

# DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND TYPES OF INTERRELATION BETWEEN THE INDICES OF EMOTIONAL AND VOLITIONAL PERSONALITY SPHERE

TAISA KYRYLENKO

Faculty of psychology, Taras Shevchenko National University,  
Volodymyrska street 64/13, Kyiv 01601, Ukraine  
E-mail address: [kkst.emovol@gmail.com](mailto:kkst.emovol@gmail.com)



KARINA SHAMLYAN

Department of philosophy and psychology,  
National Forestry University,  
General Chuprynka 103, Lviv 79057, Ukraine  
E-mail address: [kkst.emovol@gmail.com](mailto:kkst.emovol@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

This article deals with the role of emotions in the will activity of the personality. The analysis of the empirical study results shows that appraisal of the role of emotional experience depends on the level of will development of the individuals under study. A methodical technique has been applied, by which the indices of the emotional and volitional sphere are considered throughout different life periods of the individuals under study. Types of interrelation between the indices of will and emotions are highlighted which illustrate certain variants of the influence of emotional experience on the formation of the will structure of the personality.

**Keywords:** emotional and volitional sphere, emotional experience, emotions positive and negative, volitional organization of personality.

The Will, feelings and emotions constitute integral components of an individual's mental self-regulation, driving engines of his/her self-growth and self-formation. Volitional actions and acts are expressive of the extraordinary inner tension of the individual's emotional world. We are deeply convinced that activity of the will is caused by a strong desire to overcome, win, achieve, prove, assert oneself.

The very notion of "emotional and volitional sphere" points to the fact that there exist close ties between emotional and volitional processes, conditions and properties of humans; however, in spite of the obvious topicality of the problem those dependences

have not as yet been sufficiently studied. That is the aim of our study is : to analyze the interrelation between the emotional experience of humans and the characteristics of a person's will activity.

Emotional experience is available in will activity in all of its stages – starting with the appearance of the intention up to volitional action-taking. Emotions influence the general direction and dynamics of conduct; urge us to take certain actions, and that is most vividly manifested in passions. It is passions which lead to volitional actions, subordinating all the strength and energy of humans towards high goal achievement.

The structure of the emotional world of a personality can be figuratively drawn in the form of a tree cross-section, the rings of which correspond to different levels: starting with affective sensitivity to subject matter emotions and feelings, and from them on to a world outlook, feelings and will. Volitional processes develop from emotions and feelings as high-level processes closely related to conscience. The Will manifests itself when a person is capable of reflecting on his/her drives, rising above them and managing them in an arbitrary way, without being a slave to them. In volitional processes organic combinations of feelings and beliefs are important. As Kostyantyn Ushynskyi pointed out, those feelings last longer than those which are combined with ideas. And then it is no longer passion, but the possibility of the idea on a permanent basis, over a long period of time to evoke strong emotional reactions that nourishes the will activity.

The interrelation of emotional experience and volitional effort has its distinctive features in each specific case. In the opinion of Eugene Ilyin (2011), the notions of “emotional and volitional sphere”, “emotional and volitional regulation” stress only the connection of emotions and will, and not their relation, and, moreover, identity. In everyday life these two mental spheres are manifested as antagonists.

In some cases emotions demobilize people – then their willpower makes up for their negative consequences. This is clearly manifested during some unfavourable psycho-physiological conditions. The condition of fatigue and the wish to stop working are compensated by such volitional powers as patience. The state of anxiety and doubt is overcome at the expense of determination; the state of fear – by courage; frustration – by persistence and perseverance; and the state of emotional excitement – by self-restraint. In other cases, emotions (inspiration, joy, and sometimes anger) stimulate activity, and then no volitional effort is needed, since high working capacity is achieved at the expense of the mobilization of hyper-compensatory energy resources. However, such regulation is uneconomical, wasteful, and related to over fatigue. Volitional regulation also has an “Achilles heel” – excessive volitional strain may lead to breakdown of nervous activity (Ilyin, 2011, pp. 129–130)

Vladimir Kalin (2011, 1975) was of the opinion that emotion does not constitute an accurate regulator of human activity. The mechanism of emotions ensures overall mobilization of all the body systems, and that mobilization is not always optimal (for instance, it may be extensive or premature and lead to burn-out before the activity is completed, or even before it is begun).

What is more, volitional regulation ensures selective mobilization of mental and physical human capabilities, and enables us to consciously change the degree of activating the mechanisms of emotional regulation via the change in the motives. Volitional regulation is called “initiative” by the scholar, while the emotional one is called “reactive”. In his opinion, knowledge of and the taking of your emotional regulation into account constitute an important condition for the success of volitional regulation of any human.

We point out the following roles played by emotions in the will activity: 1) conation

mobilization; in this case one may talk about “volitional” emotions which ensure energy increase, or about emotional and energy feeding of conation; 2) internal obstacles (fear, frustration, disgust, etc.) which a human feels during the period of fulfillment of subjectively complicated activity; 3) evaluation which is closely related to the sense of a specific volitional action; 4) a tool of self-recognition as the necessary condition for personality self-change, self-growth, his/her progress towards harmony and perfection.

## PARTICIPANTS AND RESEARCH METHODS

For the purpose of studying the interrelations between the emotional and volitional personality potential and researching the types of those interrelations we have conducted a pilot study in which 67 Master-level students of higher educational institutions participated (31 of them were men and 36 were women); they were aged 20-24.

In the selection of methodologies we were guided by the following factors. The study of distinctive human emotional features faces certain complexities caused by deep intimacy of a person’s emotional world, diversity and complexity of emotional phenomena. This requires elaboration and the use of methodological devices combining self-evaluation with self-analysis, intensifying personality self-cognition by the recollection and realization of the important experience of emotions throughout one’s life.

The following methodologies and methodological techniques have been used in the study:

1. T. Kyrylenko’s Emotional space analysis technique (Kyrylenko, 2007a) elaborated by the author on the basis of the methodology Evaluation of the five-year intervals by Aleksandr Kronik (Kronik, Akhmerov, 2003). The graphic variant “Emotional space analysis technique” lies in the fact that the person under study is asked to draw a graph of self-evaluation of the intensity of emotional experiences (vertical coordinate from -10 to +10 points) depending on the age (horizontal time axis, in years): “Please, evaluate the intensity of emotional experiences you once had, have now, or will - as it seems to you - have in the future”. The time range is 40 years with 4-year intervals for the coordinate corresponding to the present age of young people under study to be approximately in the middle of the time axis. The graph illustrates quite well (in particular, for the person under study) the dynamics of emotional experiences, their sign and amplitude, stability or, vice versa, dramatic fluctuations throughout different age periods. On the basis of the graphs, the index of emotional experience intensity, as of the present, was determined ( $E_{pr}$ ); the index of emotional experience intensity in the past ( $E_{past}$ ) and the index of expected intensity of experiences in the future were calculated ( $E_f$ ) as the average of evaluations of the past and the future, correspondingly. The higher the values  $E_{pr}$ ,  $E_{past}$  and  $E_f$ , the better the positive pole of experience is represented, the higher the emotional mood of the person under study. The following were viewed as additional indices: the number of dramatic fluctuations in emotional experiences in the past, the maximum variation in intensity values, and the amplitude of negative experience. Such graphic representation, in our opinion, increases the accuracy and “reality” of the evaluation, since it helps those under study to become more deeply involved in self-analysis, and possibly, to better recall important events better, and periods of their lives and the related experience. Emotional experience is thus studied in relation to important events in the subjective picture of the world of

the personality as comprehensive characteristics of his or her psychological time. Subjectivity of experience, as well as subjectivity of event perception, allow us to study them not only in retrospect and at present, but also in the future perspective – following the evaluation of future experience anticipated by the person.

2. To assess volitional personality potential, a similar methodological technique has been used: a graphic representation by the person under study of the self-evaluation of his or her willpower (from 0 to 10 points) in the time dimension, on the basis of which the following indices were determined: self-evaluation of willpower as of the present ( $V_{pr}$ ), self-evaluation in the past ( $V_{past}$ ) and in the future ( $V_f$ ).
3. To study the importance of the value attached by those under study to emotional experience, we have developed a questionnaire which indicated the evaluation of different characteristics of the influence of emotional experience on humans by a 10-point scale. The same set of influence characteristics was applied separately for positive and negative emotions (see table 1). The list of characteristics was selected on the basis of literature analysis and the personal emotional experience of the authors.
4. The methodology of volitional personality organization study (Gutkin et al, 2000, pp. 175–182) containing the following scales: value and sense of personality organization, activity organization, determination, persistence, self-composure, independence and general scale. The methodology also has a scale of insincerity.

The statistical processing of empirical data was made using the STATISTICA 6.0 program, and methods of descriptive statistics, correlation, factor, comparative, cluster analysis have been applied.

## DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In “graphic” evaluations of emotional experience and willpower there has been traced one and the same tendency: future indices are higher than the ones of today that are, in their turn, higher than the indices of the past. Values average for the researched group are as follows:  $E_{past}$  (4.97) <  $E_{pr}$  (6.84) <  $E_f$  (7.73) and  $V_{past}$  (6.35) <  $V_{pr}$  (7.32) <  $V_f$  (8.17). The index  $E_{past}$  is much lower than other emotional indices since in the graphs almost 50% of those under study had some serious fluctuations from the positive to the negative experience pole in the past.

Thus, young people are quite optimistic about the future: they see themselves as both happier and with stronger willpower. And differences can be traced in the evaluations of boys and girls: the latter have higher evaluations of willpower (both in the past, as in the present, and particularly in the future) and lower evaluations of emotional potential in the past and the present, and the amplitude of variations between the positive and negative experience poles is greater. Inspection under Student’s t-criterion, however, has not corroborated the statistical importance of gender divergences.

Correlation analysis has proved that only one of the basic indices of the “emotional space analysis technique” –  $E_f$  (anticipation of future emotional experience) has statistically relevant correlations with the indices of the volitional sphere:  $E_f$  at the level of importance  $p < 0.01$  correlates positively with the data on the general scale of the volitional organization test ( $r = 0.36$ ), on the determination scale (0.39) and self-composure scale (0.34); at the rate of  $p < 0.05$  – with evaluation of future willpower  $V_f$  (0.31) and a result on the scale of value and sense organization (0.27). As far as additional indices are concerned: the number of dramatic fluctuations in emotions at the rate of  $p < 0.01$  cor-

relates negatively with the scales of organization (-0.36), self-composure (-0.32), with the general scale of the test (-0.33), at the rate of  $p < 0.05$  - with points on the persistence scale (-0.25). The value of negative experience amplitude correlates negatively with organization (-0.27) and self-composure (-0.25) for  $p < 0.05$ .

The indices  $V_{past}$ ,  $V_{pr}$  do not correlate with any characteristics of the emotional sphere, the indices  $E_{past}$ ,  $E_{pr}$  do not correlate with any characteristics of the volitional sphere.

Thus, relation between will and emotions has been traced for two cases only. Firstly, when we speak about serious negative experience in the past (its amplitude, or repetitions) which generally weakens volitional personality organization. Secondly, when we speak about the future: similar expectations (optimistic or not) are related to the whole spectrum of indices - both willpower and emotional experience ( $E_f$  correlates with  $B_f$ ), and optimistic personality expectations are ensured only by a high level of his/her volitional organization (correlation of test scales with  $E_f$ ).

We shall present the results of survey based on the elaborated questionnaire in the form of the table.

The hierarchy of evaluations of the influence of positive emotions			The hierarchy of evaluations of the influence of negative emotions		
Place	Characteristics of influence	Point	Place	Characteristics of influence	Point
1	<i>are pleasant</i>	9.59	1	<i>destruct</i>	7.10
2	<i>are necessary</i>	9.29	2	<i>urge "to retreat into oneself"</i>	6.85
3	<i>are valuable</i>	9.14	3	<i>inhibit activity</i>	6.83
4	<i>enrich spiritually</i>	9.05	4	<i>are difficult to live through</i>	6.71
5	<i>urge to be active</i>	8.58	5	<i>worsen the results of activity</i>	6.70
6	<i>improve the results of activity</i>	8.51	6	<i>make stronger</i>	6.17
7	<i>intensify the wish to achieve the desirable</i>	8.25	7	<i>help in self-understanding</i>	5.73
8	<i>stimulate creative search</i>	8.03	8	<i>help to better understand others</i>	5.52
9	<i>make relaxed</i>	7.82	9	<i>intensify the wish to achieve the desirable</i>	8.25
10	<i>make stronger</i>	7.34	10	<i>make clever</i>	5.18
11	<i>contribute to good organization</i>	7.24	11	<i>urge to be active</i>	4.50

12	<i>help in self-understanding</i>	7.01	12	<i>are necessary</i>	4.43
13	<i>make clever</i>	7.00	13	<i>contribute to good organization</i>	4.42
14	<i>help to better understand others</i>	6.65	14	<i>stimulate creative search</i>	4.15
15	<i>urge "to retreat into oneself"</i>	4.69	15	<i>enrich spiritually</i>	3.43
16	<i>worsen the results of activity</i>	2.81	16	<i>improve the results of activity</i>	3.40
17	<i>inhibit activity</i>	2.65	17	<i>make relaxed</i>	2.83
18	<i>are difficult to live through</i>	2.06	18	<i>are valuable</i>	2.59
19	<i>destruct</i>	1.67	19	<i>are pleasant</i>	1.61

**Tab.1. Average values of evaluation of different characteristics of emotional influence for the group of people under study**

Source: Own research

On the whole, evaluations of the influence of positive emotions are much higher than the ones for negative emotions. In particular, this tendency is characteristic of women: women have a higher evaluation than men for the overwhelming majority of characteristics of the influence of positive emotions. There are minor divergences, though: the inspection under the Student's t-criterion has testified to statistically serious differences for two characteristics only – the value of positive emotions and their influence on the spiritual enrichment of humans which are higher (by points) in women ( $t=2.26$ ,  $t=2.72$ , correspondingly).

In the evaluations of negative emotions, the tendency is different: evaluations by men are higher. Divergences are also not that great: Student's t-criterion has proven a statistically important difference only in the evaluation of the role of negative emotions in spiritual enrichment of humans – men consider it much stronger ( $t=-2.78$ ).

Let us analyze the correlations of evaluations of the influence of positive emotions with the volitional sphere indices. At the level of importance  $p < 0.01$  self-evaluation of willpower  $V_{\text{past}}$  correlates with such characteristics of positive emotions as *contribute to good organization* (0.40), *urge to be active* (0.33); self-evaluation  $V_f$  correlates with such characteristics as *are valuable* (0.34), *worsen the results of activity* (negative correlation  $r=-0.33$ ).

At the level of  $p < 0.05$  index  $V_{\text{pr}}$  correlates with many evaluations of the influence of positive emotions: *urge to be active*, *make relax*, *are pleasant*, *are valuable*, *help to better understand others* (0.30; 0.29; 0.29; 0.26; 0.26, correspondingly). The general test scale, self-composure as well as value and sense organization scales correlate well with assessments *urge "to retreat into oneself"* (0.25), organization scale – *help in self-understanding* (0.27).

Quite unexpected is the negative correlation of the test scale of independence with the evaluation "*are pleasant*" ( $-0.33$ ): the more independent the human is, the lower (s)he assesses the pleasure of positive emotions.

Many correlations have been traced between the characteristics of the influence of negative emotions and volitional personality organization test scales. This most often majorly refers to the self-composure scale. Its correlations with the following emotional characteristics have been traced – *are necessary* (0.36), *enrich spiritually* (0.28), *are valuable* (0.27); as well as negative correlations with – *worsen the results of activity* (–0.37), *are difficult to live through* (–0.27), *destruct* (–0.26), *inhibit activity* (–0.26). Negative correlations have also been traced for the scales of persistence (*destruct* (–0.39), *worsen the results of activity* (–0.28)), value and sense organization (*are difficult to live through* (–0.30)), determination (*inhibit activity* (–0.29), *are difficult to live through* (–0.29), *destruct* (–0.26)).

Self-evaluation of willpower  $V_{\text{past}}$  correlates positively with the characteristics of the influence of negative emotions – *stimulate creative search* (0.40), *make clever* (0.33), *make stronger* (0.31).

Thus, the higher the indices of volitional sphere of the person under study, the more valuable and necessary they are for spiritual growth, the less destructive and harmful (s)he considers negative emotional experience to be.

In order to determine the structure of interrelations between the evaluation of influence, a factor analysis using the method of principal components with Varimax rotation has been applied, as well as a reliability check under  $\alpha$ -Cronbach factor.

Three important factors have been pointed out in the evaluations of the influence of positive emotions (47% of the overall contribution to the total dispersion).

Factor 1 – let us call it “Unfavourable impact on well-being and activity” formed by the following scales: *destruct*, *are difficult to live through*. Factor loads are negative;  $\alpha$ -Cronbach equals 0.657.

Factor 2 – “Favourable influence on personal development” formed by the following scales: *help in self-understanding*, *help to better understand others*, *intensify the wish to achieve the desirable*, *make clever*, *stimulate creative search*. That is the best coordinated factor –  $\alpha$ -Cronbach equals 0.811.

Factor 3 – “Favourable influence on activity and well-being” ( $\alpha$ -Cronbach = 0.734) unites the following scales: *are valuable*, *enrich spiritually*, *improve the results of activity*, *urge to being active*, *are pleasant*.

Thus, in fact, only two factors of positive emotional influence have been traced: 1) on personality development, which mainly refers to reflection, intellectual and creative capacities and search dominant of those under study – this influence is illustrated by the second factor; 2) on well-being and activity – this influence is illustrated by the first and the third factors formed by the opposite scales.

The factor structure of evaluation of the influence of negative emotions differs slightly: four factors have been indicated (57% of the total dispersion).

Factor 1 – “Favourable influence on personal development” (best coordinated,  $\alpha$ -Cronbach = 0.873) unites the following scales: *help in better self-understanding*, *make cleverer*, *help to better understand others*, *make stronger*, *intensify the wish to achieve the desirable*, *stimulate creative search*.

Factor 2 – “Unfavourable impact on well-being” ( $\alpha$  = 0.520) formed by the scales: *are difficult to live through*, *destruct*, *urge “to retreat into oneself”*.

Factor 3 – “Favourable influence on activity” ( $\alpha$  = 0.518): *urge to being active*, *make stronger*, *make relax*, in case of reverse count – *inhibit activity*.

Factor 4 – can relatively be called “Value-conscious” ( $\alpha$  = 0.787), which combines scales: *are necessary*, *enrich spiritually*, *improve the results of activity*, *are valuable*, in case of reverse count – *worsen the results of activity*.

Correlation analysis of factor values and the indices of volitional sphere have been made.

Most correlations have been studied for factors of evaluation of the influence of negative emotions. Self-evaluation of willpower  $V_{past}$  correlates with the idea that negative experience contributes to personal growth (factor 1,  $r=0.40$  with  $p<0.01$ ).

Factor 2 ("Unfavourable impact of negative emotions on well-being") correlates negatively with the scales of volitional personality organization test: the general one and the scale of powers that belong to primary volitional powers, – self-composure and determination ( $r=-0.38$ ;  $r=-0.37$  and  $r=-0.38$  correspondingly, with  $p<0.01$ ), as well as the scale of persistence ( $r=-0.27$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); that is – the higher the indices under those scales, the more resistant the person is to the destructive impact of negative emotional experience. Besides this, a strong-willed person appreciates negative experience more, and this fact is confirmed by positive correlations of the general scale and self-composure scale with factor 4 ( $r=0.27$ ;  $p<0.05$  and  $r=0.32$ ;  $p<0.01$ , correspondingly).

Correlations of "positive emotional" factors: factor 3 ("Favourable influence on activity and well-being") correlates with the indices of volitional sphere – with self-evaluation of willpower  $V_{past}$  ( $r=0.41$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and self-evaluations  $V_{pr}$  and  $V_f$  ( $r=0.31$  and  $r=0.28$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). This dependence is enhanced by a negative correlation of factor 1 ("Unfavourable impact on well-being and activity") with the  $V_{past}$  index ( $r=-0.26$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

In order to trace the types of interrelation between emotional and volitional indices, let us analyze the results of cluster analysis. On the basis of the hierarchy classification dendrogram and K-means method, 5 clusters of those under study have been outlined, which are distinguished for specific combinations of "emotional" and "volitional" evaluations (see Fig.1).

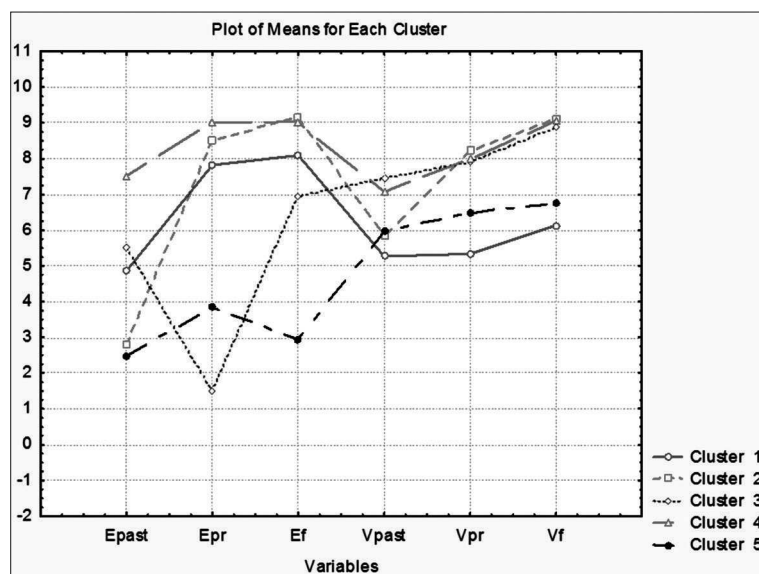


Fig.1. Graphs of mean indices for each cluster:

$E_{past}$ ,  $E_{pr}$ ,  $E_f$  – the indexes of emotional experience intensity in the past, as of the present, in the future;  $V_{past}$ ,  $V_{pr}$ ,  $V_f$  – self-evaluation of willpower in the past, as of the present and in the future

Source: Own research.



Let us consider clusters 1, 2, 4 characterized by high values of  $E_{pr}$  indices ("those who feel well").

Cluster 1 unites those under study who have had a serious negative experience, feel well now and are optimistic about the future, whose self-evaluation of willpower, however, is the lowest ("experienced and positive but not strong-willed").

Cluster 2 - those under study have had a very serious experience of negative emotions, feel well now, have most optimistic expectations about the future (the highest evaluation  $E_i$ ); low self-evaluation of willpower in the past and the highest self-evaluations of willpower at present and in the future ("experienced, optimistic, quite strong-willed: all the bad things are in the past, all the best things are in the future").

Cluster 4 - the highest "emotional" indices of the past and the present, expectations of the best things in the future; self-evaluation of willpower in the past is high, at present and in the future it is the highest ("convinced optimists, strong-willed with the happy past"). These subjects will probably drive out everything related to frustration.

Clusters 3 and 5 - which due to low  $E_{pr}$  indices may be called "those who have some emotional discomfort now" - differ from each other under other indices.

Cluster 3 - the profile of this cluster is characterized by a dramatic fluctuation of emotional indices: the past is filled with both positive experience and frustration - the toughest state is the present (the lowest  $E_{pr}$  index) - and positive expectations about the future. Volitional indices are stably high ("strong-willed, feeling strong frustration, experienced").

Cluster 5 may relatively be called "convinced pessimists, quite strong-willed", and at present they are in the best mood out of all the possible ones.

To determine differences between the clusters in evaluating the influence of emotional experience, a one-factor dispersion analysis and Schaffe criterion has been applied. The following statistically important differences (for  $p < 0.05$ ) have been traced. "Convinced optimists" (cluster 4) evaluate the influence of positive emotions on activity and well-being (factor 3+) higher in comparison to "not strong-willed" (cluster 1) ones, and they evaluate the role of positive emotions in goal achievement higher in comparison to "strong-willed in a tough situation" (cluster 3). In turn, those under study within the third cluster assess the need for negative emotions in human life, their impact on activity and spiritual enrichment (factor 4-) much higher, in comparison to "convinced pessimists" (cluster 5).

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, an attempt has been made in the pilot study to analyze the interrelation between emotional and volitional personality characteristics. Already its first results have proven to have a strong influence of human emotional experience on the formation of his/her volitional structure.

Quite a number of statistically important interrelations between different indices of emotional and volitional sphere of those under study allow us to draw the following basic conclusions. Evaluation of the role of emotional experience in human life depends on the level of volitional organization of personality. Most correlations refer to attitude to negative emotions: the higher the indices of volitional sphere of those under study, the higher they assess the role of negative emotional experience in personal human development, showing at the same time greater resistance to the destructive influence

of negative emotions. This dependence is clearly manifested for primary volitional powers that are most closely linked to neuro-dynamic human properties, – self-composure and determination. A high level of volitional personality organization also ensures optimistic expectations about the future.

The study of the structure of interrelations between evaluations of the influence of emotions by factor analysis has traced the main vectors of the influence of positive and negative emotional experience on humans: their personal, intellectual and creative development, well-being, and activity. Further work must be done towards the clarification and increase of diagnostic sensitivity of the emotional sphere indices.

For us the methodological approach under which self-evaluations of emotional and volitional sphere are considered in the time retro-perspective of the person under study, in connection with the important events of his/her life, seems to be a success, since, in our opinion, it must raise the accuracy and “realness” of the evaluation. Further clustering of “time” indices has identified five types of correlation of emotional and volitional evaluations that illustrate characteristic variants of the influence of emotional experience on the formation of volitional personality structure. These interesting results, as well as gender differences traced in some indices of emotional and volitional sphere, require more detailed research.

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