LIFE STRATEGIES OF PERSONAL SECURITY

M. Ivanov
Kemerovo State University, Kemerovo, Russia

Abstract

The results presented in the article show the fact of individual differences in people’s attitude to the problem of personal security, gaining great importance in our world. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that the personal security is studied in terms of life strategies. The method of in-depth interviews revealed elements of personal security strategies. On this base the author’s technique of studying life strategies of personal security was created. The results show that the most important condition for the security of respondents is safety social environment, consisting of reliable people. The following types of personal security strategies are identified and described: the adaptation strategy (life as survival, security as result of self-protection), socialization (security as social adaptation), individualization (security is a result of self-development and a way of self-realization) and mixed strategy. We conclude that the study of personal security as a component of life strategies can represent a wide field of psychological research.

Keywords: psychology of personal security, life, life strategies, extreme situations, adaptation strategy, socialization strategy, individualization strategy

Relevance

“Life” categories in psychology (strategy of life, way of life, life realization) are usually considered by the psychologists from a “development” point of view, as a way to seize opportunities for success and for development, because development is the main
condition of any life. At the same time the saving as the second condition of life is studied very little. It is believed that a person plans and implements the strategy of their life on the basis of development considerations, success and fulfillment (Lind, Delmar, & Nielsen, 2014; Hewlin, Kim, & Song, 2016; Mushongah, 2012; Ruža, Ruža, Raščevskis, Vorobjovs, & Murasovs, 2016; Reshetnikov, Korshever & Dorovskaya, 2015). In fact in decision-making the majority of people first of all analyze the risks and threats. It is especially true about important life decisions. The development possibilities of the planned action take second place (Acquisti, 2015; Schneier, 2003). People decide to develop only when necessary level of safety and security of the development is provided. In addition, the security of the life can be not only a condition of the development, but an independent task of self-realization.

State of the problem

In psychology security issues mostly are not applied to the problems of the life, development and self-realization. Today, the problem field of the psychology of security is reduced to ensure safety in dangerous and extreme situations like hazardous work, combat, natural disasters, etc. Ensuring the safety and personal security is usually studied as a situational activity and a reaction to a danger (Kudashov, 2009; Galaktionova, Maisenko, & Taptygina, 2015).

Thus, “Safety psychology” studies the psychological causes of accidents occurring in the course of work and other activities and ways to use psychology to improve security. The subjects of research in this area are the mental processes generated by the activities and influencing its safety. But there is a relatively new and popular trend in the study of the psychological aspects of security called psychological security studies. Its authors (Bayeva I.A., Solomin V.P., Shlykova N.L.) broaden in some way the views on the security problem in the psychology. Psychological safety stands as a kind of security along with physical and economical ones and this kind of security is understood as the protection of mental development and mental health. The subject of the study is to ensure security of the person’s inner world, peace of mind.

Another new trend in the study of psychological security issues has appeared recently. It is the psychology of individual’s security (Krasnyanskaya, 2009; Fomenko, 2010), whose authors enhance further the problem field of the psychology of individual’s security. This one
means to study the behavior in any situation of life perceived as a dangerous one, showing that the problem of ensuring own security is relevant to every human being, and it is beyond the scope of hazardous industries and occupations.

Despite the development of safety concepts in psychology, security is still understood as a necessity inherent in any living organism, as an adaptive capacity, expressed in an effort to survive, due to the instinctive motivation of a low level. Even modern security studies in psychology, made in line with the psychology of personality, retain some “reactivity” and “situational” in the sense of security.

**Materials and methods**

This article presents the results of the study of some characteristics of life strategies in terms of personal security and describes the main types of these strategies.

In order to explore the variety of individual attitudes to personal security, we used in-depth interviews. A total of 18 students of management training program at the age of 23 to 38 years were asked the following questions: “Tell me about your attitude towards security. What are you doing to make your life more secure? How do you provide the strategic security of your present and future?”

The students’ responses gave us a possibility to identify three types of attitude to personal security. The students of the first type (33%) rejected the need for a focused planning security strategy, tended to rely on fate, society and the state. Typical statements of the subjects were: “It’s fate, live right, do not try to protect yourself”, “Do not focus on that”, “I don’t think about it”.

The subjects of the second type (22%) paid attention to tactical security issues, the implementation of the necessary, common actions aimed at safety, but did not engage in strategic security matters. The typical answers were: “My car must be high and large”, “It is necessary to dress warmly in winter”, “You need to take care of your health”.

And yet, most of the subjects (45%) attached great importance to the security of their future. They had a strategic plan to life; they tried to act in the present so as to ensure the economic and physical security for themselves and their families in the future. Among the answers of the subjects of the third type there were the following phrases: “We are trying to buy an apartment for children in advance, we have a savings account”, “We bought an
apartment to our son in advance, we have a second job, we have insurance and accounts in
different banks,” “I try to plan to minimize the risks”, “I participate in co-financing of my
pension, there are bank accounts”, “Eggs are in different baskets”.

Results and their discussion

Analysis of the interview data allowed us to identify several options related to
strategies to ensure personal security, which we have called the types of life strategies of
personal security, as a component of life strategies, individually safe ways of self-realization.

1. Adaptation strategy. The basis of this strategy is the attitude to security as a protection,
based on respect for life in general, life is considered to be a survival. The strategy consists mainly
in providing stability and comfort at the expense of their own abilities and resources. People who
choose this strategy, are convinced that in order to protect better the personal safety it is necessary
to develop their own physical, intellectual, and professional abilities. They are trained in martial
arts and weapon handling skills to ensure the physical safety, learn the basics of law, economics
and finance, analyze the experience and stories of other people, try to ensure their own economic
security, choose a profession helping to better ensure their own security. In the organization of
everyday life, the strategy also consists in self-reliance. That means a well-protected housing,
the availability of means of protection, the creation of the necessary material wealth for security.
In relation to the state and society, this strategy is often manifested in a desire to live in the state
providing strict order and stability in the society.

2. Socialization strategy. This strategy is opposed to adaptation strategies because
people who prefer this strategy realize that a person lives in society and is included in the
system of relations, therefore developing their own ability to ensure security is not the most
efficient way. You may ensure your security by becoming a respected person, or by having
the support of influential people. Personal development of persons opting for this strategy is
aimed at improving their reputation, status, influence, establishing the right relationships and
the acquisition of power. In the organization of everyday life these people try to surround
themselves with trustworthy people (family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, partners, etc.).
In contrast to people implementing a defensive strategy they understand that safe social
environment is much important in ensuring the personal security than metal doors, weapons and
security systems. People implementing a social strategy are also aware that at the macro-level the state police providing stability in the society can not guarantee safety unless the society itself share the values of safety. Therefore their strategy is aimed to select and support a high cultural society and a public safety regime with responsible policies to ensure public safety.

3. Individualization strategy. At the core of the individualization strategy there is the human reliance on the existential-humanistic views about themselves, the world and society. Therefore, the main task of self-development is no longer the training skills of self-defense and the conquest of power and authority but trials to strengthen their identity and spiritual development, to achieve inner peace and mental health. This is the formation of a strong personality, able to cope with any difficulties in life, which is the best security guarantee for the people implementing the strategy. At the same time, the individualization strategy can be implemented in an effort to become popular, unique, indispensable in some domain, to gain people’s love. In the organization of everyday life this strategy tends to self-sufficiency, mobility, independence and lack of attachment to concrete conditions of life. As for the macro-level people implementing individualization strategy understand that police state and even a society with a strong safety culture can not provide their personal safety as much as it can be provided by a humane and tolerant society and a democratic political system which protects the rights of person and property.

The described models may be represented in tabular form (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of life strategies of personal security</th>
<th>Self-development</th>
<th>Micro-environment</th>
<th>Macro-environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adaptation strategy</td>
<td>Be smart, strong, healthy, have the knowledge and security skills</td>
<td>Have a well protected house, protection, material wealth necessary for safety</td>
<td>Live in a society which strictly ensures order and stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Socialization strategy</td>
<td>Be authoritative person, have relationships and influence</td>
<td>Surround yourself with reliable people who can be trusted (family, friends, neighbors, colleagues)</td>
<td>Live in a society with a strong safety culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Individualization strategy</td>
<td>Be spiritually strong person, useful and relevant, who is respected and valued in society</td>
<td>Be self-sufficient and mobile, not dependent on the living conditions and social environment of constant</td>
<td>Live in a humane and tolerant society that respects the rights of person and property</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In order to pre-validate the proposed theoretical model, a study was conducted on a sample of 58 people (students and workers, age 19-44 years). They were presented the questionnaire consisting of nine statements about the terms of personal security and were asked to choose three conditions under which their lives would be more secure. Here are those statements:

1. Be smart, strong, healthy, have the knowledge and security skills;
2. Be authoritative person, have relationships and influence;
3. Be spiritually strong person, useful and relevant, who is respected and valued in society;
4. Have a well protected house, protection, material wealth necessary for safety;
5. Surround yourself with reliable people who can be trusted (family, friends, neighbors, colleagues);
6. Be self-sufficient and mobile, not dependent on the living conditions and social environment of constant;
7. Live in a society which strictly ensures order and stability;
8. Live in a society with a strong safety culture;
9. Live in a humane and tolerant society that respects the rights of person and property.

The survey results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Conditions of personal security</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Be smart, strong, healthy, have the knowledge and security skills</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Be authoritative person, have relationships and influence</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Be spiritually strong person, useful and relevant, who is respected and valued in society</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Have a well protected house, protection, material wealth necessary for safety</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Surround yourself with reliable people who can be trusted (family, friends, neighbors, colleagues)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Be self-sufficient and mobile, not dependent on the living conditions and social environment of constant</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Live in a society which strictly ensures order and stability</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Live in a society with a strong safety culture</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Live in a humane and tolerant society that respects the rights of person and property</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These data give a general idea about the preferences of certain security conditions among the subjects. So a large margin in the first place is the purpose “Surround yourself with reliable people who can be trusted” (75%). Least of all in ensuring the safety of the subjects attach importance to the condition of “Live in a society which strictly ensures order and stability” (11%).

Let us take a look at the distribution of the strategy types, which is actually the main objective of this phase of the study. If the two conditions are selected from one of the types of strategy, we attribute it to the corresponding strategy type. If all three conditions apply to different types of strategies, we define it as an indefinite (or mixed) type of strategy. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

Types of life strategies of personal security distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life strategies of personal security</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation strategy</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization strategy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualization strategy</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite (or mixed) strategy</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that the largest number of subjects are indefinite or mixed life strategy of personal security (40%). Adaptation strategy include 23% of the subjects, socialization 21%, individualization 16%.

Conclusion

1. People have individual differences in their attitudes to personal security. We have studied these differences and described them as the types of life strategies of personal security: 1) Adaptation strategy (perceives security as physical protection, rely on themselves, prefer to live in the conditions of order and discipline), 2) Socialization strategy (focuses on social environment for security), 3) Individualization strategy (refers to the security of both individual freedom and self-actualization).

2. Most people have an indefinite (or mixed) type of personal security strategy. Among the conditions that make up the life strategy of personal security, the most popular is the “Surround yourself with reliable people who can be trusted”. 75% of respondents consider it as a personal security condition.
3. The results show a wide range of mental phenomena falling within the substantive field of psychology, which are relatively little studied and related to construction and realization of the person’s safe life strategy. This extends the range of security studies in psychology and shows the possibilities to studying security problems not only in dangerous and extreme situations like hazardous work, combat, natural disasters, but as a part and condition of any person’s being.

References


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