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Socio-psychological Profile of a Person Who Confidentially Provides Assistance to the Operational Unit

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the analysis of the specific socio-psychological characteristics of the people who confidentially assist the operational units of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, with the aim of knowing the typical socio-psychological profile of the confidential informant. To this end, a survey was conducted among 84 officers who performed operational and service tasks with these people. The study evaluated the sociodemographic (gender, age, education) and psychological (temperament, reasons for cooperation, nature of the relationships between them and the operational personnel, attitude of the confidential informants towards the tasks) characteristics, and the operational and investigative characteristics (qualities of intelligence, quality of the operational information provided, duration of assistance to the operational unit, etc.). The synthesis and interpretation of the results of the survey gave the possibility to know the socio-psychological profile of the volunteer assistant of the operational unit of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, and to compare the individual specific characteristics of the relevant confidential informant with those from other law enforcement agencies in foreign countries who cooperate with Ukraine. It is concluded that the knowledge of the socio-psychological profile of informants by the operational officials is of great importance to provide confidential assistance to the operational units. The differences between the activities of the corruption claimants, whose characteristics were provided by foreign scientists, and of confidential informants, who provide assistance to the operating units, are mainly explained by the fact that informants cooperate in a confidential format (not publicly) and their activities are related to a wider range of issues.

Perfil socio-psicológico del individuo que asiste confidencialmente a la unidad operativa

RESUMEN

El artículo presenta el análisis de las características socio-psicológicas específicas de las personas que asisten de manera confidencial a las unidades operativas del Servicio Estatal de Guardia de Fronteras de Ucrania, con el objetivo de conocer el perfil socio-psicológico típico del informante confidencial. Para ello se realizó una encuesta a los oficiales que realizaron tareas operativas y de servicio con estas personas. El estudio evaluó las características sociodemográficas (sexo, edad, educación), psicológicas (temperamento, motivos para la cooperación, naturaleza de las relaciones entre ellos y el personal operativo, actitud de los informantes confidenciales hacia las tareas) y operativas e investigativas (cualidades de inteligencia, calidad de la información operativa proporcionada, duración de la asistencia a la unidad operativa, etc.). La síntesis e interpretación de los resultados de la encuesta dieron la posibilidad de conocer el perfil socio-psicológico del asistente voluntario de la Unidad Operativa del Servicio Estatal de Guardia de Fronteras de Ucrania y comparar las características específicas individuales del informante confidencial relevante con aquellas de quienes cooperan con otras agencias encargadas de la aplicación de la ley de Ucrania y países extranjeros. Se concluye que el conocimiento del perfil socio-psicológico de los informantes por parte de los funcionarios operativos es de gran importancia para proporcionar asistencia confidencial a la unidad operativa. Las diferencias entre las actividades de los denunciantes de corrupción, cuyas características fueron proporcionadas por científicos extranjeros, y de informantes confidenciales, que brindan asistencia a las unidades operativas, se explican principalmente por el hecho de que los informantes confidenciales cooperan con las unidades operativas de manera confidencial (no públicamente) y sus actividades están relacionadas con una gama más amplia de temas.

Palabras clave:

Informantes confidenciales
Denunciantes
Unidades operativas
Perfil socio-psicológico
Actividad operativa y de investigación

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Applying confidential cooperation is one of the most effective ways to fight crime. From the very beginning of their creation, law enforcement agencies all over the world used informants (Fitzgerald, 2015). Intelligence information is vital (Crous, 2012).

One of the most important factors that influence the effectiveness of the duties both of law enforcement activity in general and confidential cooperation in particular is socio-psychological features of confidential informants, which in total constitute a typical socio-psychological profile of the person cooperating with the operational unit.

According to Okhrimenko (2009), operational and investigative psychology is a specific branch of legal psychology, which has certain specific tasks (diagnosis, assessment, prevention, and correction of individual psychological features and peculiarities of behaviour of a person involved in the process of operational and investigative activities – hereinafter referred to as OIA; knowledge and consideration of psychological factors and features, in course of OIA, which is an integral part of optimization of certain operational and investigative measures; introduction of psychological tools for solving strategic tasks of OIA, etc.), as well as psychological technologies that cover the complex of diagnostic, interpretive, assessment and correctional psychological techniques.

In our opinion, the study of the problems of providing assistance to operational units on a confidential basis by confidential informants will be incomplete without studying their socio-psychological features. However, no scientific work has been dedicated to the study of the socio-psychological profile of a person who provides assistance to the operational unit of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (hereinafter – SBGSU) on a confidential basis, which, of course, cannot affect the state of confidential informants in the SBGSU positively. So, our study is an attempt to eliminate this gap.

Applying citizen assistance in combating crime is recognized as an axiom both in domestic and in foreign practice. Practitioners are convinced that the use of informants in prevention and investigation of various crimes is mandatory. The use of informants is actively studied by scientists from different countries. In the post-Soviet space the vast majority of publications deal with general issues and do not reveal the content of the socio-psychological profile of confidential informants. Those waging the War on Terror readily admit they could not accomplish their mission without informants (Fitzgerald, 2015).

The research by Miller (2011) has significant scientific interest. The results of his research provide information on informants' motivation, how they work and what makes them decide to help detectives. These results are from deep, frank interviews with confidential informants. Miller also stresses the lack of empirical knowledge about informants, which confirm the results of our study.

In the world literature the term “police informant” is commonly associated with secrecy and snitching with terms that reflect a much stronger focus on the development of human intelligence (HUMINT) capabilities such as ‘Covert Human Intelligence Sources’ (CHISs) or ‘Human Sources’ (HSs) (Rajakaruna, Henry, Crous, & Fordham, 2013).

Operational and investigative activities from the standpoint of psychology is a certain system of psychological patterns, relationships and ties that relate to various aspects of this activity and the personalities of its subjects and objects, have predominantly psychological nature and psychologically determined content structure, subordinated to the general principles and provisions of psychology and subject to scientific and practical methods of psychological analysis, diagnostics and interpretation, as well as psychological implementation and appropriate correction while integrating with other scientific and practical knowledge (social, managerial, operational and investigative, criminal, criminal procedural, forensic, etc.); they form a separate branch of psychology

applied to OIA (Aleksandrov, Kazmirenko, Yukhnovets, Okhrimenko, & Irkhin, 2007).

According to Sinilov (2008), one of the main tasks of operational and investigative psychology is the development of psychologically grounded recommendations for establishing trust relationships with people involved in the operational and investigative process with an aim of prevention and solving of unobvious grave and especially grave offenses. Integration of the achievements of psychology is necessary for the development of problems of prevention and suppressing crimes in order to provide psychological support to the work of an operational officer with confidential informants and agents (Merkulova, 2010).

Proceeding from this, we should support the opinion of Biliaiev (2009), who notes that effective cooperation with confidential informants depends on the fact that operational staff has the necessary knowledge and skills from practical psychology. In this connection, there is the urgent need for proper formation of the relevant knowledge of modern psychology of the confidential informant and, first of all, that knowledge that contributes to understanding the true motives of confidential cooperation.

It is impossible to perform management effectively without the knowledge of psychological patterns of relationship between people. Therefore, psychological science occupies a prominent place among the sciences that provide assistance to law enforcement agencies. It reveals the patterns of human psychology, knowledge of which is necessary for everyone who is called to influence people, direct their efforts, and educate them. Problems of confidential cooperation, where business communication of the officer with the confident proceeds under strict secrecy, where scientifically grounded personal approach to each person is urgently needed, occupy a special place in the theory of the operational and investigative activities (Grebelskiy, 1982).

Psychological support of OIA must necessarily include the use of psychological knowledge during various search activities, investigations, etc., including studying a person for the purpose of further confidential cooperation and work.

The peculiarity of the topic under study is that the numerous scientific papers dedicated to this problem are published in editions with a stamp of confidential access. In this context, it is necessary to investigate works of foreign scientists who are studying the psychology of the denouncers (who, in our case, are the closest to the term “informer”) quite fruitfully. Thus we should point out the work by Alford (2001), *Whistle-blowers: Broken lives and organizational power*. Studying the psychology of the denouncers, he draws attention to the repressions directed to them, describing the internal psychological struggle of confidential informants' motives, in particular the feeling that they have no choice other than to speak. He points out that the most confidential informants will not agree to do this again (Alford, 2001).

The work by Alford (2001) is characterized by a pessimistic mood regarding the possibilities of denouncers' use. In contrast, it should be noted that it is the faith of confidential informants' activities that provides an opportunity to ensure their safety and inviolability, and may be an argument in favour of involving other people in such activities.

In order to characterize persons, the term “psychological profile” is often used in legal literature. In the vast majority of sources, this term is used in relation to persons suspected of committing a crime (criminals). Along with this, a psychological profile has also an importance for the work with informers.

The concept of “profile” is used to identify a particular set of personal data in law-enforcement practice. Didenko (2007) distinguishes psychological profiles by the way of obtaining information (objective and subjective), by the form of expression (figurative, formalized, verbal), by the content of the reproduced data (political, socio-demographic, moral, psychological, etc.), and by the number of objects (individual and group profiles).

The structure of the psychological profile includes: psychological qualities of persons, presence of psychic and other pathologies; psychological features of a person's lifestyle – kinds of occupation and attitudes towards them, motives and peculiarities of the deeds, sources of satisfaction of their needs, marital status, communication circle and peculiarities of relationships (status, informal role, orientation); psychological peculiarities of behaviour in a legally significant situation (motives and other reasons for the peculiarities of behaviour in one or another situation) (Stolyarenko & Chernenilova, 1986).

As Didenko (2007) outlines, practical legal psychology and law-enforcement practice (search and operational and investigative activities) use several basic ways of presenting psychological information about a person. All these methods are structured and representing the information in a certain sequence. This information is psychological, but it is also associated with socio-demographic, criminal, medical, psychiatric, and pedagogical information. These methods are distinguished, as a rule, by the methods and possibilities of obtaining the source of information, by the way of its presentation (verbal and descriptive, quantitative and digital, visual and graphic), by the purpose and subjects of use. This is a characteristic, a map (scheme), and a profile.

The term “characteristic” is used in several meanings. First of all, this is an individual feature, an attribute. In a broader meaning, a psychological characteristic is considered to be a collection of data on a psychological features inherent to the person. This is a widespread, relatively formalized way of presenting the information in a verbal and descriptive manner, including elements of evaluative comparison, form, required to form an idea of a person (Didenko, 2007).

Legal psychology determines structural elements of the investigative, prosecutorial, judicial, penitentiary activities quite meaningfully; psychological features of the OIA are also considered in some way. However, confidential cooperation is a specific type of human activity and has unique features that affect the content of its substructures. Socio-psychological profile is a certain system of data concerning psychological and other person's qualities, which are essential in terms of their identification and detection. The system includes not only psychological qualities, but also socio-demographic, anthropological and other.

The aim of this article is to create a typical socio-psychological profile of a person who provides assistance to the operational unit on a confidential basis, taking into account the experience of using such persons by the SBGSU.

Formation of the socio-psychological profile of a person who provides assistance to operational units on a confidential basis (confidential informant) will facilitate operational personnel who have insufficient experience in operational work the acquisition of the most qualitative sources of information (confidential informants). In addition, using a typical confidant's profile will help operational staff to establish trust relationships.

In order to achieve objectives, the following tasks have been determined:

1. To summarize the results of scientific research concerning the use of assistance provided by confidential informants in the work of national and foreign scientists.
2. To detect and to summarize typical socio-psychological features, inherent to confidential informants based on the analysis of the survey results of the SBGSU operational officers, who have the experience of relations with confidential informants.
3. To form the typical socio-psychological profile of a person who provides assistance to the operational unit on a confidential basis, and to compare confidential informants with corruption denouncers taking into account revealed social and psychological features.

Method

Methodology of the empirical part of our study is based on general scientific methods, the main of which was the method of system analysis. The indicated method, in some way, combines subjective and objective moments of cognition. It is a program for formation and practical implementation of the theory (Berezin, Miroshnikov, & Rozhanets, 1976).

The research was aimed at the study of socio-psychological characteristics and identification of socio-psychological features of persons who provide assistance to the SBGSU operational unit on a confidential basis.

In addition, methods of empirical data processing (analysis, synthesis, comparison, and generalization) for comparing and interpreting the data obtained from the results of other investigations were used during the research.

Participants

The specificity of the subject of the research and the impossibility to work with confidential informants “directly” prompted us to a mediated study of their features, through a survey of officers of the SBGSU operational units who work with them directly. Eighty-four operational officers of the SBGSU, who received training and improved their qualification at Bohdan Khmelnytskyi National Academy of the SBGSU during 2017, participated in the survey.

Instrument

The study used a specially designed questionnaire for assessing the socio-psychological profile of a person who assists the operational unit on a confidential basis; it included 14 questions that had multiple answers and were formed on the basis of the analysis of the results of scientific research on similar topics, as well as the personal views of the authors on the problem. In addition, the author's team used their priceless practical experience of cooperation with confidential informants, which actually prompted us to do this study.

Procedure

To accomplish the study, the authorization of the administration of the SBGSU was obtained. Taking into account the specifics of the study and the fact that conducting personal polls of the confidential informants is not possible due to the fact that their identity is protected by the Ukraine's “Law on State Secrets”, the survey was conducted through operatives who personally cooperate with confidants. The survey was conducted during the training courses of operatives personally by the authors of this research. The survey was anonymous.

Results

Studying the socio-psychological characteristics of the confidential informants, who are in contact with staff of the SBGSU, we chose such a structure, which includes socio-demographic (gender, age, education, material wealth), psychological (temperament, motives that prompted the cooperation, nature of relations between informants and the staff, confidential informants' attitude to the tasks), and investigative features (intelligence qualities, quality of information provided by the confidential informants, term of assistance to the unit, etc.).

Socio-demographic Features

Analysis of data obtained shows that the confidential informants are classified by gender as follows: among the total number of the studied persons, 83.3 % are male, 16.7% are female (see [Table 1](#)).

Table 1. Gender

	N	%
Male	70	83.3%
Female	14	16.7%

In the process of studying age characteristics, for greater informational value we have divided the structure of age into five positions, which further are embodied into three groups. Thus, confidential informants were divided by the age as follows: youth (18-25 years) – 12% of the persons studied; 26-30 years – 21.4%; middle age (31-35 years) – 33.3%; 36-40 years – 26.2%; 41 years and older – 7.1% respectively (see [Table 2](#)).

Table 2. Age

	N	%
18-25	10	12.0%
26-30	18	21.4%
31-35	28	33.3%
36-40	22	26.2%
41 and older	6	7.1%

The results show that the overwhelming majority of persons who provide assistance to the units of the SBGSU on a confidential basis belong to youth and middle age, which in the aggregate amounted to over 92% of all investigated persons.

The overall result shows that, in general, confidential informants are featured as follows: 28.6% have higher education, 19% have incomplete higher education, 42.8% have secondary professional education, and 9.6% have secondary education (see [Table 3](#)).

Table 3. Education

	N	%
Higher education	24	28.6%
Incomplete higher education	16	19.0%
Secondary professional	36	42.8%
Secondary education	8	9.6%

At that time, confidential informants of units of the SBGSU of Ukraine are characterized in general positively, as among the studied persons there were only 19% who had a criminal history (conviction) (see [Table 4](#)).

Table 4. Criminal Record

	N	%
Yes	16	19.0%
No	68	81.0%

Among those who had a conviction, 6 (7.1%) were sentenced of crimes connected with the illegal trafficking of persons across the state border, 5 (6%) for crimes against property, and 4 (4.8%) for crimes connected with illicit drug trafficking (see [Table 5](#)).

Table 5. Type of Crimes

	N	%
Illegal trafficking across the state border	7	8.3%
Crimes against property	5	6.0%
Illicit drug trafficking	4	4.8%

The behaviour of confidants to a certain extent can also be explained by their life position: 66 (78.6%) confidants have a positive life position, 8 (9.5%) confidants have a negative life position, and 10 (11.9%) confidants have an indefinite life position (see [Table 6](#)).

Table 6. Life Position

	N	%
Positive	66	78.6%
Negative	8	9.5%
Indefinite	10	11.9%

Psychological Features

The investigated confidential informants were divided by their temperament as follows: there were 26.2% of choleric persons, 52.4% sanguine persons, 9.5% melancholic persons, and 12% phlegmatic persons. We consider that considerable predominance of percentage externally oriented temperaments is 66% – due to the fact that such individuals naturally come easier into contact with other people, including officers (see [Table 7](#)).

Table 7. Type of Temperament

	N	%
Choleric	22	26.2%
Sanguine	44	52.4%
Melancholic	8	9.5%
Phlegmatic	10	12.0%

The main reason for cooperation was the motive of material incentives – 47.6%; 21.3% of confidants provided assistance to the unit for patriotic reasons, compromise materials motivated to cooperate 19% of confidants; 9.5% of informants provided assistance with motives of loyalty to Ukraine (as a rule, they were foreigners or persons without citizenship), and only 2.4% cooperated with motives of envy (envy to success of other people) (see [Table 8](#)).

Persons for whom the civic position and principles were the “driving force” for confidential cooperation mostly had a higher education – 9.5%, incomplete higher and secondary professional education – 4.8%, and incomplete higher education – 2.4% (see [Table 3](#)).

Table 8. Cooperation Motivation

	N	%
Material incentives	40	47.6%
Compromise materials	16	19.0%
Patriotic motive	18	21.4%
The motive of loyalty to Ukraine	8	9.5%
Motives of envy	2	2.4%

During questioning, the nature of relationship between confidential informants and staff was revealed. According to the analysis of indicators, 50% of officers have friendly relations with confidential informants, 33% formal and business relations, and 14% (16.7%) have neutral relations (see [Table 9](#)).

Table 9. Nature of Relations with Operational Staff

	N	%
Neutral	14	16.7%
Friendly	42	50.0%
Formal and business relations	28	33.0%

The attitude of confidential informants to the tasks of the officer is also different. Thus, 38% of them perform them in good faith, 21.4%

without much enthusiasm, and 40.6% in good faith in presence of incentives. This reaffirms that motivation plays a significant role in confidential cooperation.

By intelligence qualities, the investigated confidential informants are characterized as follows: only 28.6% of them had high intelligence qualities, 64.3% had medium ones and 7.1% had low intelligence qualities. The average period of maintenance of confidential relations is 4 years (see Table 10).

Table 10. Intelligence Qualities of Confidants

	N	%
High intelligence qualities	24	28.6%
Medium intelligence qualities	54	64.3%
Low intelligence qualities	6	7.1%

Regarding behavioural characteristics, it should be noted that 44 (52.3%) confidants are characterized positively, 20 (23.8%) have submissive behaviour, 14 (16.7%) timeserving behaviour, and 2 (2.4%), respectively, behave outwardly, roughly, obsessively (see Table 11).

Table 11. Behaviour Characteristic

	N	%
Arrogance	2	2.4%
Harshness	2	2.4%
Timeserving	14	16.7%
Submissive	20	23.8%
Positive	44	52.3%
Obsessive	2	2.4%

Operational and Investigative Signs

Attitude of confidential informants to the tasks of the officer is also various. Thus, 38% of them perform them in good faith, 21.4% without much enthusiasm, and 40.6% in good faith with stimulus. This reaffirms that motivation plays a significant role in confidential cooperation (see Table 12).

Table 12. Attitude to the Tasks

	N	%
Good faith	32	38.0%
Without much enthusiasm	18	21.4%
Good faith with stimulus	34	40.6%

The operational staff estimate the quality of information received from confidential informant as follows: 61% noted that the information is usually valuable and reliable, 36.6% that the information is of general nature, 2.4% noted that quite often the information is not confirmed. The given data testify that operational officers in the overwhelming majority of cases estimate the quality of operational information provided by confidential informants positively (see Table 13).

Table 13. Quality of Information Provided

	N	%
Information is valuable and reliable	51	61.0%
Information has a general nature	31	36.6%
Information is not confirmed	2	2.4%

An important point in determining the profile of a confidant is the term during which he/she provides assistance to the operational unit. Among the studied persons it turned out that a confidant provides assistance for four years on average (see Table 14).

Table 14. Term of Assistance

	N	%
Up to 1 year	16	19.0%
Up to 3 years	42	50.0%
Up to 5 years old	16	19.0%
More than 5 years	10	12.0%

Discussion

Modern state border is on the one hand the attribute of the state, its independence, territorial integrity, inviolability of its territory, limits of its legal competence, etc. On the other hand, it determines a difference of price of goods that is connected with specificity of legislation of adjacent states, levels of social and economic development of the population, its material resources, level of well-being, etc. All these motives are indirect factors in trans-border illegal activity. Close cultural and family ties, active interaction of the border community provide opportunities for active use of this difference and, in particular, for finding ways to make profit from the differences in prices for the same object in contiguous countries, including those in violation of law.

The obtained results give us an opportunity to explain the features of confidential cooperation. Thus, gender difference in confidential cooperation is explained primarily by the fact that the overwhelming majority of persons who assist the operational units of the SBGSU are males. As for the types of offenses, such as smuggling of prohibited items, substances, weapons, excisable goods, illegal trafficking of people across the border, human trafficking, etc., are predominantly "male". On the assumption of this, the most confidential informants are men. The fact that crime at the border has a "male face" is confirmed by the results of the studies (Içli, Sever, & Sever, 2015; Zhang & Chin, 2002).

The young age of confidential informants may be explained by the fact that the vast majority of people who are involved in illegal activities at the state border of Ukraine are young people, and hence the young age of those who provide assistance to the operational units. This data completely coincides with the average indicators of age of person brought to criminal or administrative liability for committing offenses at state border (Izcara-Palacios, 2014; Ohniev, 2015).

Information on education of a person who provides assistance to the operational units of the SBGSU on a confidential basis is also important for socio-demographic characteristics. This feature provides an opportunity to trace the dependence of the fact of cooperation of such a person on the educational level and intellectual development of the person, which simultaneously affect the needs and interests of that person. It is known that a low educational level affects self-awareness, views, and – quite often – desires of an individual and the form of their implementation.

Thus, the percentage of people with higher education is the same both among those who have a corresponding civic position and principles, and among those who suppose confidential cooperation is a way to improve their financial position. In spite of the generally low educational level, and hence possibly insignificant material wealth, such individuals provide assistance to operational units under the influence of various motives. Among them there are those who are involved in illegal activity at the state border of Ukraine.

The plurality of motives reflects the diversity of human behaviour (Miller, 2011). Studying personal qualities of confidential informants showed that they are dominated by material needs. This material needs have different manifestations, shades, and often are combined with other dominant needs. As results, our study showed that 47.6% of persons were prompted to confidential cooperation by material encouragement. That is, a significant part of confidential informants

wants to receive some benefits, mostly material, for their assistance. Accordingly, among confidential informants for whom material encouragement was the main motive for confidential cooperation there were 9.5% with a higher education, 26.2% had secondary professional education, 7.1% had incomplete higher education, and 4.8% had secondary education. According to the data of the operational staff, 48.8% of them use the motive of material incentives most often, which actually correlates with the above data (see [Table 8](#)).

The use of confidants who consider cooperation as a way to enrich themselves also has a negative effect. For example, in relations, stated in a 2009 report, informants “are paid and/or rewarded based on the amount of information they produce; therefore, these informants are inclined to exaggerate, instigate, and fabricate cases of a ‘terrorist’ nature” ([Stabile, 2014](#)).

It is known that the source of mental and behavioural activity of the person is their needs. This is also important for confidential informants. The need, reflecting in the mind the lack of something necessary for maintaining vital functions of the organism, human personality ([Yadov, 1975](#)), is a socio-psychological category, which makes it possible to reveal the strongest motives of a person to certain activities.

Clarifying the nature of the relationship between confidants and operational staff is important. The study of world scientists shows that law enforcement officers are often inclined to justify the illegal actions of their informants. Sometimes the relationship between them is characterized by manipulations and selective use of the information received ([Crous, 2009](#)).

As for other indicators, continuous functioning in stressful conditions, as shown by numerous psychological studies ([Korolchuk, 2010, 2013](#)), imposes certain imprint on human mentality, contributing to the emergence of various negative phenomena up to mental health disorder. Confidential cooperation is not an exception. In the process of such cooperation undesirable changes in the mentality of the confidential informants, psychological deformation of their personality, are possible.

Intelligence work requires a great nervous strain, which means that the confidential informant must have a strong nervous system in order not to reveal his/her emotions in the course of an extreme situation of intelligence. Psychological studies confirm that no intelligence officer can be quite calm before performing a task ([Sokolov, 1974](#)). Using the term intelligence officer, [Sokolov \(1974\)](#) in this case considers an operational staff, but in the vast majority of cases confidant actually performs similar functions, which gives us a reason to confidant him/her as intelligence officer.

The analysis of scientific works of foreign scientists show that 82% of corruption denouncers were subjected to various pressures from the individuals they exposed ([Dyck, Morse, & Zingales, 2010](#)). In confidential cooperation, when a person communicates with a criminal, he/she must suppress natural hostility and antipathy, monitor their behaviour constantly, mask their natural emotions; thus, the mental states of the unofficial agent are complex. At this time, the main focus of an operational officer should be on mobilizing them on completing the task, inspiring their confidence in their strength and capabilities ([Kozachenko, 2011](#)).

Problems of compatibility between confidential informants and operational officers may also be caused by the attitude of operational staff to confidential informants. It is appropriate to give an example of how the current Ukrainian society evaluates those who assist operational units in the fight against crime on a confidential basis. It is not a secret that in the everyday conversational lexicon such rather negative words, which denote voluntary assistants, as “snitch”, “rat”, etc., are used. Foreign scholars also point out that the term “denouncer” is often associated with negative labels such as “rat”, “whistle-blower” ([Natapoff, 2004](#)), “sneaker” ([Friman et al., 2004](#)). Miller also writes about the humiliating attitude to the informants ([Miller, 2011](#)).

Exploring the problem of “hostility” towards the denouncers, professor Fred Alford believes that the cause of stigma is that people are tribal beings, and they feel a sense of discomfort being near to those who are repulsed from the tribe ([Alford, 2001](#)).

Despite the fact that assistance to the operational units on a confidential basis is positive and legally permissible from the point of view of the social value of such activities, the contemporary Ukrainian society perceives it negatively, and that is where the presence of such labels in the lexicon comes from.

It is interesting to trace the difference between the relations with confidential informants of the operational officers of the SBGSU and of the penitentiary bodies and institutions. According to the results of the contact survey, 78% of the interviewed operational officers believe that confidential informants do an important job, so they appreciate such assistance, 22% treat their assistants neutrally. No operational officer admitted that they despise their volunteer assistants. And in the penitentiary institutions and bodies, 11% of the questioned operational officers despise their confidential informants; in other words, they consider them traitors, etc. ([Khalymon, 2014](#)).

Informants deserve a negative attitude to themselves, as most of them are criminals, and criminals are enemies ([Miller, 2011](#)). Appealing to this thesis, [Miller \(2011\)](#) says that such an attitude to informants is illogical towards people, even when coerced into action, typically perform better when not humiliated.

The lack of perception by the operational staff at the subconscious level of this kind of activity leads to the fact that no favourable psychological contact between the confidential informant and the operational officer is possible, and results of such cooperation will be ineffective. This difference in perception of confidential informant, in our opinion, is explained by the fact that a significant amount of people with negative social orientation is concentrated on detention facilities, and therefore, at the subconscious level, operational officers perceive their assistants from the negative side.

As [Kozachenko \(2011\)](#) states, at the present stage, the confidential cooperation of a person with an operational officer is expressed psychologically in the collision of diverse interests, in the confrontation of the parties. According to him, 61% of operational officers believe that a person's lack of confidence in the operational officer as a representative of a law enforcement agency is one of the essential reasons that hinders cooperation and even leads to refusal to provide information to operational units; 71% of operational officers believe that individuals who are offered a confidential cooperation do not trust the preservation of confidentiality of the source of information. Therefore, communication between an operational worker and a citizen is characterized by emotional saturation, conflict, and continues along with constant occurrence and extinction of various mental conditions. It is worth noting that the data provided by [Kozachenko \(2011\)](#) refers to the confidential cooperation of operational police officers (police), which also has significant differences in comparison to the confidential cooperation with the SBGSU.

An important aspect of confidential cooperation is the psychological compatibility of individuals. It regulates relationships and determines the performance of joint activities. The basis of psychological compatibility is the subjective satisfaction of the person by the results of confidential cooperation. So, psychological incompatibility is often caused by intellectual, ideological, status and role-playing, age, and psychophysiological differences.

It would be logical to argue that the most significant are differences in status and role-playing, though intellectual came out to the fore. In other words, intellectual barriers often arise between operational staff and the confidential informant in professional communication (partners speak “different languages”). But they are the easiest to overcome in comparison with others. Age and psycho-physiological incompatibility cannot be avoided at all (it exists objectively); ideological incompatibility can be neutralized by the deliberate “extension” to the expressed beliefs that is not always possible in

operational and investigative work (Kazmirenko, Kondratiev, & Servetskiy, 1997).

The quality of the information provided in the SBGSU is evaluated by so called 4 x 4 method. This method is widely used by the operational units of the SBGSU for the last several years after adoption of the EU law enforcement experience, particularly experience of the Border Guard Service of Poland, to ensure the correct perception of information from confidants.

The 4 x 4 method in practice of the most world law enforcement agencies has already evolved to 5 x 5 x 5 evaluation system (Osborn, 2012). We consider it useful to introduce the 5 x 5 x 5 method in the operations of the operational divisions of the SBGSU. Its implementation, in our opinion, will contribute to a more qualitative assessment of the information received from informants.

If you apply to the explanation of the average time of confidential cooperation, it should be noted that all informants are temporary and duration of the cooperation is short, which requires constant updating. This is also due to the constant danger of the criminal environment (Miller, 2011).

Operational units should seek informants with certain skills and intelligence capabilities to perform specific tasks – the priority of such work should be directed at reducing crime (Crous, 2009).

Conclusion

Results of the research showed that insufficient attention is being paid to the study of the identity of the confidential informant in scientific literature. The above mentioned confirms the relevance of the research, and the results can be an output for further comprehensive monographs dedicated to the study of social and psychological features of individuals who provide assistance to operational units in the fight against crime.

Based on the analysis of results of the survey of operational officers, who have an experience of cooperation with confidential informants, characteristic features, inherent to the confidential informants of the SBGSU were identified and generalized and, consequently, a typical socio-psychological profile of a person who provides assistance to the operational units of the SBGSU in the fight against crime on a confidential basis is worked out. Mostly, it is a male and young – from 18 to 35 years old. This person has a higher or incomplete higher education, a “constructive” view of life and is estimated by an operational officer positively. The main type of temperament of this person is sanguine. The main motive for confidential cooperation is receiving material benefits. This person is mainly characterized as a “conscientious” assistant and preferably has high intellectual capabilities.

The typical socio-psychological profile of a person who provides assistance to the operational units on a confidential basis, formed in course of the research, allows comparing informers with corruption denouncers, whose characteristics are presented in scientific works of foreign scientists. So, according to the psychotherapist Luskin, such typical features for corruption denouncers are inherent: they are guided by altruism, try to overcome uncertainty through demonstration of awareness, as a rule, they are moralists, who become obsessed with their personal faith, have a tendency to rely on moral theories that emphasize the rights, are strong and strong-willed, uncompromising, ready to go against social conditions, and have their own view of life (Luskin, 2011). That is, when we speak about denouncers, psychic and psychological qualities are important, but not the opinions, beliefs, or material interest. The differences in the characteristics of corruption denouncers, given by Luskin (2011), and of the informers, who provide assistance to the operational units of the SBGSU, are explained primarily by the fact that informers cooperate with operational units on a confidential basis (secretly) and their activities touch on a wider range of issues, than of the denouncers.

Thus, the above elements of the socio-psychological profile of a person who provides assistance to operational units on a confidential basis (confidential informant) will help operational personnel with insufficient experience of operational activity to form an idea about the contingent of persons from whom it is expedient to obtain the most qualitative sources of information (confidential informants) in the field of counteracting crime, and to estimate the reliability of information provided by them. In addition, utilizing a typical profile of such persons will facilitate the establishment of trust relationships with them, not only by law enforcement officers, but also by investigative units in the criminal investigations and in the adoption of procedural decisions.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

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