, etc.)	50.82%
4	Procrastination	50.82%
5	Low motivation	50.27%
6	Insufficient control over the assigned cases	46.41%
7	Hurry, excessive fussiness	45.56%
8	Talking about extraneous topics	43.65%
9	Fuzzy goal setting	39.23%

10	Lack of priorities	30.94%
11	Personal disorganization	43.09%
12	Long wait	42.54%
13	Lack of self-discipline	41.44%
14	Poor workday planning	38.67%
15	Incomplete, timely non-submitted information	37.57%
16	No ability to deny	37.02%
17	Poor preparedness for interviews, conversations	35.91%
18	Lack of ability to bring things to fruition	35.36%
19	Unplanned visitors	33.7%
20	Ineffective workflow system	32.04%
21	Random phone calls	32.04%
22	Long meetings	30.4%
23	Disadvantages of cooperation or division of labor	27.62%
24	The desire to learn everything in detail	25.41%
25	Excessive sociability	23.76%
26	Excessive reading	23.76%
27	Excessive business records	20.44%

To verify findings there were conducted other techniques studies, determining the level of specialists competence (in particular, N.Y. Grigorovskaya's "Personal competence in Time" technique, which, unlike E. Shostroma's "Competence in time" scale identifies the most significant aspects of operational time management).

Due to the analysis two main components were identified. A group of factors determining the person's time competence in the long period of time (the ability to allocate their time for a long term, holistic vision of the past, present and future times, sequence in purposes, matching set and achieved goals):

- The index of life satisfaction.
- Competence in time.



**Figure 01.** Levels of competence in time for young specialists, (in percentage)

A group of factors determining the person's time competence in the short term (i.e., the ability to allocate efficiently their time during the day, not procrastination "for later", etc.) consists of personal competence in time and procrastination.

## 7. Conclusion

The findings show that the personal time competence is often determined with the ability to allocate his time in operational conditions. It is also important for young specialists to have planning and time management skills. It was revealed that the major negative factors in the formation of a time identity competence of a young man are accelerated life pace maintaining an unhealthy lifestyle, long working hours (10-14 hours). The impact of these factors cannot be understated, because after a while it strongly affects the health and career of employees.

1. The study has shown that procrastination and personal time competence affect prompt distribution of time. If personal time competence is partly due to the personal temperament (inherent biological characteristic cannot be changed), the procrastination is the result of dissatisfaction with any vital aspects, low motivation, lack of importance awareness of their activities and so forth. And the stronger procrastination is expressed in a person, the more difficult it is to start immediately the implementation of tasks, one is often engaged in non-essential matters instead of doing his job. Above said leads to a significant reduction in the productivity of young specialists.

2. Personal time competence in the long period is mainly determined with the index of life satisfaction:

- Zest for life as the opposite of apathy.
- Determination, dedication, consistency in achieving life goals.
- Consistency between the stated objectives and the actual achieved.
- Positive assessment of one's qualities and actions.
- General mood.

These factors contribute to the fact that the person uses effectively his time in a long term, and it often leads to a productive and successful career. Otherwise, if there is ineffective time usage over years, a person burns at work, he had no desire to do anything, there is possible development of various psychosomatic diseases (diseases caused by being in constant stress), the gradual drop in productivity, which leads to a lack of career or even demotion or dismissal.

Based on these results, one can conclude that while students' training and at primary adaptation of young specialists in the workplace it is necessary to pay particular attention to the skills of working time optimization. Introduction of time management training courses at senior courses of universities and colleges can improve the students' time competence and introduction of additional events in this field in new staff adaptation, particularly young specialists, consolidate previously learned skills.

Timely knowledge in this field for young people contribute to reducing the risk of professional and emotional burnout, development of depression and psychosomatic diseases, and for the organization to reduce staff turnover and to the stability or increasing the productivity of employees in the long term.



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