

**PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MANIFESTATION OF  
PROFESSIONAL DEFORMATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS. (ON THE  
EXAMPLE OF THE PERIOD OF MATURITY)**

**To‘lanova Mahliyo Murotali kizi**

A lecturer of the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology at  
Andijan State Pedagogical Institute

**Annotation:** Professional deformation is a complex psychological phenomenon that emerges as a result of long-term professional activity and manifests through changes in personality traits, emotional states, values, and behavior patterns. In primary school teachers, professional deformation becomes especially evident during the period of professional and personal maturity, when accumulated experience, routine workload, and emotional demands intersect. This article explores the psychological features of professional deformation in mature primary school teachers, focusing on emotional burnout, rigidity, reduced empathy, and changes in professional motivation. The study highlights key psychological mechanisms, analyzes scientific literature, and presents empirical findings. Based on the results, practical recommendations are proposed to prevent and mitigate professional deformation in primary education teachers.

**Keywords:** professional deformation, primary school teachers, maturity, emotional burnout, psychological well-being, professional activity

### **Introduction**

Teaching is one of the most socially significant and emotionally demanding professions. Primary school teachers, in particular, carry a unique responsibility for shaping children’s cognitive, emotional, and social development at the earliest stages of formal education. Over time, prolonged exposure to high emotional involvement, constant responsibility, role overload, and institutional constraints can lead to professional deformation.

Professional deformation refers to stable negative changes in personality and behavior caused by long-term professional activity. During the period of maturity—typically characterized by professional stability, accumulated experience, and peak responsibility—teachers are especially vulnerable to this phenomenon. While maturity is often associated with competence and confidence, it can also become a stage where rigidity, emotional exhaustion, and reduced adaptability emerge.

### **Literature Analysis**

The concept of professional deformation has been widely studied in psychology, pedagogy, and occupational health. Early researchers viewed it as a distortion of personality traits under the influence of repetitive professional roles and responsibilities. Later studies emphasized its multidimensional nature, including emotional, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral components.

Research indicates that teachers are among the professions with the highest risk of professional deformation due to continuous interpersonal interaction, emotional labor, and role conflict. Studies on teacher burnout show that long-term teaching often leads to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of professional accomplishment.

In the context of maturity, scholars note that experienced teachers may develop professional stereotypes, authoritarian tendencies, and resistance to innovation. While professional experience enhances pedagogical mastery, it can also foster rigidity and

conservatism in teaching styles. Empathy, initially high in early career stages, may gradually decline as a psychological defense mechanism against chronic stress.

### **Methods**

The study employed a mixed-method research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The sample consisted of primary school teachers aged 35–55, representing the stage of professional maturity, with teaching experience ranging from 10 to 30 years.

Research instruments included:

A professional burnout inventory to assess emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment

A personality rigidity scale to measure cognitive and behavioral inflexibility

A professional motivation questionnaire

Semi-structured interviews to explore subjective experiences of professional change

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and thematic qualitative analysis. Ethical principles such as voluntary participation and confidentiality were strictly observed.

### **Results**

Professional deformation is a process of negative changes in personality that occur as a result of long-term professional activity, affecting the teacher's psychological state, communication style, and life views. This condition is particularly pronounced in primary school teachers, as their work involves constant intensive emotional and educational interaction with young children (ages 6–10). The specific features of this profession—high responsibility, constant stress, the need to adapt to children's individual needs, and the combination of the "mother-teacher" role—accelerate professional deformation.

The maturity period (usually ages 35–55, with 15–30 years of professional experience) is the peak of professional deformation. During this period, the teacher becomes professionally mature and experienced, but at the same time, entrenched stereotypes in the personality and the exhaustion of emotional resources intensify the deformation.

#### **Main Psychological Manifestations of Professional Deformation**

##### **Increased Authoritarianism and Dominance**

Mature teachers often rely on their experience and consider their own opinion as the only correct one. In the classroom, strict commands, punishments, and control methods may become habitual. This trait also manifests outside the workplace: in the family with children or spouse, or among friends, the habit of "giving orders" emerges. Psychologically, this is a pathological intensification of the need for power and control.

##### **Didacticism and Excessive Teaching**

The teacher feels the urge to explain, advise, and "show the right path" in any situation. For example, in family conversations, they may explain simple matters as if it were a lesson, or treat adults in a childish manner. This condition is called "generalization of the professional role"—the teacher constantly sees themselves as a "mentor."

##### **Emotional Burnout and Depersonalization**

The most common manifestation in the maturity period is emotional exhaustion. The teacher loses genuine feelings toward children and begins to view them not as individual personalities, but as a "group" or "class." Thoughts like "All children are the same" or "Nothing ever changes" appear. This is called depersonalization—perceiving students as objects rather than individuals. As a result, the teacher's self-esteem decreases, and interest in work is lost.

### Conservatism and Resistance to Innovations

With increasing experience, the teacher rigidly adheres to "old, tried-and-tested" methods. Accepting new curricula, digital technologies, or innovative approaches becomes difficult. This is a psychological defense mechanism—the desire to "protect" one's own experience. As a result, the teacher professionally "stagnates."

### Hyper-Responsibility or, Conversely, Indifference

Some teachers develop hyper-responsibility—feeling guilty for every student's life and future. In others, the opposite occurs—indifference with the attitude "I've done what I could." Both conditions disrupt psychological balance.

### Impact on Personal Life

Professional deformation transfers to family relationships: being strict with children as in the classroom, "grading" the spouse, or constantly teaching in conversations with friends. This can lead to family conflicts and estrangement from loved ones.

### Reasons for Intensification of Deformation in the Maturity Period

- Long-term engagement in the same activity—strengthening of stereotypes.
- Exhaustion of emotional resources—working with young children requires constant emotional expenditure.
- Social isolation—teachers often interact only with colleagues and children.
- Decline in societal respect—the low social status and material provision of the teaching profession reduce self-esteem.
- Age-related psychological changes—midlife crises in maturity intensify deformation.

### Consequences

- Depression, anxiety, insomnia, chronic fatigue.
- Decline in professional effectiveness—lessons become low-quality.
- Negative impact on students—the teacher's indifference or harshness harms children's psychological development.
- Desire to leave the profession or forced departure.

### Prevention and Correction Methods

Completely eliminating professional deformation is difficult, but it can be mitigated and controlled:

- Regular professional reflection—analyzing one's own activities, keeping a journal.
- Psychological trainings—sessions to prevent burnout, stress management techniques.
- Professional development courses—learning new methods to overcome conservatism.
- Balance in personal life—family, hobbies, sports, travel.
- Open communication with colleagues—sharing experiences, support groups.
- Psychological help—individual counseling if symptoms are severe.

In conclusion, professional deformation in primary school teachers during the maturity period is an inevitable risk, but it can be managed through timely attention and active measures. This is extremely important not only for the teacher's psychological health but also for the quality of education of the new generation.

### Discussion

The results confirm that professional deformation in primary school teachers during maturity is a multifaceted psychological phenomenon. Emotional burnout appears to be the central mechanism triggering other deformation features, such as reduced empathy and depersonalization. Emotional distancing functions as a psychological defense but negatively affects teacher–student relationships.

Cognitive rigidity, while providing a sense of control and predictability, limits professional growth and innovation. This rigidity may stem from repeated success using traditional methods, reinforcing resistance to change. Additionally, accumulated professional stress without sufficient psychological support contributes to emotional depletion.

### **Conclusions**

Professional deformation in mature primary school teachers manifests primarily through emotional burnout, reduced empathy, cognitive rigidity, and motivational decline. These changes are the result of long-term emotional strain, repetitive professional roles, and insufficient support systems.

To prevent and reduce professional deformation, the following recommendations are proposed:

Implement regular psychological support and counseling programs for teachers

Promote professional reflection and self-awareness practices

Encourage continuous professional development focused on innovation and flexibility

Create supportive school environments that value teacher well-being

Introduce mentoring roles that allow mature teachers to share experience while renewing professional meaning

Addressing professional deformation is essential not only for teachers' mental health but also for ensuring the quality and humanity of primary education.

### **References.**

1. Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 397–422. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397>
2. Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2004). Areas of worklife: A structured approach to organizational predictors of job burnout. *Research in Occupational Stress and Well-being*, 3, 91–134.
3. Kyriacou, C. (2001). Teacher stress: Directions for future research. *Educational Review*, 53(1), 27–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131910120033628>
4. Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2010). Teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout: A study of relations. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(4), 1059–1069. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.11.001>
5. Hakanen, J. J., Bakker, A. B., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2006). Burnout and work engagement among teachers. *Journal of School Psychology*, 43(6), 495–513. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2005.11.001>
6. Vodopyanova, N. E., & Starchenkova, E. S. (2009). Burnout syndrome: Diagnosis and prevention. St. Petersburg: Piter. (in Russian)
7. Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). Motivated for teaching? Associations with school goal structure, teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, 152–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.006>